

Sunday 19th February 2023

I witness

Material from Roots Bible Study

Begin with an opening prayer

‘The Lord is king, let the peoples tremble!’

Lord, we praise your great and awesome name,
you are the holy one.

Today we draw close to you,

to be still and to listen,

to be mesmerised by your dazzling brightness.

Meet us today, Lord, in this place.

Amen.

Read: Matthew 17.1-9

Bible notes

In the chapter before this, the Pharisees and the Sadducees have tried to test Jesus, Peter has identified him as the Messiah and Jesus has begun to explain to his disciples the way of the cross. There is irony in that what happens next would surely count as a glorious ‘sign from heaven’ (16.1) - but the transfiguration is not a miracle to convince sceptics. The mention of ‘Six days later’ is perhaps an allusion back to the story of Moses on Mount Sinai. Jesus’ face shone like the sun - Moses’ face was also described as shining (Exodus 34.29). There was a cloud covering the mountain. Two figures stood alongside Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Moses can be seen as representative of the Law and Elijah of the Prophets, meaning that the two fundamental strands of Jewish tradition are represented. Some people feel that the offer of Peter to build three dwellings or shelters (akin to the sukkah built for the festival of Sukkot) is a bit absurd and a sign of his impetuosity. The Gospel of Mark goes so far as to say that he did not know what he was doing (Mark 9.6). Peter did offer to do something, however, and that was an act of devotion. Perhaps his spiritual style was much more action-orientated than that of the other disciples! Peter, James and John hear the voice from heaven, which repeats the words spoken at Jesus’ baptism, adding the imperative, ‘Listen to him!’ As the way of the cross draws ever nearer, they need this instruction more than ever.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

Have you had any experiences, seen anything, that made you feel God was close to you or you to God? A sunrise, perhaps, or an especially beautiful moment somewhere? Can we encourage one another simply by telling our stories?

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

O Morning Star,
we thank you that we can be completely changed by you.
We thank you that you have called us to yourself
to be transformed and made whole.
Thank you that we can draw aside and
spend time in your presence,
worshipping you and praising you for your love.
You transform us day by day.
You draw us closer to you,
so that we can shine bright and be your children of light.
O Morning Star, we praise you!
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Awesome God,
your glory shines all around us.
Help us to use all our senses to know how close you are.
Give us words to tell everyone that you are there for them too.
Amen.