

Sermon 14th February 2021
“Transfiguration?! I Doubt It.”
Mark 9: 2 - 9

Gracious God, be with us today
in this place, in the
Scriptures and in our
words.

May the words of my mouth and
the meditations of our
hearts praise your Holy
name. Amen.

We human beings are a strange
mixture of belief and doubt.
We say we believe something,
but there is always doubt
present.

I guess it is part of being human.
The Bible says we see only in
part now as though looking
through a dark glass.

We don't understand everything
in the world around us.
So we are always questioning
what we believe to be the
truth.

But thank God we still venture to
believe despite our doubts.
Even though we can't see God,
some of us still believe that
God exists.

If we do not admit however that
we have doubts then we are
only fooling ourselves.

Jesus' disciples were no different.
They believed and yet they
doubted too.

One day Jesus asked them who
people were saying he was.
They said, “Some say Elijah or
John the Baptist.”

Then Jesus said, “Who do you
say I am?”

And Peter said, “You are the
Messiah.”

He believed in Jesus and was the
first disciple to say so out
loud.

But then Jesus started saying that
he must go to Jerusalem to
be rejected and killed.

Peter didn't like the sound of
this.

He probably began to doubt not
only Jesus' divinity but his
sanity as well.

Mark says that Peter took Jesus
aside and rebuked him.

He didn't merely ask for a
clarification of something
he had trouble
understanding.

He rebuked Jesus and told him he
was wrong.

If Peter believed without a doubt that Jesus was the Messiah, he should have accepted whatever Jesus said as the Gospel truth.

But he questioned what Jesus told him and doubted.

This incident demonstrates that Peter, the chief apostle, was a mixture of belief and doubt.

Don't misunderstand; Peter did believe.

He honestly believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

But at the same time he doubted. He questioned the truth of Jesus' teaching when it didn't make perfect sense to him.

Peter and the other disciples had to live with this mixture of faith and doubt just as all humans do.

So Jesus took them on a journey to help them grow in faith.

It took six days of walking to reach the destination: a mountain.

Then Jesus took three of the disciples: Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray.

It was quite a hike to the top. At the top something happened.

Jesus was transfigured.

His clothes became an unearthly white and his face seemed to glow.

Moses and Elijah were standing there with him as a testimony to Jesus' holiness.

Then there was a voice that said, "This is my Son, marked by my love. Listen to him."

I believe that this happened to build their faith.

They believed that Jesus was the Messiah but at the same time they probably wondered if he was not mistaken about going to Jerusalem to die.

But despite their doubt they followed Jesus to the mountain.

They even hiked to the top of a high, cold mountain.

And God showed them that Jesus was the Messiah, and their faith was strengthened.

Like the disciples you and I are a mixture of belief and doubt. Even faithful people, like the apostle Peter, have doubts.

"Lord I believe. Help my unbelief."

That is the prayer of a true
disciple.
Anything less is a failure to be
honest with ourselves and
with God.

Let me tell you a story about
faith.
Listen to the parents for their
mixture of belief and doubt
in the intensions of their
daughter Emily.

Soon after her brother was born,
little Emily began to ask
her parents to leave her
alone with the new baby.
They worried that like most four-
your-olds, she might feel
jealous and want to hit or
shake him, so they said no.
But Emily showed no signs of
jealousy.
She treated the baby with
kindness, and her pleas to
be left alone with him
became more urgent.
They decided to allow it.

Elated, Emily went into the
baby's room and shut the
door.
But as she was shutting the door,
it opened up a crack—
enough for her curious

parents to peek in and
listen.
Then they saw little Emily walk
quietly up to her baby
brother, put her face close
to his and say quietly,
“Baby, tell me what God feels
like.
I’m starting to forget.” By Dan
Millman

Like those parents, we all have
doubts.
The parents doubted their older
daughter’s ability to be
gentle with the baby.
Their faith had yet to be
confirmed in her.

Like those parents, there are
people who hesitate with a
mixture of doubts about
their faith.
There are some people who
believe they should just sit
still until they get it all
figured out.
They say they will start going to
church after they are
finished reading the Bible
and understand it all.
Or they won’t make any
commitments to Christ until
they are free of all doubts.
It’ll never happen that way!

That's not the way Jesus works.
When Jesus called Peter and the
others, he didn't say come
and I will explain
everything to you, then we
will minister.

He said, "Follow me and I will
make you fishers of men
and women."

Christians learn on their feet
while they walk.

Jesus believes in on-the-job
training.

Every Christian needs to take
classes, but we also need to
sign up for an internship.

We must follow to learn and
grow.

If we try to learn it all then
follow, we will never learn
what we need.

Have you ever heard the saying,
"If you want to have faith, live as
if you had it."

That doesn't mean that we
should put on a religious
show as if we had faith.

It is saying that we should step
out in faith especially when
we doubt.

Because it is only when we step
out in faith that our faith is
verified and our doubts are

quieted.

Step out in faith like Peter, James
and John.

They doubted, yet they followed
Jesus up that mountain and
their faith was confirmed
and strengthened.

In the same way follow Jesus up
the mountain.

Even though it seems an uphill
struggle and our doubts nag
at us all the way, continue
to step out in faith.

Thanks be to God. Amen.