

TFTD 23.22. Saturday March 18th

Matt 17:1-8 Meeting God in awesomeness and in intimacy



Thanks to Sue Mills for this wonderful picture of mountains in Austria!

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>3</sup> Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' <sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' <sup>8</sup> And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

Once upon a time, there was a cluster of churches, a stone-throw away from each other in the Cheshire countryside.

There was the one with a tall and elegant spire, framed with rainbows in the sky.

There was the old lady, who squatted gracefully in an ancient landscape.

And then there was the smallest of them all, full of joy and exuberance who hid her beauty behind a thicket of trees.

And every Sunday, their respective bells would call the faithful to worship ... and the people who worshipped in those churches .. they loved their church, the beauty of their building, the quirkiness of their traditions and the strength of their fellowship.

You may recognise those churches and be able to name them. You may know their stories or even their secrets.

But there is something far more important than the name of the saint after which each is called ... it is the way you feel when you step through their doors and venture inside ..

A feeling of peace ...A feeling of comfort

Or just an intense feeling of belonging .. a feeling that you are where you have always meant to be.

So, it is no wonder that in the places where we

I am struck by the special places, where we involve climbing up to today's reading, we and John up a high mountain which was both awesome and

The awesome and the divinity of the intimacy is that the disciples are afraid. Led by Christ

intimacy of God in the familiarity of our own church traditions and in those spiritual places where we instinctively feel we belong.



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We worship God in awe and wonder. We are moved, to wonder “what are human beings that He is mindful of them, mortals that He cares for them?” (Psalm 8:4)

I believe we are meant in worship to wrestle with the awesomeness of God, to be disturbed by it, confused, confronted with the sheer anarchy of God's grace. In humility, we learn that “God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways His ways” (Isaiah 55:8).

And yet again worship feeds that hunger we have for intimacy with God. When we find strength in a God who is our rock and our salvation .. a God who like a mother bird shelters us in his wings, who walks with us in the valley of death .. whose touch of the hand we feel on our lives.

Something truly wonderful happens when we worship... I am privileged to be part of a team which gets together to pray first thing in the morning three times a week. We have been doing so for several years now and have become quite proficient at making it work on zoom.

Sometimes prayer is as exciting as brushing your teeth and yet at other times it just seems to lift you up to a higher place. It is uncanny how that simple regular act of worship sustains us and has changed us over the years, both as individuals and as a team.

When we have finished our prayers, there is that awkward moment, when you want to stay and continue to savour the moment .... A bit like Peter in the account of the Transfiguration who did not want that precious moment to end.

But eventually it is time to come down from the mountain .. to roll up our sleeves and get stuck into the work that needs doing.

What happens at the foot of the mountain is also part of God's world but what is different, is that worship has

equipped us for whatever lies ahead.

So let us pray that:

Whatever joys or sorrows, we face today,

Whatever challenges come our way,

Whatever pain lives inside us,

May we feel the touch of God's hand upon our life

May the outpouring of God's Spirit uplift us

And may we encounter God in awe and wonder.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

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Looking down from the Mount of Transfiguration

