

“The Never-Changing Jesus Christ Changes Us”  
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How often have we heard the saying, “The only constant is change.” Perhaps the origin of this saying can be traced to Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 500 BC), who is quoted by Plato as saying, “Nothing endures but change.”

At Christ Anglican, our Gospel lesson on Sunday was Luke 9:28-36, which is the account of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this passage, Jesus went up on a mountain with three of his disciples, and there--right in front of Peter, James, and John-- Jesus was changed and transformed, with his face shining brightly and his clothes dazzling white. Along with Jesus, Elijah and Moses appear as well – radiantly shining.

Ever impetuous Peter wants to erect three tents, or booths, perhaps to memorialize the event or to at least give some honor to Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. What this reveals is that Peter doesn’t fully understand Jesus’ status, as he attempts to put Jesus on *equal* footing with Elijah and Moses. A bright cloud appears and God the Father says, “*This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased, listen to him.*” For the disciples, this verifies that *Jesus is the Son of God* and unequivocally clarifies his divinity (see Daniel 7:13-14).

In the light of the subsequent events of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, we are invited to take comfort in looking at and believing in Jesus in the same way God directs the three disciples. Jesus is more than a good teacher, more than a wise prophet, more than a lawgiver. He becomes the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is not just a messiah, but the only Messiah.

What are some broader implications of the Transfiguration? Perhaps one lesson the Transfiguration demonstrates for us is that in spite of all the change we experience, there is one constant. There is someone who doesn’t change: Jesus (Hebrews 13:8). The Transfiguration, by revealing Jesus’ divine glory, reassures us in this and encourages us, because it reveals to us who Jesus really is. Jesus was 100% divine and 100% human. There is no God like Jesus nor will there ever be one like Him.

The change that comes from the Christian Scriptures is that as we follow Jesus, we are empowered and transformed by the hope that lives in us (see 2 Peter 1:16-21). The change (the metamorphosis) that Jesus wants to do in us is from the inside out. By rightly understanding who Jesus is, we can remain unchanged from all forces attempting to change us from the outside in: technology, science, religious pluralism, materialism, enlightened social objectivism, postmodern subjectivity, and identity confusion such as biological sex.

In the epistle reading from Sunday, taken from Peter’s second letter, he reveals that the church in Rome was headed for difficult times of persecution (2 Peter 1:13-21). He tells

the church that being an eyewitness to the Transfiguration – recalling the event of seeing the full majesty of the Lord in his glory – stuck with him through his entire life. Peter the uneducated fisherman was transformed into Peter the disciple who ultimately gave his life for his faith. May Peter's metamorphosis inspire us to allow the glory of the Lord to transform us so that Jesus shines ever brighter in us.