

Transfiguration of the Lord

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It is a vision. We cannot know God, but we visualise Him in order to still be able to see something of the fantastic glory He promises - and sometimes already lets us feel a little. Perhaps not as strongly as the apostles there on Mount Tabor, who even briefly saw Jesus' connection with Law and Prophets, but still: we can sense God in our inner lives.

These are intense experiences of happiness, like the birth of a child, great moments in our lives when we are moved, or experiencing the beauty of creation. And once you taste that, you want it to stay that way forever. Mary Magdalene has known and loved Jesus, and then when He shows Himself after His death, she wants to hold Him, but Jesus' answer to that is immediately: 'Don't hold me'.

Within us lives a longing for perfection that drives us to bring fulfilment to our lives ourselves - but the result remains beyond our control. We can hope that the world will develop well, that there will be a future for our children but it is far from perfect for now. Our materiality holds us down.

Only once there was a moment in Jesus' life when perfection was visible. His limitless divinity became visible. A flash, a peak experience. His clothing becomes 'shining like the light', He changes appearance, shape as the full truth of His life comes to light and becomes visible. A flash, for a moment the perfection of heaven is overwhelming. And then it is gone. Eternity shows itself in the finite and temporal, but it cannot remain and then all is as it was, almost. The story of Jesus' transformation is like a fairy tale about our own inner life. We build our own existence, but gradually experience that our identity is given to us: our human existence takes on a divine dimension.

We can only experience this when we allow ourselves to say that in faith: don't build on yourself first and foremost, but let yourself be formed by God, take your identity from Him. No longer create your own freedom, but fully accept the life given to you, absorb it, reconcile with it and experience the fullness of divine life.

For Jesus, it meant: accepting his calling, his destiny to bear witness to the life of God in us. Bringing people to self-denial as He Himself had known it, giving people the insight that learning to receive is more beautiful than just continuing to believe in yourself.

Constantly, the testimony of Jesus evokes resistance, counter-reactions. Misunderstanding, fear, annoyance. People do not want to hear that they are not themselves enough. But Jesus' testimony is stronger than people. As his divine reality becomes visible, Moses and Elijah join him. They represent Law and Prophets: all the Bible is completed in the encounter with the heavenly Jesus.

The all-transcending brilliance we want to hold: once heaven is here, it must stay here. Three tents! Look at the tents in refugee camps, look at the tents after the earthquakes. What is more preliminary? If we try to hold on to our experience of God, we are powerless. What we do with our faculties is terribly out of reach compared to what God gives us.

The completion of Law and Prophets does require the utmost: our lives. But the life Jesus gives shines like the light - once more when He died. Heaven has settled here. With us.

Jesus is the undisputed centre of this: God Himself makes us feel that Jesus is the Son loved by Him, the man after God's heart. A thousand times thousands served Him and

tenthousand times tens of thousands stood before Him. All creation is submissive to Him because He made God visible to us. That is the vision. Our vision.