

WHEN THE CLOUDS ROLL IN (MK 9:2-9; 2 Kings 2:1-2)

Given by the Rev. Corinne Hodges

Sun., February 22, 2009, St. John of the Cross, Bristol

- I. Story as young girl in the fields on a glorious summer day
 - A. When came time to leave, wanted to take part of it with me
 - B. Want to capture the special moments and times of our lives
 - C. Friend who just returned from trip and took 500 photos
 1. Missed everything outside of view
 2. As good as pictures were, could never really capture the moment
 - D. Perhaps not only can't we, but we are not supposed to

- II. Peter at Transfiguration—when Jesus gives Peter, James and John a glimpse of his divinity in the brightness and dazzling whiteness of his clothing
 - A. Wants to preserve it
 1. Plan to build three dwellings for Jesus, Elijah and Moses so they will never have to leave
 2. Picture the wheels turning in his head how is going to do this
 - a. Materials he is going to use
 - b. How to get them up mountain
 - c. Interrupts conversation and shares his vision/plan
 - B. Just as he starts to share his idea, clouds roll in, overshadowing them”
 1. From glorious white to darkness, fast
 2. From the cloud comes a voice, the voice of God
 3. Immediately Peter is silenced and afraid
 - C. Peter is stopped dead in his tracks
 1. God woke him up, out of his strategizing and vision
 2. Things were not going to happen as Peter had planned
 - a. Jesus, Elijah and Moses were not going to stay there forever
 - b. In fact Jesus would only be with him a little longer
 3. Peter could not capture the moment; he was not supposed to

- III. This message is pertinent to many of us today—can relate to Peter
 - A. Across the country, many people had a vision of what life would be like
 - B. Clouds roll in and suddenly everything has changed
 1. Most of us do not welcome clouds
 2. Clouds make us stay inside and change our plans
 3. Cloudy/stormy days can be discouraging
 - C. Great fear
 - D. Unknown, different reality
 1. Not the one we expected or wanted
 2. Wish we could go back to those better days/preserve them
 3. But this reality is the one that is here

- IV. Two things that make all the difference in cloudy scene
 - A. God's voice. The fact that God's voice can be heard amidst the clouds is vitally important. In times that seem desperate and hopeless, God is there. On days when you can't find anything to pick you up or look forward to, God is with you. In the turbulent sign of a storm and change, God is ever present. Sunshine and brightness are not the only conditions in which God exists
 - B. Equally important is God's message: LISTEN!
 - 1. When times get really tough, when our dreams and visions get shattered, just like Peter, we need to listen—really listen for God

- V. A couple conversations last week about listening
 - A. Trying so hard to communicate and understand God (readings, writings, prayer, church)—take over life, frustrating, actually distancing from God
 - B. A parishioner--same kind of thing (Bible reading, prayer yet no transformational moment)
 - C. Sometimes we work too hard trying to make something happen
 - 1. Like Peter, we have a plan of how things should be, we have a vision, expectations
 - 2. When we don't experience a transformational moment, we are discouraged
 - 3. Can all that work get in the way? Perhaps God can't communicate with us because we are so caught up in these works/plans
 - 4. Perhaps we are so busy doing all the talking
 - D. Maybe by setting all that aside, we are better able to listen—Peter needed to be told to listen and most of us probably need to be told as well

- VI. Lent begins this Wed., Ash Wed.
 - A. Not just a coincidence that time when many of us put things down/aside
 - 1. Give up unhealthy habits that stand in the way of us and God
 - B. By putting certain things down, we create space in our lives and there is the potential for us to become better listeners
 - C. How can we become better listeners this Lent? (better ? than sacrifice)
 - 1. What do we need to set aside to create some space to hear?
 - 2. Perhaps we need to pick something up, like the Bible or BCP?
 - 3. Where do you do your best listening to God? In what place? At what time of day?

- VII. My friends, there are many clouds circling around us, no doubt. But I pray this Lent that we will be able to listen and hear God's voice. And that we will discover that God is with us no matter what the conditions.