

February 23, 2020    'Right Under Our Eyes!'    Rev. Jane Courtright  
(*Matthew 17:1-9*)

I wore contact lenses for many years!  
One day, while putting them into my eyes, I dropped one!  
I looked down, onto my bathrobe,  
          the edge of the sink & on the floor below me.  
Right then, my cat walked in front of my legs.  
I figured maybe the contact lens was now stuck  
          on one of the pads of her paws!  
I checked them, but no contact lens!

I never did find it,  
          so I used one of the brand new lens in my medicine cabinet.  
When I came home that evening,  
          as I prepared to wash my face before going to bed,  
I SAW the contact lens clearly, stuck to the faucet handle of the sink!

Has this ever happened to YOU?  
So many times in our lives,  
          what we're looking for is right in front of us –  
LITERALLY, right under our eyes.  
But somehow, we just don't see it!

So, maybe we ought not to be so hard on Peter, James & John.

Of the people who surrounded Jesus,  
          these 3 disciples made up Jesus very inner circle.  
They were probably the closest male confidants of Jesus-  
          the ones with the inside story.  
THEY were the ones to go with Jesus  
          on this special trip up the mountain.

Peter, James and John had been with Jesus for awhile.  
They had been witness to many extraordinary happenings.  
They had heard Jesus' teachings many times.  
But, even now, when the glory of God  
    shines through Jesus SO CLEARLY,  
Even after all this, the disciples STILL don't get it!

They become blinded by the light of truth,  
    rather than illuminated by it!

Theologian Ralph Martin believes that Peter, at least  
    may have been really blind to what Jesus  
    was trying to show about his mission!  
Martin observes that Peter's offering to build 3 shelters  
    shows that Peter wants Moses and Elijah to stay.

AFTER ALL, Moses represents the law, Elijah the prophets,  
    and Jesus the new covenant.  
Peter would like them all to 'set up shop'  
    And take care of business together.  
I wonder what their business would be?

The shelters Peter wanted to set up match the booths  
    erected during the Festival of the Tabernacles,  
    described in the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Leviticus.  
This Jewish festival tended to stir up an intense  
    nationalism and patriotism –  
It was like Independence Day, our 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

MOSES – is the central hero of Israel,  
    The one who led the Hebrews out of Egypt,  
    And defeated the pursuing armies of the Pharaoh.

ELIJAH – is the next closest thing to their SUPER HEROE!

He called brimstone and fire down  
upon the prophets of Baal  
during King Ahab & Queen Jezebel's reign!

Put all these together and you can start to see how  
Peter could have viewed this 'Transfiguration' event:  
as an invitation for Jesus  
to be the same kind of conquering hero,  
even though Jesus himself always refused this role!

So, it is possible that instead of being 'blown away'  
By Jesus' Transfiguration,  
Peter may have been picturing a military response  
To the Roman Occupation.-  
And example to us that even when we receive a revelation  
WE CAN GET IT WRONG!

Reminds me of C.S. Lewis' analogy:  
"We're like children unwilling to leave our mud puddles  
Because we can't imagine a vacation at the seashore  
That our parents want to give us."

But the good news is that Peter's story as a whole  
is also an example of how  
even the slowest and most stubborn of people can,  
in the end, still get it right!

Peter may not have been the sharpest tool in the shed,  
but he was THERE, and he didn't give up!  
When he fell down, he got back up.  
When he ran away, he eventually returned.

**Maybe Woody Allen was right about 1 thing:  
95% of success is just showing up!**

Peter, James and John may have been living in the dark  
after being shown the light,  
But to the end, they lived their lives for God!  
Like Peter, we WILL HAVE our ups and downs  
our highs and lows.  
We will also see with limited and sometimes faulty vision.  
But if we can be open to God,  
our transformation is also possible!

**So, what about US? What blinds us to God?**  
What can remove the blinders from OUR eyes?

This week we begin our observance of Lent  
With our Ash Wednesday service in just 3 more days.  
**LENT IS A SEASON OF REFLECTION.**

IF there's anything that can help us gain spiritual sight,  
this is one of those things:  
*Departing from our usual agendas  
to pay more attention to God!*

Lent can be a time when we wrestle with  
Some basic and important questions.  
I'll give you some of these questions to take home on Ash Wednesday!

So, let's take advantage of the season.  
let's slow down enough so that  
we not just receive the light, but begin to live in it!  
Carl Jung's (yung) reminder sticks with me:  
**"Hurry is OF the devil, hurry IS the devil."**

If we can slow our frantic searching,  
*could it be* that what we really long for  
is right in front of us?

Hmmmmmmmmmm.....

I wonder what **we might hear** God say to US....  
if we paused in our self-directed schedules  
and **paid attention to God?!** Amen .