

ORDINARY TIME : EXTRA-ORDINARY DAYS

HALFWAY, THE REALLY REAL and US

Mark 9:2-9

- i. This story today is more like an episode out of Netflix's series, *Stranger Things*. Children discover an upside-down world that only they can see. Anyone who sees it, sees it as a gift.
- ii. This is precisely what the transfiguration of Jesus is. A gift given to those who can see it. Not everyone is allowed to see this strange new world that runs parallel with what we actually traverse daily.
- iii. I think we ought to dig into the story and go deep today as a roadmap to our upcoming Lenten Journey, Where Your Heart is.

I. DIGGING DOWN ONE FOOT INTO THE SOIL: HALFWAY

- a. This story is situated halfway between the baptism of Jesus and his resurrection.
- b. Notice the similarities between baptism and transfiguration: God speaking from a cloud saying, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased" and "Listen to him!"
- c. But listen to what? What has been said and will continue to be said.
- d. This is a theophany—when God tears open the veil between the seen and unseen.
- e. It is frightening, awful, frightened to the point where now words can be spoken by Peter, James and John.
- f. This moment does not set aside Judaism, it extends it.
- g. Halfway we are confronted with important questions: Who is Jesus? Who are we? Who does Jesus say that he is? Who does Jesus say that we are? Who does it tell us we are?

II. DIGGING DOWN TWO FEET INTO THE SOIL: THE REALLY REAL

- a. After Jesus was changed into "dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them" and Moses and Elijah are gone. Jesus says, "don't tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead."
- b. Huh? Risen from the dead, what does this mean?
- c. It is a foreshadowing that Jesus didn't only die to purge the world from my sin and yours. He died because the really real world is at play and the power of evil sought to destroy his witness to nonviolent love, justice, and truth. His death and resurrection revealed not only the evil of evil but showed the really real transforming power of divine love that does not dominate as much as challenge, expose, and seek to transform it.
- d. The scandal of the resurrection is that the powers we think are all powerful are simply straw people, paper Mache, wineskins too brittle to be elastic enough to hold anything of importance. It is insubstantial.

III. DIGGING OWN THREE FEET INTO THE SOIL: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

- a. At this hallway moment it is a call to choose the really real world of the spiritual-political realm of God and be participants in non-violent love, justice of the upside down and right side up world of the really real.
- b. We ought to create space in our community to share new stories when we encounter the gift of transfiguration and how they lead us to be more relevant, relational and bold toward the Jesus way.
- c. Will you? Choose the Really real way of God today?