

SATURDAY – February 21st

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: I proclaim...Jesus Christ as Lord.

God of light, shine through me as you first shone through Christ. May my devotion to the Lord shine through my actions and my words because of the special time we spend together day by day. Guide me throughout this day and always. In the name of Jesus, the Christ, my Savior and my Lord, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

KEY VERSES: 2 Corinthians 4:5-6:

(5) “For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. (6) ‘For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (NRSV).

Epiphany is the season of light. It began with the light of a star and ends with the light of the transfigured Christ. Here in our scripture passage today we track Christ’s light as it shines out of the darkness from our hearts so that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God will be seen by all humankind. The culmination of the Epiphany journey of discovery and discipleship is in the light which we can shed as we continue our faith journey. We may leave this portion of our faith journey, moving from Epiphany and its light into the Lenten journey where the light is challenged by the darkness, but the light will ultimately overcome the darkness. It is through our words and our actions that this light is proclaimed to the world. So often, however, our words and actions proclaim ourselves; our desires, our ministries, our duties so that the light of God is left behind. When that happens we are stumbling along in the dark without the light of the Spirit which dwells in our hearts.

Everything we do and say proclaims something. It may convey anger and displeasure, frustration and inconsiderateness. Or, it may shout joy and love, peace and comfort. Our emotions color our words and our actions. We often get caught up in reactions to words and deeds instead of responding within the light of our Lord. We know that we are called to love, peace, joy, gentleness and so forth, but the reality is that we much more often react out of anger, discontent, sadness with sharp tongues and jerky actions. Jesus rarely chose such ways to relate to the world around him and when he did show anger it was in a holy cause. Evil resides in the darkness, lurking behind the scenes, but waiting to trip us when we leave the light of Christ behind us. We can expose the evil within our hearts with the light which has come to us along the road of new discoveries and discipleship we have trod through the last several weeks. As we prepare to end this portion of our faith journey and begin another, let us hold fast to the light which we have received. Let us proclaim Jesus Christ as our Lord and boldly proclaim him without claiming any glory for ourselves.

When we proclaim ourselves, our agendas, our goals, our solutions, we leave God behind. This is not what we have been called to do. Our agenda, our goals, our solutions are to be framed by the light of Christ who dwells within us through the Holy Spirit. When this takes place, we can proclaim Christ’s light by both deed and action. When our emotions and our thoughts are dominated by our dependence upon the Spirit of God, bathed by the light of God’s glory, we can proclaim the Christ by our words and our actions without stumbling around in the dark. The proclamation will be a natural outpouring of our knowledge of and joy in the light of God’s glory as seen through our loving Savior, Jesus, the Christ. The more we shine that light upon our lives, the more we will uncover that can be removed and the more the light

with shine through us into the world. We will naturally share the light we have so that the darkness will be swallowed up by the light. Let's search our hearts for new ways to proclaim the love of God, revealed through the light of Christ's glory and instilled within us through the Holy Spirit. Let's be filled to overflowing by the Holy Spirit so that the light will transform the world!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: John 1:1-14

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. How have I proclaimed myself through my own agendas, etc.?
2. How have I proclaimed Christ through my words and actions?
3. How can I continue to proclaim Christ in all his glory?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

Do a review of the Road of New Discoveries devotionals. Take special note of those discoveries, or re-discoveries which had an impact on your faith journey. Look for ways to proclaim these discoveries through your life. Take the light of these discoveries with you as you prepare to begin new faith journeys.

Lord Jesus Christ, light of my life, I thank you for the light you shine into my life each day. As our Epiphany journey nears completion, prepare me for the next steps in our lifelong journey of faith. Keep me faithful to my commitment as a disciple so that I may proclaim my Savior along the way. Shine your light into my heart and help me reflect it into the darkness of a wounded world as in your radiant name, I pray. Amen.

7th SUNDAY IN EPIPHANY – February 22nd

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: May I see...Jesus only.

Dearest Jesus, may I never take my eyes off you! I come to be with you once more as we bring the Epiphany journey nearly to its end. As I look around at the world and all the things which could distract my mind and my heart, I ask for your help to keep me focused on you alone. In your enfolding name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 9:6-9

KEY VERSE: Mark 9:8:

“Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them” (NAB).

Once more we find ourselves on the mountaintop with Jesus. His chosen three disciples have witnessed his transfiguration and conversation with Moses and Elijah. They also hear the voice of God once more proclaiming Jesus as God’s beloved Son and to do as Jesus tells them. At the end of this vision, Peter had expressed the desire to build shrines to the three. Jesus doesn’t answer him, but when they again look up, all they see is Jesus alone. There is no explanation about how the disciples knew the others with Jesus were Elijah and Moses. There is no explanation about what the experience meant. There is no answer about building shrines. But, when they again look up, all they see is Jesus alone. No blinding light coming from his face is seen now, only the one they have been with for the past three years or so. But, he will never be the same in their eyes again. Now they have seen Jesus in all his glory! Things can never go back to the way they were.

The terror and the wonder have passed. Jesus is with them just as before. Yet, they are cautioned to keep this experience to themselves until after the resurrection. What did their hearts say to them? How did this experience affect them? What does it mean for us? These are questions which haunt us. This experience was not given to all the disciples, not even for all of the named twelve, only for three of them. Yet, we have been given knowledge of it. There must be a reason for it, a reason that fills our hearts and begs us to keep our eyes on the Christ. Perhaps it was in fulfillment of the promise that Christ came to let us see the face of God. It was, after all, one of the reasons for the incarnation. The transfiguration is the final discovery of the Epiphany season, the culmination of light over darkness. Moses and Elijah may have put in an appearance, but in the end, it was Christ who stood alone and it is Christ we must look for as our light and our salvation. We need to look up as the disciples did on that mountaintop and see the one who can meet all our needs and who gave himself as a sacrifice so that we might live. He was transformed before their eyes into a vision of the glory of God. How do we see him? We have never seen Christ’s physical face. O, we’ve seen all kinds of pictures of what he might have looked like, most of them stylized so that they bear little resemblance to the person he probably was. But, unlike Peter, James and John, we don’t know what he looked like in the flesh. Our eyes see him in a different way. We use our imaginations, but we see the risen Savior. The light we see is internal and lights our way through the darkness of sin and evil. When we look for the light of Christ we have hope and joy and peace waiting for us. The journey may not always be an easy one, but we travel with the one who can show us the way, who loves us more than we can imagine and who shines upon us along the way. We can look upon his face in our mind’s eye and find the love and compassion we need. We can find the example we need for how we treat others and we find the strength and empowerment to overcome and persevere. We don’t look to Moses, we don’t

look to Elijah, we look to Jesus. Just as Peter, James and John, we see Jesus alone. His light brings us transformation just as it did for him. Let's just keep looking at Jesus alone and we will come out just fine. We end this Epiphany journey in a couple of days as we prepare for the Lenten journey. We will need Christ's light as we make the journey to the cross along with Christ. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus as we make the transition from Epiphany's light to the reflective Lenten season.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. Do I look to Jesus alone for leadership and empowerment for transformation in my life?
2. How do I see Jesus?
3. What can I take away from this mountaintop experience with Jesus?

Dearest Lord, help me to see Jesus alone when I have needs in my life. So often, I look to myself first and fail to seek Jesus unless I begin to fail. Let me look to Jesus for all my needs and let his light illumine the way. As we prepare to leave the season of Epiphany and enter into the season of Lent, help me to take the light from Epiphany into the Lenten season. The road to the cross will be easier when the light of Christ is a part of it. In your name alone, I pray. Amen.