

Transfiguration - 2023

A Coming Attraction

You go into the movie theatre, find a seat that's suitable, an image appears on the screen. It is not the film you came to see. It is the preview of coming attractions, a brief glimpse of the highlights of a film opening soon. The moviemakers and theater owners hope the preview will pique your interest enough to make you want to come back and see the whole film.

On the Mount of the Transfiguration, Peter, James and John, the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, were given a preview of coming attractions.

And today, on the Festival of the Transfiguration, so, too, are we - a splendid preview of Jesus radiant in divine glory, his mortal nature brilliantly though only momentarily transfigured; a dazzling preview of his divinity, unalloyed and perfectly pure, shining in glory like the very sun. A sneak preview, in other words, of Easter, the triumphant climax of the epic love story between God and humankind. (by Mark WM. Radecke from *God in Flesh Made Manifest*, CSS Publishing Company)

Describe That Person Theologically

In order to become a minister in most denominations, a ministerial candidate must be examined and tested theologically. The church has a right and an obligation to know if a person is theologically sound before authorizing ordination, so theological questions are asked. I heard recently about a veteran minister who always asks the same theological question of every potential minister; indeed, he has been asking this question of every candidate for over 30 years.

He begins by asking the candidate to look out the window. The puzzled examinee peers out the window, and the old minister adds, "Tell me when you see a person out there."

"I see one," the candidate will haltingly announce.

"Do you know that person personally?"

"No, sir."

"Good. Now, my question is this: Will you please describe that person theologically?"

In three decades of experience in asking that question, the seasoned minister has found that the candidates tend to give one of two different answers. Some will say something like, "That person is a sinner in need of the redemption of Jesus Christ." Others, however, will respond, "Whether they know it or not, that person is a child of God, loved and upheld by the grace of God in Jesus Christ."

"I suppose," this minister reflects, "that, technically, both of these answers are theologically correct. But it is my experience that those who give the second answer make the better ministers."

The reason, of course, is that they have the gift of "transfiguration discernment." They are able to see people in the present tense, in the middle of their circumstances, but they are able to see

more than just the present tense. They can also see them as they were at the beginning of creation and as they will be in God's future -- a beloved child of God. (by Thomas G. Long from *Whispering the Lyrics*, CSS Publishing Company)

Listening

I would hate to have a hard count of how many times I have interrupt people in conversation and how many times I jumped ahead with my thoughts expressing the wrong conclusion to someone else's words. We miss so much in life because we will not listen.

Writer Charles Swindoll once found himself with too many commitments in too few days. He got nervous and tense about it.

"I was snapping at my wife and our children, choking down my food at mealtimes, and feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions through the day," he recalled in his book *Stress Fractures*. "Before long, things around our home started reflecting the patter of my hurry-up style. It was become unbearable.

"I distinctly remember after supper one evening, the words of our younger daughter, Colleen. She wanted to tell me something important that had happened to her at school that day. She began hurriedly, 'Daddy, I wanna tell you somethin' and I'll tell you really fast.' "Suddenly realizing her frustration, I answered, 'Honey, you can tell me-- and you don't have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly.' "I'll never forget her answer: 'Then listen slowly.'" (Adapted from *Bits & Pieces*, June 24, 1993, pp. 13-14)

Heck of a Place to Lose a Cow

Southern Utah folklore still enshrines stories about Ebenezer Bryce, a cattleman who used to run his herds early in this century on land that is now Bryce Canyon National Park. The canyon he used is actually the face of a high plateau, carved by wind and water into fantastic, colorful sandstone castles and cathedrals. Few people can stand on the canyon's rim, look down at the majestic scene below and fail to sense awe and inspiration.

Once, Bryce was asked what it was like to have spent his working life in a setting of such overwhelming natural beauty. The cattleman replied: "It is one heck of a place to lose a cow."

You might think this as proof of the man's dedication to his work, but it is probably more accurate to lay the remark to his inability to perceive the majesty of the place. Too often we are blind to the grandeur, beauty, and wonder of life. It is easy to miss--we don't listen slowly enough!