

**“WHEN PICTURES BECOME WINDOWS”**

**A SERMON BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
(9:2-9) AND PRESENTED FOR ORLEAN UMC ON  
FEBRUARY 14, 2021----**

**FOR MOST OF US ANYWAY THERE ARE TIMES IN  
OUR LIVES WHEN WE LOOK AROUND AND  
WONDER, “IS THIS ALL THERE IS?” -----**

**SOMETIMES IT’S JUST A PASSING QUESTION,  
OTHER TIMES IT’S FOR A SEASON..... WE LOOK  
AT OUR LIFE, OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WE  
WANT MORE..... THERE IS A RESTLESSNESS, A  
SEARCHING, AND LONGING FOR SOMETHING  
ELSE..... SOME CALL IT A MID-LIFE CRISIS.**

**IT CAN MAKE US DO CRAZY THINGS – THIS  
SEARCHING AND SEEKING. WE GET A NEW JOB,  
A NEW CAR, A NEW RELATIONSHIP. MAYBE WE  
TAKE UP A NEW HOBBY, GO ON A TRIP, OR  
WORK EXTRA HOURS..... BUT IF WE ARE REALLY  
HONEST....NOT MUCH CHANGES.**

***IT IS NOT ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE.  
IT'S ABOUT US. THE RESTLESSNESS, THE  
DESIRE FOR SOMETHING MORE, GENERALLY  
MEANS THAT WE HAVE BEEN LIVING LIFE AT THE  
SHALLOW END OF THE POOL.... LIFE AND  
RELATIONSHIPS HAVE BECOME SUPERFICIAL.  
WE HAVE BEEN SKIMMING ACROSS THE  
SURFACE.***

**IN SOME WAYS *LIFE AT THE SURFACE* IS EASIER,  
MORE EFFICIENT, ENCOURAGED AND  
REWARDED BY MUCH OF THE WORLD TODAY. IT  
FAILS, HOWEVER, TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE  
THAT THE WORLD IS ALREADY TRANSFIGURED  
AND CREATION IS FILLED WITH THE DIVINE  
LIGHT.**

***LIFE ON THE SURFACE* KEEPS US JUDGING THE  
CIRCUMSTANCES. WE LOOK AT THE OUR  
CIRCUMSTANCES AS A PICTURE. IF IT IS PRETTY,  
PLEASING, AND SHOWS US WHAT WE WANT TO  
SEE THEN GOD IS GOOD AND LIFE IS AS IT  
SHOULD BE.**

WHEN WE DON'T SEE WHAT WE WANT THEN WE  
OFTEN LOOK FOR A NEW PICTURE. THE  
RESTLESS SEARCHING, THE LONGING FOR  
MORE, THE DESIRE FOR MEANING ARE NOT,  
HOWEVER, USUALLY ANSWERED BY CHANGED  
CIRCUMSTANCES. THE ANSWER IS FOUND IN  
DEPTH, INTIMACY, AND THE VULNERABILITY OF  
THE INTERIOR JOURNEY.

WE DO NOT NEED TO SEE NEW THINGS. WE  
NEED TO SEE THE SAME OLD THINGS WITH NEW  
EYES.....WE DO NOT NEED TO HEAR A  
DIFFERENT VOICE. WE NEED TO HEAR THE SAME  
OLD VOICE WITH DIFFERENT EARS.

**WE DO NOT NEED TO ESCAPE THE**  
**CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIFE. WE NEED TO BE**  
**MORE FULLY PRESENT TO THOSE**  
**CIRCUMSTANCES..... WHEN THIS HAPPENS LIFE**  
**IS NO LONGER LIVED AT THE SURFACE. THESE**  
**ARE THE TRANSFIGURED MOMENTS, MOMENTS**  
**WHEN THE PICTURE OF OUR LIFE HAS BECOMES**  
**A WINDOW INTO A NEW WORLD AND WE COME**  
**FACE TO FACE WITH THE GLORY OF GOD.**

**MOST OF US, I THINK, SEEK GOD IN THE**  
**CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE. WE WANT GOD TO**  
**SHOW UP, BE PRESENT, AND DO SOMETHING.**  
**THIS IS THE GOD WHO DOES.**

***THIS IS THE GOD DESCRIBED IN MARK'S GOSPEL UP TO THE POINT OF TODAY'S READING. WE MIGHT THINK ABOUT THIS AS THE FIRST PART OF THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY. IT IS THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERING GOD IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IS WHAT THE DISCIPLES HAVE BEEN DOING.***

***THEY HAVE SEEN JESUS CAST OUR DEMONS, HEAL PETER'S MOTHER IN LAW, AND CURE THE SICK OF CAPERNAUM. HE'S CLEANSED THE LEPER AND MADE A WITHERED HAND NEW AND STRONG. PARALYTICS NOW WALK, THE BLIND SEE, AND THOUSANDS ARE FED. THIS IS THE GOD ABOUT WHOM PEOPLE***

**TALK, THE GOD THAT GETS “LIKES” AND  
“SHARES” ON FACEBOOK.**

**AT SOME POINT WE MUST, HOWEVER, BEGIN TO DISCOVER THE GOD WHO IS BEYOND THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IS THE GOD WHO IS. THIS IS THE SECOND PART OF THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY..... JESUS IS LEADING PETER, JAMES AND JOHN, UP THE MOUNTAIN TO DISCOVER THE GOD WHO IS BEYOND CIRCUMSTANCES. HERE THEIR PICTURES OF LIFE’S CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BECOME WINDOWS BY WHICH THEY MOVE INTO THE DEPTHS OF GOD’S LIFE, GOD’S LIGHT, AND GOD’S LOVE.**

**THERE ON THE MOUNTAIN THEY SAW JESUS  
“TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM, AND HIS  
CLOTHES BECAME DAZZLING WHITE, SUCH AS  
NO ONE ON EARTH COULD BLEACH THEM.” THE  
CLOUD OVERSHADOWED THEM AND THE  
FATHER’S VOICE SPOKE OF HIS BELOVED SON.  
PETER WANTS TO BUILD DWELLING PLACES. HE  
WANTS TO FRAME JESUS, ELIJAH, AND MOSES.  
“IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE,” HE SAYS. HE  
WANTS TO PRESERVE IT. HE WANTS TO TAKE A  
PICTURE.**



***PICTURES, HOWEVER, ARE STATIC. ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION OUR PICTURES OF LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES BECOME WINDOWS THROUGH WHICH WE STEP INTO A NEW WORLD, A NEW WAY OF SEEING, A NEW WAY OF HEARING, AND NEW WAY OF BEING. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED FOR PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN.***

**JESUS DID NOT SUDDENLY LIGHT UP AND BECOME SOMETHING HE WAS NOT. NO, THEIR EYES WERE HEALED AND OPENED SO THEY COULD SEE JESUS AS HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN. THE VOICE IN THE CLOUD WAS NOT NEW.**

THEIR EARS WERE OPENED AND THEY HEARD  
THE VOICE THAT HAS NEVER CEASED SPEAKING  
FROM THE BEGINNING. THE TRANSFIGURATION  
IS AS MUCH ABOUT THEM AS IT IS JESUS.

WHENEVER OUR PICTURE OF LIFE'S  
CIRCUMSTANCES BECOMES A WINDOW INTO  
NEW LIFE WE STAND IN A TRANSFIGURED  
MOMENT. CIRCUMSTANCES HAVEN'T CHANGED.  
WE HAVE CHANGED AND THAT SEEMS TO  
CHANGE EVERYTHING.

THOSE TRANSFIGURED MOMENTS ARE ALL  
AROUND.

**EVERY ONE OF US COULD TELL A STORY ABOUT  
STEPPING BACK FROM THE PICTURE OF OUR  
LIFE, SEEING WITH NEW EYES, LISTENING WITH  
DIFFERENT EARS, AND DISCOVERING A WINDOW  
THAT OPENED INTO ANOTHER WORLD AND  
ANOTHER WAY OF BEING.**

**MAYBE IT WAS THE DAY YOU REVEALED TO  
ANOTHER PERSON THE SECRET YOU HAD  
CARRIED FOR YEARS. IN TELLING THE SECRET  
THE PICTURE OF YOUR LIFE AS ONE OF GUILT  
AND SHAME BECAME AN OPEN WINDOW  
THROUGH WHICH YOU STEPPED. THE DARKNESS  
GAVE WAY TO LIGHT, THE CHAINS FELL OFF,  
AND FORGIVENESS OVERCAME SIN.**

**WE ALL HAVE OR MOST CERTAINLY WILL  
EXPERIENCE THE DEATH OR LOSS OF LOVED  
ONES----AND FOR SOME OF US THIS PICTURE OF  
DEATH AND LOSS BECOMES A WINDOW  
THROUGH WHICH WE STEP INTO THE MYSTERY  
OF LIFE ---HOPE AND RESURRECTION.....OR  
MAYBE THINK ABOUT THE DAY THAT YOU HELD  
YOUR CHILD FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME. YES, IT  
WAS A PICTURE OF A NEWBORN BUT IT WAS  
ALSO A WINDOW THROUGH WHICH YOU  
STEPPED AND WERE FOREVER CHANGED. YOU  
EXPERIENCED A NEW VOCATION AS A PARENT.**

**YOU BECAME A PART OF THE MYSTERY OF  
CREATION. THE LORD'S GLORY SURELY SHONE  
AS MUCH IN YOUR HANDS THAT DAY AS IT DID  
ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION 2000  
YEARS AGO.**

**WE OFTEN WANT TO GO BACK TO THOSE  
TRANSFIGURED MOMENTS. WE ARE TEMPTED TO  
BUILD DWELLINGS PLACES FOR THOSE  
MOMENTS.....BUT BOOTHS, DWELLING PLACES,  
WILL ONLY KEEP US IN THE PAST..... TO THE  
EXTENT WE CLING TO THE PAST WE CLOSE  
OURSELVES TO THE FUTURE GOD OFFERS. SO  
JESUS, PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN CAME BACK  
DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.**

THEY COULD NOT STAY THERE BUT NEITHER DID  
THEY LEAVE THE MOUNTAIN. THEY TOOK IT WITH  
THEM. IT IS WHAT WOULD CARRY THEM  
THROUGH THE PASSION AND CRUCIFIXION TO  
THE RESURRECTION.

TRANSFIGURED MOMENTS CHANGE US, SUSTAIN  
US, PREPARE US, ENCOURAGE US, AND GUIDE  
US INTO THE FUTURE REGARDLESS OF THE  
CIRCUMSTANCES WE FACE..... THEY SHOW US  
WHO WE ARE..... WE ARE THE TRANSFIGURED  
PEOPLE OF GOD.

**OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE A TRANSFIGURED  
WORLD. OPEN YOUR EARS AND HEAR THE  
TRANSFIGURING VOICE. OPEN YOUR HEART AND  
BECOME A TRANSFIGURED LIFE.**

**EVERY PICTURE OF LIFE IS AN OPEN WINDOW  
THAT SAYS, "NO, THIS IS NOT ALL THERE IS."**

**PRAISE GOD AND MAY IT BE SO FOR YOU AND  
FOR ME.....AMEN**