

We Don't Need to Climb a Mountain; Our Place of Transfiguration Is Already Here, Waiting for Us

The Gospel story of Jesus' transfiguration and the experiences of Moses and Elijah on mountain tops "have at least two basic characteristics," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday. "They draw those experiencing them closer to God, and they give them strength for their journeys."

"I believe we all need these kinds of mountain-top experiences," Pastor Thelander said. "We need these times in our lives—times when we know that God is with us, times when we see clearly the glory and majesty of God."

Moses' experience strengthened him "to come down and to do the work God had given him to do, leading the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to the promised land," he continued. So it was with Jesus, because, "from the moment he comes down from this mountain he moves steadily toward that work, toward Jerusalem and his appointment with a cross. . . .

"And guess what! Jesus invites us to go along with him. As the season of Lent begins this week, we will be invited to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him to Jerusalem," to "learn that true and abundant life is found through sacrifice and service to others. . . .

"Now, how do we prepare for such a journey? It would be great if we could have a mountain-top experience, an epiphany, an experience were we could get a glimpse of heaven. . . . We could perhaps all go up to Bogus Basin or some other nearby mountain, and see what happens. But I have a better idea. We don't need to go and climb a mountain, for our place of transfiguration is already here, waiting for us, and it requires only that we take a few steps. . .

. "I'm speaking here of the Lord's Table, for the Eucharist



"Landscape with the Temptation of Christ", by Joos de Momper. © Web Gallery of Art. The Gospel reading this Sunday will tell of the Devil's three temptations of Christ. In this painting, one may see the supply of stones which Satan suggested that Jesus make into bread—especially the one in the right foreground, which resembles in shape an oversized bread loaf—and the traffic of commerce toward the city ("the kingdoms of the world"). Where is the temple from which Satan urged Jesus to cast himself? Look closely upper left, and you'll see it: the Cross! Observe, also, the sense of foreboding which suggests that the temptations are not the reality they purport to be. That sense of foreboding is divinely placed within us, to help us to see that the Devil's seductive urgings are wrong, false and destructive, not least because they would have us put ourselves, or some earthly reward, or—worst of all—Satan himself in first place. Both the O.T. and Epistle lessons for Sunday tell us that our blessings are from God, and He therefore wants our first place and our first gratitude, as well as our worship. In the Gospel lesson, Satan claims to be the source of blessing. By his life, words and death, Jesus effectively told Satan that Jesus would rather die—and let his body be the bread—than to believe or act upon that lie.

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On the Web: www.epworthchapelonthegreen.org	
Sunday	10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
	11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
	11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion.
	6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, tea, refreshments.
Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.: Lenten Evening Prayers, then soup & bread supper.	
Thursdays 7:00 p.m.: Lenten Evening Prayers	
For the poor: Ground beef, chicken, sausage, bacon, fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, canned spam and tuna, cold cereal, milk, butter, cheese, cooking oil, pancake mix, syrup, chili powder, paprika, oregano, garlic powder, diapers, baby wipes, bathroom tissue, hand and body soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream, cold weather clothing.	
Readings, 2/25: Deut. 26:1-11; Ps. 91:9-16; Rom. 10:5-13; Luke 4:1-13. 3/4: Gen. 15:1-8; Ps. 27:10-18 (105:1-15); Phil. 3:17—4:1; Luke 13:22-35.	
Prayer Emphases: Barbados; Brethren in Christ Churches; Reflections Church, Meridian, ID, and the Rev. David Goebel; Inter-Cristo; parishioners on Weaver Circle.	
(Sermon, cont'd.) provides the very things that all good epiphanies provide: it draws us closer to God, and it strengthens us for the journey that yet lies ahead. When we come to the Table of the Lord, we get a glimpse of heaven. In the bread and wine, we encounter the living God, who speaks to us and tells us we are loved and forgiven. At the Lord's Table, we know that God is with us. . . . We receive grace that helps us in time of need . . . when the way gets rough."	

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