

“Outshine” Sermon, Transfiguration, February 11, 2018 2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50:1-6, Mark 9:2-9

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2 Corinthians 4:5

5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

Peter wanted to build three temples on the Mount of Transfiguration: one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. As the big fisherman, the outspoken guy that others looked to, he needed to shine in spite of the awe, confusion and fear he felt.

Therefore, he needed to fit Jesus into the realm of his own experience, his own understanding of life.

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As the young apprentice continued to follow the prophet Elijah, knowing that soon he would no longer be with him, Elijah tried to turn him back.

“Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” 10 He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.”

It may seem that Elisha's motive was similar to Peter's—that he wanted to command the moment, to outshine Elijah. But Elijah clarified it for him. Only if you see me as I am translated away. Only if you see me beyond the limitations of your reality, will what you seek be possible. Elisha needed to see the presence of the Christ in Elijah. He could not be Elijah, a person of his experience.

It would be more than a double portion of the spirit which took on Jezebel and Ahab, more than a double portion of that spirit which fed a starving widow, and raised her dead son to life. He would have to receive what was of God rather than of self. Elijah reminded him and us, you ask a hard thing.

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Before Peter could shine with the radiance that was displayed in Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, he had to stop trying to promote himself, his people

his past, his traditions, and his prominence among the disciples. He would have to forsake self, in order to attain Christ. Self always wants to outshine. In our authoritarianism, we even seek to elevate others so that they might outshine us and we can develop a co-dependence with them. But God cannot use us if all we have is the elevation of ourselves. Neither does God want us to elevate others. We are to lift up Christ. Jesus prophesied, “If I, even I be lifted up from your ego-bound, self-bound consciousness, I will draw the world into God’s presence.

“This is my beloved Son, hear Him.” Christ must outshine in our lives. It was not Peter’s moment, any more than it was Moses’ or Elijah’s moment. Neither are our lives ours anymore. Christ had come to outshine the old us, the socialized us, the us we and everyone else has always known. Otherwise we miss God’s power, its potential and its joy.

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The Lord was turning their and our attention away from the law and the prophets – but also from the humdrum and the mundane of human existence. Christ outshines the law, Christ outshines our sins. Christ outshines our past, Christ outshines our personalities, Christ outshines our trouble, Christ outshines our turmoil. Christ outshines the challenges we face and the challenges others place in front of us, if we will seek that double portion of him in us, rather than be filled with religious ideas and misconceptions passed on to us by others.

5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

Christ outshines what went before. Christ outshines ritual. Christ outshines our experience. Christ outshines legalism. Christ outshines reason. And we through faith can yet see and know Christ outshining in us. Amen.