

Scripture: Mark 9:2-9

Sermon Title: "Dazzling Reminders"

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When you have something important to remember, how do you remind yourself? There are certainly numerous ways to prompt yourself to remember something and we all find what works the best for us. I recall in high school, kids would often write on their arms to remember things – to call someone, to complete a certain assignment, and yes, from time-to-time, remind them of an answer for their test. Some people use those little white boards with dry erase markers on which to put important notices. With technology, you can set you phone to prompt you of an appointment or of something that you need to do at a certain time and it will vibrate or ding when the time has come. You can email yourself so that the next time you open your emails, you will find a reminder! Right now, my go-to way of offering myself reminders is through the old-fashioned post-it note. If there is something that I need to remember to do, I'll write it on a post-it note and stick it on my desk, or on my computer, somewhere I am bound to see it so that I don't forget that thing that I need to do. We often remind ourselves of the things that we need to do in our lives: pick up milk, call back so-and-so, make this appointment, do that chore, and so on. And yet, I believe that we need reminders about more than just what needs to get done. We need reminders that empower us, that strengthen us, that bring us joy and comfort – reminders that get us through the day, no matter what the day will hold.

In our Gospel reading for today, we hear of such a reminder that Peter, James, and John received atop a mountain where they journeyed with Jesus. A reminder that showed them just how special Jesus was, is, and forever will be. For up until this moment, they have been journeying with Jesus, learning from Jesus, seeing him do miraculous things, and they have been sent out to do wonderful things as well. So they knew he was powerful teacher and they knew he had authority from God, but they needed a reminder of just how awesome Jesus really was. For when they saw him transfigured

on that mountain top, changed before their very eyes into a dazzling, radiating image that can only be described as angelic, the most pure, so holy, they saw with their very eyes that Jesus was more than an ordinary man or simply a wise teacher. And then, with the appearance of Elijah and Moses, two messengers and change-agents of God, they witnessed that even the leaders of the past have come to follow Jesus – he is not just another messenger. And finally, to top it all off, from within the clouds, the voice of God saying, “this is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him.” And in their seeing and in their hearing, Peter, James, and John received a dazzling reminder of the glories of Jesus. A reminder that he was more than a man. A reminder that he was more than just another leader in a historical lineage of Israelite prophets for even the saints who went on to God before him came to follow him. A dazzling reminder that God is with Jesus every step of the way in the most special way, confirmed in the beautiful words “this is my Son, the Beloved”.

Now, this moment and reminder of the glories of Jesus, came at the perfect time. For from this moment, Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem and his fate on the cross await and advance. For soon, Peter, James, and John, who saw this dazzling reminder of the glories of God will also see palm waving as Jesus enters Jerusalem. They will soon sit with him at the Passover meal and hear the words that ring throughout history, “this is my body, given for you...my blood, shed for you.” They will soon see his body given and his blood shed as he is crucified. Their journey from the mountain where we find them today is one that will be filled with trials, one that will test faith, and one that will push the limits of hope. Yet, through it all, the moments on this mountain will linger with Peter, James, and John, providing a dazzling reminder that Jesus is glorious, and such glory, such beauty, such light cannot be overcome.

Beloved People of God, as we prepare to enter the season of Lent once more, we will begin the journey down this mountain, where we too in several weeks will encounter waving palms, broken bread, and the shadows of the cross. On this journey, we will witness the wonders and power of love. And like Peter, James, and John, we travel this

road with a dazzling reminder. Not only of that which we read about today, for we also know the wonders that lie beyond the cross. We know the blessed joy of Easter morning. So we do not embark on this journey alone – we do so with dazzling reminders- knowing the wonders of Jesus, the power of his love, and glory of God.

And as we begin this journey together as the church, I am also aware we too are all on our own journeys in life. Journeys that may bring their own challenges that we face daily and their own joys that we cherish. May the dazzling reminders of the blessedness of Jesus accompany each of us, not just in lent, not just on this journey to the cross, but on whichever roads we travel. And even when the journey feels daunting, when we question where God is, when we feel pushed to the limits of hope, remember that the one we follow, is God's beloved Son. Remember that the one we follow, faced death and overcame it. Remember that the one we follow, proved the strength of God's love, a bond unbreakable. However you need to remind yourself of this, do it! Write it on your arm, set you phone to remind you daily, put post notes all around you to remind you that we do not make this journey of lent and this journey of life alone.

May the glories of this day as we celebrate the radiant image of Jesus on the mountain and the glories that await, strengthen us to face all that this journey will hold. For we trust by faith, that blessed joy will come. So be it and may it be so. Amen.