

Glimpses of Glory. As we end the season of Epiphany and the stories of Jesus being revealed to the world we see this ultimate revelation given to the three closest disciples. The two figures representing the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) are glorified along with Jesus for these three to fully see if only for a moment. Some people had caught glorified glimpses of Moses and Elijah before:

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. (Exodus 34:29-30)

Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.’ Elisha said, ‘Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.’ He responded, ‘You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.’ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha kept watching and crying out, ‘Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!’ (2 Kings 2:6-16)

I have been blessed to catch glimpses in the faces of dying patients when I have been called to the hospital. Sometimes for just a moment they seem to see something invisible to the rest of us gathered around them. Peace and joy seems to illuminate their faces. I feel blessed whenever I witness it.

Don’t Just Do Something, Stand There. We often hear the reverse of that don’t we? That was Peter’s gut reaction as he blurts out to Jesus what sounds to me a request to Jesus to set up camp and stay a few days. From the reaction of Peter, he seemed to want to capture the moment and stay in the moment on the mountain top as long as possible. He and the other two could build little lean-tos for Jesus and the others to camp out for awhile. But in an instant it was over and time to go. There are times to stop and just stand in worship of God’s presence. I was at a district missions meeting this week and heard stories of people going on mission trips. There is a tendency for many to think they are going to do something – clean up after the flood or hurricane, or fix or build something. And though that is part of it, the main focus is to go to be in ministry with the people who are there and make relationships connecting the body of Christ. On Wednesday I have invited you to join me in a prayer vigil as we begin the season of Lent. Come to the prayer room or chapel or at home, not to do anything but just to be in the presence of God in prayer and be in a holy relationship with all for whom we pray.

Pray Tell. Please note that Jesus did not tell the disciples not to ever tell anyone, only not to tell until after his death and resurrection. We actually read a first-hand version of this experience in one of Peter’s letters to the early church: *We didn’t repeat crafty myths when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Quite the contrary, we witnessed his majesty with our own eyes. He received honor and glory from God the Father when a voice came to him from the magnificent glory, saying, “This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16-18)* What stories do we have to tell? Pray Tell.

I am reminded of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s last sermon. He delivered it April 3, 1968, on the eve of his assassination. He concluded his remarks that night with these prophetic words: *“I don’t know what will happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter with me now. Because I’ve been to the mountain top. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the promised land. And I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”* Have your eyes seen the glory? Have you caught even a glimpse? Pray tell. Alleluia and Amen.