

St John & St Stephen's Church, Reading, 6th August 2023, The Transfiguration of Our Lord
Luke 9:28-36

Plugged in and switched on



So, I wonder if all of the young people would like to come down here and have a look at this thing here! First of all, have a good look at it and be quiet! Don't say anything...yet. Just look. Ok, now, imagine that perhaps you are trying to describe what you see to someone who can't see it: perhaps to someone that you are talking to on the phone. How would you describe this? OK, not bad. Now, having had a good look at it, can you guess what it does?

Well, let's see now...Can someone plug it in...how do you think it turns on, whatever it is? Ah yes, press the button – wow! It lights up! Try pressing it again...and again...and again. Did anybody think that might happen? No?

Well, we might just see if anybody actually knows what this is for...yes, it's called a light box, and it produces light of a particular kind – in fact, daylight. People who get sad and gloomy in the winter months when it's dark and the days are short sometimes find it helps them to sit in front of bright daylight. But that's not actually the point of my talk!

Now, I wonder if anybody can remember anything about the bible reading that we had a few minutes ago... It's a strange passage, isn't it? Jesus goes up a mountain with 3 of his disciples to pray. While he is praying, his appearance completely changed: it says that his clothes became dazzling white and his face *shone like the sun* (that's what it says in Matthew's gospel). It was almost as if...he had a light bulb inside him that someone plugged in and switched on (turn light on). Hey, wait a minute, isn't that sort of what happened?

Then a cloud came down – who has been on a mountain when a cloud came down? You literally have no idea where you are or which way to go – I'm guessing that the disciples felt like that. What is happening? What do I do? Where am I? And then, just to add to the strangeness of the moment, a voice from nowhere: *'This is my Son, my Chosen: listen to him!'* It was the voice of God. I wonder how you would have felt if you had been there? Terrified, probably! How can we understand what the disciples saw and heard? Perhaps it was like this: *they saw Jesus with the light on.* They saw him in His *glory*. They saw Him in a very new way. I don't think they ever forgot that.

Well, what do we do with that? Well, there may be times when we come to see Jesus in a new way – perhaps during worship, perhaps when we're praying, perhaps up on a mountain top, perhaps even during a sermon! Hang on to those moments, don't forget them: they're precious! I wonder if you can think of a moment when *you* saw Jesus in a new way? What difference did that make to you?

Then...let's see what we make of this. I don't think what happened up on the mountain is just for us to point at and say 'Wow! That proves Jesus is someone really special! Amazing!' – and then go home and forget about it, kind of, leave it up on the mountain. There's something more here. I think we're meant to shine too. Don't we say that about people, sometimes? That person – there's something about them – they shine! Hard to put your finger on, isn't it? But you know it when you see it. Sometimes that person might be you or me. We are meant to be like that: meant to be like Jesus, even if only a little bit. There are 3 places in the bible where Jesus is actually called *our brother* (Hebrews 2:11, Romans 8:29, Mark 3:34). If we have a brother (or a sister!) then we are certain to be like them in some ways (even if we don't like it!). Listen to these words written by our old friend, St Paul: *'All of us...seeing the glory of the Lord...are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another'* and here: *'For it is the God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'* (2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:6)

So. Let's make sure that we too are plugged in...and light switched on! It is our *destiny*, our *birthright* in baptism to be like Jesus, and to shine like Him. What would it be like for you to shine for Jesus?

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