



SOMETHING TRANSFORMATIONAL HAPPENED HERE THREE WEEKS AGO TONIGHT/THIS MORNING. You may recall that was the weekend that Pastor Jeff shared the story from the Gospel of Luke about a woman whose life was all but over. Her husband had died. Her son had died. And because of that, she was as good as dead herself. The powerful turning point in that story was when Jesus the Savior confronted death and deadness with the power of life and aliveness. The connection to our lives—the practical application became clear when Jeff challenged each one of us to consider the places in our lives where we feel like we're dying and longing to be brought back to life.

Embracing the bold promise that Jesus the Savior is still confronting death and deadness in our lives right here, right now, Jeff dared us to write down on a simple little Post-It Note a word or phrase indicating that place that needs to be awakened and brought back to life in you; and then to get out of your seats, come forward and put that Post-It Note in a basket. Jeff promised that those sacred little pieces of paper would be brought into our chapel on the following Tuesday morning where we, as a staff would pray through the things that we wrote down together on the Post-Its.

Apparently, that struck a deep chord in you. On the following Tuesday morning as I sat with my colleagues to pray through those notes, I held in my hands some of the deepest longings for life and aliveness that I'd ever seen. I held in my hands fragile hope for renewed relationships between husbands and wives, between daughters and sons, siblings and friends. I held in my hands the deepest longings for the Spirit to create even the slightest bit of hope for things that before that moment of writing it on that Post-It had seemed unthinkable. I held in my hands the profound desire to experience love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. And then we prayed—at times just simply lifting that Post-It with the whisper: "Here God, bring life back into this death." We prayed, trusting that the power of God

could do far more than we could ever think or imagine; helping us to see Jesus, the Savior in a new light, giving us eyes to see the movement of the Spirit, to see things that we had not seen before; to see life from the perspective of Jesus of Nazareth who became Jesus the Savior whose promise to change everything still stands.

THE STORY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION IN LUKE 9:28-36 STIRS ALL OF THAT UP AGAIN TODAY. Let me give you some context. A lot has gone on. Jesus had been baptized, he returned to his home community to preach and teach; he called together his followers—most of them fishermen and taught them a different way to fish; he healed the sick, raised the dead, modeled for his followers what it meant to forgive the seemingly unforgiveable, love the seemingly unlovable, welcome the stranger, embrace the outsider, and show extravagant mercy for all who felt like outsiders. And now this: the transfiguration. It's not a word that we use much at all; transfiguration doesn't roll off the tongue so readily. And it's just such a strange story that we don't talk about a lot. But we should! The disciples didn't talk about it either—Luke even tells us that! Are you kidding me? Jesus is utterly changed; his appearance completely altered. Peter, James and John are standing there watching this—their mouths hanging open like they'd just seen something that defies description. And then, as if that's not enough, a voice from heaven—God's voice says, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" And then—Luke ends this story with one of the most perplexing statements in the Christian Scriptures: And the disciples—Peter, James and John "kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen." We'll come back to that in a minute.

HERE'S WHAT I KNOW: Even though transfiguration isn't in much of our conversation, most—if not all of us desperately long for what the transfiguration of Jesus means. The Transfiguration of Jesus refers to the outer change in Jesus' appearance. The #bigmoneyword for this is "theophany!" God showing up in the flesh—Jesus reveals his divinity.

And because Jesus was revealed and God showed up, transformation happens: the broken hearted are healed, the lost are found, the outsiders are invited, the outcasts are welcomed, the darkness becomes light, and the transformation of our lives is completely possible.

If you were here three weeks ago on "Post-It Note Saturday/Sunday" whatever you wrote on that slip of paper was deeply connected to some profound desire in your life for transformation. And even if you weren't here that weekend, but have ever wrestled with the weight of feeling hopeless, or struggled through the pain of trying to heal a hurting relationship, or wrestled with the fear of a serious health issue

or felt like you were suffocating under the weight of broken dreams wondering what the future holds, you know that these things are very powerful forces in our lives. Most if not all of those post-It Notes represented what seemed like a dead end for the person writing them.

But friends, the Transfiguration of Jesus is the bold announcement that with God there are no more dead ends. With God there is no more darkness. With God there is hope and healing, grace and mercy, life and aliveness. When God shows up—because God always shows up—suddenly every dead-end becomes a royal highway leading right into the heart of Christ for whom anything is possible and nothing is impossible! The transfiguration of Jesus creates transformation in us!

ALL OF WHICH LEADS US TO AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: What is it in your life that needs transformation? For some of us it may be how we understand—or how we “see” Jesus. The disciples thought they knew Jesus. But with the transfiguration, they saw Jesus in a totally new light—no pun intended.

Maybe there’s a narrative in your life about who Jesus is and what “following Jesus” means and somehow all of that—for one reason or another just sucks the life right out of you. Maybe it’s been all about measuring up. Maybe it’s been all about fitting in. Maybe it’s been all about trying to jump through a series of hoops and rules and regulations. Maybe it’s been all about behaving, struggling to believe in an attempt to fit in and belong. Friends, that is not the narrative of the scriptures. Shame and guilt never led anyone to transformation. What leads to people to transformation is the power of love. And the transfiguration is the presence of God’s love in Jesus.

In that one moment of the transfiguration, it became very clear that Jesus of Nazareth was Jesus the Messiah—God’s son, God—in the flesh. No longer hidden, no longer “out there somewhere,” no longer disconnected from humankind, but fully present, fully alive, fully for us, fully in us, fully God. The transfiguration of Jesus creates transformation in us!

Second, because the transfiguration of Jesus creates transformation in us, things begin to stir. A movement begins, momentum increases, and expressions of the Kingdom of God remind us that God is up to something in the world, our world, in us. And that gets interesting!

It’s almost bizarre that the disciples who witnessed this incredible appearance of Jesus told absolutely no one else about it! Usually when we see something remarkable that stirs us, moves us, amazes us, we can’t wait to tell someone else. Our vacation goes up on Facebook. Our meal gets posted on Instagram or snapchat. When our team wins the game or the tournament, we #hashtag all over twitter.

But not here in Luke’s gospel. And not because the disciples didn’t have social media. They had social media—it was called “word-of-mouth” and it was very effective in the first century. But Jesus’ followers just went silent. And we’re left to wonder why. Were they afraid? Did they think others wouldn’t believe them or worse, think they were nuts? Did they think that their lives would somehow be in danger? What kept them in silence?

Perhaps it’s the same thing that keeps us silent about our experience of God. We attend a remarkable worship service but we go to work the next day and say nothing. We have this incredible experience at Student Ministry but when we return to school we remain silent. We sense God speaking to us through scripture or prayer, but we keep the experience to ourselves. Why is that? Are we afraid that we’ll be ridiculed? Perhaps this is an opportunity to be both challenged and equipped to speak or begin to learn to speak about our faith in ways that can be heard in the world around us.

We know this: stories transform us. When we tell stories about what God is up to in our lives, that’s transformational. When we tell the stories that connect the dots between faith and real life, that transfigures the hearts and lives of others. When we tell stories about how people have been impacted through Feed My Starving Children or Mission Outpost or the Dental Clinic, that’s transformational; that transfigures people’s hearts. When we tell stories about how something we learned in our small group gave us confidence, or how taking time to listen to a friend renewed their hope or what happened when you offered to pray for someone before they went into surgery—that’s transformational! That transfigures people’s hearts and lives!

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MOVING FORWARD? This is about telling the story of God’s transformational work in you. This is about being a part of the movement. This is about talking about the Spirit’s momentum. This is about expressing love and gratitude and hope and giving thanks that God is up to all kinds of things in the world—in your world—whether it’s evident or not. This is about recalling the movement and momentum of God among us.

So what I’d like to do today is take us back three weeks to a Post-It Note in a basket—whether you were here or not. Come back to the basket of God’s love for you. Come to the table, take another Post-It Note and do this: recall what it was that you wrote down three weeks ago. And then in an expression of faith, or hope or trust or however you want to understand it, write a word or phrase that expresses the transformation that you desire most, or the transformation that God is doing in your life. Perhaps it’s gratitude for how God is meeting you right here and now. Perhaps it’s love, hope, thanks, desire to be transformed...