

Last Epiphany

February 15, 2015

Rev. Ken Wratten at St. Stephen's, San Jose

2 Kings 2:1-12

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9 The Transfiguration

“Hove to”; back the jib, tiller all the way to leeward.

The lesson from my instructor was not to dazzle, but to empower me to sail safely. What if we looked at the events of Epiphany through that lens; that God's intention was not to dazzle us with Elijah's ascension into heaven with a chariot of flame, pulled by horses of flame; but instead it was intended to validate the prophetic ministry of Elijah, and to empower the ministry of Elisha, who would continue Elijah's work.

In the Transfiguration story, Peter was dazzled by the vision of Jesus' face and clothing, and the appearance of Elijah and Moses with Jesus on that mountain top. Peter wanted to memorialize the event by building booths. But Jesus did not even acknowledge the offer. Memorializing was not what Jesus wanted when he invited Peter, James and John to join him that day. Jesus needed to empower these disciples who still thought of him as a rabbi, a teacher. He needed to empower them for their future work as leaders of the church.

At the first Epiphany, a star travelled across the heavens, guiding wise men from a far off land. It was easy to be dazzled by the miracle of God moving the heavens in order to show that Jesus was sent for the benefit of the whole world. And this event empowers us now, through the perspective of knowing that that child grew up to become our savior. We are empowered because we can understand the divine action that has been shown to us.

The epiphany of the transformation is the other book end of Epiphany season. The transfiguration of Jesus is certainly dazzling, but it also provides empowerment for us today, as we recognize the man Jesus being revealed as the divine Son of God.

There are large dazzling moments that we experience occasionally, including the baptism we will have in a few minutes for Charlie Goulart. Baptism is about empowerment for life. It reveals and offers God's presence in Charlie's life, to help him with the decisions he will face in life.

There are quieter epiphanies;

Prayer, Bible Study, Meditation, Centering

Giving the gift of a prayer shawl.  
Warm coats and hats to the homeless

The Christian life we share in this faith community is about us looking for transformation epiphanies in ourselves; it is about helping in the transformation of each other, and it is about praying for and taking action for the transformation of the world. We have been placed here and empowered by God to accomplish just that.

Through our decision to be followers of Jesus Christ, God lives in our hearts, and we are being transformed into his image. Our mission as a faith family is to bring possibilities of divine action and change into other people's lives. We need to create for ourselves quiet moments for listening to God. We need to share our own experiences of having glimpses of God's glory. We need to make God's epiphanies our way of life. Amen.