

I Can See Right Through You

[Text - Matthew 17:1-9]

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March 2, 2014

The Transfiguration of Jesus is a strange, yet spectacular story, that takes place on a secluded mountaintop some 2,000 years ago. It's a story that is so other-worldly that it may seem to have little to do with your life or mine, today. Nevertheless, this story is essential in our understanding of how Jesus' earliest followers came to view and value him, his message, and his Messianic mission - his ministry as the Messiah [the *Christ*] - God's Anointed One. Therefore, in spite of its sci-fi-like strangeness, this story definitely deserves our complete and focused attention.

Regardless of what literally transpired on that mountain, these accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration are recorded in the Scriptures to tell us something profoundly significant about Jesus, and about Life itself.

In many ways, Jesus' life was an extremely humble one. He lived in a minor, rural region of the Roman Empire. He was a poor, traveling rabbi who associated primarily *with* the poor, the outcast and the underprivileged. Outwardly, Jesus' didn't display any form of worldly glamour or glory; but as we all know, his life had one of the most profound and lasting impacts of any life ever lived. And that's what the story of the Transfiguration seeks to reveal: that there's much more to Jesus than meets the eye. So in that regard, this story is as important as anything else written about Jesus; because it gives us a clear *vision* of his genuine identity. Jesus *is* the Beloved Child of God, through whom Divine Love and Grace fully and radiantly shine!

Perhaps that's where the real value of reflecting on the Transfiguration is to be found: not that we can explain it, or understand it; but because it reminds us of the importance of

having a *vision*. In our day-to-day routine, you and I can often find ourselves simply going through the motions. We look at things, but we don't really see them. We interact with other people, yet we fail to truly connect with them. The Transfiguration of Jesus helps remind us that there is a deeper purpose and reality in Life; and by *doing* so, can help us look for that deeper purpose and reality in our own lives. Because even though this story is extremely bizarre compared to our everyday experiences, what lies behind it, isn't completely foreign to you and me.

There are times in our lives, when we have that remarkable privilege of seeing a familiar situation or person, take on an altogether different and wonderful quality. We may have seen thousands of sunsets, but there's that one particular time when there was just something *more* to it. We've seen the faces of thousands of children, but in that one child's eyes it's as if we were beholding something totally transcendent. That experience may only last a brief moment; but in that moment, we see something, or someone, from a fresh and surprising perspective; and the realization of Life's deeper essence and meaning begins to arise within our consciousness. We realize that throughout our world, and throughout Creation - just below the primal surface - there is a Wholly Other [and Holy Other] Power and Presence which is *always* there, though we often fail to seek it or perceive it. And though these glimpses are just that - a quickly passing glimmer of insight - they remind us to look at Life from fresh and different perspectives. Those rare "Mountaintop Experiences" can inspire us to search for the deeper purpose and value in *all* of Life's experiences, and in all those living souls around us. They also remind us that each person we encounter - at his or her essential core - truly *is* a Beloved Child of God! And when you and I remember that, it makes a profoundly positive difference in the way we relate to one another.

This truly strange story of Jesus' Transfiguration can inspire us to consciously look for the true potential, and the best possibilities, in

each person we meet. It can even help us recognize that the strangest things that happen to us, or the strangers who show-up in our lives, often present us some of the most marvelous opportunities for new insights and personal growth. Of course, like Peter, James, and John, we can also respond to that which is strange or different or unconventional, with feelings of fear or suspicion or even dread; yet that need not be the case. Because like those early disciples, you and I can also experience that reassuring and transformative touch of Jesus Christ:
The One who invites us to “rise up and not be afraid.”
The One who encourages us to embrace Life’s tremendous mystery and diversity, with a spirit of openness, respect, and awe.
The One who graciously encourages us to move forward in our lives, with a renewed vision and a clear purpose.

In the Transfiguration, the genuine nature of Jesus as the Christ is briefly, yet clearly, recognized by his followers. They see him as the Beloved Child of God, through whom Divine Love and Grace fully and radiantly shine! And in that moment, Jesus himself has a renewed clarity of vision and purpose. It is *not* to stay enshrined upon that Mountaintop, but to go back down the mountain - down into the mix of humanity - down into the valley of loving service and self-giving sacrifice. It’s a path which leads Jesus steadily toward the Cross. Yet even that Cross - that horrible instrument of suffering and death - is itself *transfigured*, into a sure sign of Eternal Life and Undying Love.

For Jesus and for all of God’s beloved children, that inner Light of Divine Compassion and Grace inspires a truly transformative way of living:

Giving us strength in the midst of troubles;
Courage in the face of danger;

And a steadfast source of illumination through our deepest,
darkest valleys.

A light that not only shines for us, but that also shines *through* us.

A light which the darkness can never overcome.