

## **Bennochy Church: 19th February 2012**

The truly amazing does not happen very often or it would cease to be amazing. Those special moments of life which are etched indelibly into our memories. Easily recalled, shared and often acting as a source of inspiration in the darker moments of life. Moments that bring an inward smile or catch us off guard with a tear. They encompass our emotions, our physical being and the spiritual. Amazing moments engage every part of our being and our senses are heightened.

There were three privileged men, taken on a special journey, the mountain was high and maybe physically the journey took its toll and they wondered what was going on here, where is Jesus taking us and why? On that mountain, Peter, James and John saw Jesus transformed. It was a glimpse of the post resurrection Jesus. Not that long ago, they had heard the incredulous words, from Jesus own lips, that he was to die like a criminal. This was hard to take, their Messiah, to be killed like that. Surely not! More than words were now required to show that something else lay beyond death. In the transformed Jesus, they would see, maybe not fully understand till later, Christ's victory over death.

Unless you had been there and even then I suspect, you would not really know what actually happened and what those men witnessed, not only Jesus, but the presence of Elijah and Moses. Both expected by the Jewish nation to return before the end of time. Was this a vision, a hallucination, a miracle? We will never know.

The scriptures are full of great events that have happened on high places. Moses, who climbed Mount Sinai to receive the Law of God, a moment that lay at the very heart of God's relationship with his people, where God first revealed his glory. Moses was there. If the glory of Moses was temporary and eventually faded, Jesus, here identified as the 'second

Moses', had a glory all of his own. His 'Exodus' would be much greater, not a journey through sand to a physical land, but a journey to new life. If Moses represents the Law, then Elijah represents the prophets and he too was there with Jesus.

We still use the image of being down in the depths to describe the low moments of life and the 'mountain top experience' of times when we have felt close to God. Martin Luther King "*I have been...*". Great things happened on mountain tops. They were special places.

In steps the bold Peter, so recently the Peter of confession and rejection at CP. The others seem to be too frightened to say anything. We can understand that. He suggests the strange action of constructing three tents. In the midst of this amazing event, is that the best you can come up with Peter! Even setting aside how he was going to make them on the top of a mountain, did he just say the first thing that came into his head? Maybe we have been there, met the famous person or had to say something at a special occasion. We dry up or we make no sense! What was Peter trying to say? Was it something about the wanderings of Israel in the desert, where God lived in a tent? The great thing is, tents are no longer required! God dwells in Christ. Christ is the head of the church and his spirit lives in us.

But before either Jesus could respond or Peter get to work, the miracle continues in the form of a cloud, the symbolic presence of the glory of God, and God's voice is heard, Same as Exodus story at Mt Sinai and the baptism of Jesus. Again, words of affirmation of who Jesus is. God is here confirming what Peter had declared at Caesarea Philippi. This is, Jesus, Son of God, Messiah.

In a flash it is all over. Only Jesus remains, the Law and the prophets have gone. Amazing moments can be like that, you catch just a glimpse and hard

as you try you can never experience that moment as it was, it is gone forever, living only in our memories. What did they feel, those men on the mountain top. How did they share their emotions? What did they want to say to their friends?

They are given no choice. Jesus frustrates their desire to share what they had experienced, for just as to the evil spirit in Mark 1 and to the disciples at CP, he says to Peter, James and John, don't tell anyone until I have risen from death. Do you not think they would have been bursting to tell the other disciples! I wonder if there are special moments of God's presence that are only for us. To be held closely for they would not be so amazing for others?

Jesus has been raised from death, we have no such frustrations, the message of Jesus is there to transform lives. A foretaste of the Kingdom of God to come. Amen.