



Personal Service for Sunday 14th February 2021

As you read this service remember you are part of a worshipping community, gathered in different places but in unity with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and each other. You are special and you are welcomed, by God, into His holy presence just as were Peter, James and John as they witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus.

Hymns and Psalms. 505, StF 34, MP 529 O Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Prayers of praise, thanksgiving and repentance.

Lord we come to you and we wait to see the wonders that you have prepared for us. The wonder of water, the simplest of molecules. The staggering immensity of the star cloaked night sky. The comforting wonder of your Holy word. The life giving wonders of food, homes, and medicines. The eternal wonder of your grace, the grace that sent the prophets, the disciples and apostles to lead your searching people to you persisting even when they were not listening or obeying. The grace that did not withhold the life of your Son when we needed redemption and had no way of achieving it for ourselves. WE come before you, God our Father and we are so grateful that we can step out of our everyday lives, and, join all the saints in your holy light.

We thank you, Father, for all your gifts. Pause. Think. Thank the Lord for all his personal gifts to you. We thank you for your truth in a fake news world. For your everlasting hope in a world of despair and unbelief. For your victory over the continuing power of sin. For the promise of redemption seen in the scar ravaged body of your son, our lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for unending love to us and all our fellow men. We thank you that you are our true Father. Amen.

For the times when we join with the voices of doom and gloom – we ask for your forgiveness. For the times when we allow the cares of the world to overwhelm us, without trusting ourselves to your care and provision - we ask for your forgiveness. For the times when we are irritated by our own situation, and forget how privileged we actually are - we ask your forgiveness. For the times when we don't want to listen to You or your word – we ask your forgiveness.

In Christ we see the beauty of your world and your word. In Christ we see the true light that shines through every possible darkness. In Christ we see your face shining down on our world. In Him we are forgiven. In

Him we are complete. Thank you for giving him to us sinners and, through him, calling us your children. Thank you Father. Amen.

The readings for today.

2 Kings chapter 2 verses 1- 12.

Mark chapter 9 verses 2 – 9.

The Address.

Both of today's reading could be called 'Wow' readings. They talk of events that could have walked straight from the pages of a science fiction novel. They speak of things that only someone with a really magnificent imagination could have made up. They lead us in to the presence of our awesome God. Not things that normal human beings, like ourselves, could ever experience. Are you sure? We all have moments that make us stand and think. Moments that, for a very brief span of time, make us feel that we are the most privileged person on earth. Moments that make us say "Wow!" Nature has the most amazing way of doing that. Here are a few that come to mind and, I am sure, you could add your own to the list. Seeing the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights, not in a far flung corner of Norway but over the rooftops of Leeds. Even Paul the Weatherman didn't predict that. It was a few years ago now but I still get a shiver of delight at the memory. Others include seeing comets, otters on a Scottish beach, dolphins swimming alongside a ferry, birds of prey in the wild, the night sky seen when gazing through darkness unpolluted by street lights, tasting the water of a Dales stream. So many others could be listed but they are personal to me and what delights me may not delight you. Perhaps you could pause for a few moments and think of some of your own. The feelings those memories arouse are so very special. If your wonders are of the natural world maybe a short prayer of thanks would be appropriate.

So to the natural, and, the supernatural combining in our Bible readings for today. Death would have been the natural order for Elijah but God had one last plan for him. One last chance for Elijah's life to the bear witness to the miraculous power of his God. There needed to be a witness, someone to record the occasion and there was. The faithful companion, and soon to be successor, Elisha. The one who would never leave his mentor. We hear echoes of Peter's vow to Jesus in his promises. We hear the same denial of the inevitable in Elisha's response to the prospect of his master's departure from this earth. The prophets

wanted to convince him, or maybe they were just taunting him but he closed his mind to their truths. He didn't want his journey, with Elijah, to end. We all hang on to people at some point in our lives, even when we have no choice but to let them go be it to university, marriage or, sadly, death. We can empathise with Elisha. So the journey ended and Elijah asked for one last request from Elisha. He wanted to be as his mentor and master had been, a prophet, a great prophet; but that was not Elijah's to give. Only God could do that. So Elijah, knowing this, left with a promise that if Elijah witnessed his passing then he would get a share of his power. Elisha did see the spectre of Elijah's wondrous journey to heaven. He did receive a portion of his power. He did become his true successor. Awesome indeed - both the event and its consequences.

The Gospel reading tells us not of a departure but of a preparation for such. A mountain top experience for three very ordinary men, and, one who was anything but. The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus, the Christ. We always focus on the wondrous events as preparation for Jesus' to show the divinity of his nature. However there is another set of people whose lives this event most definitely transformed. The witnesses, Peter, James and John. They saw things no-one else, not even their fellow disciples, did. They saw Moses and Elijah. They heard the voice of God speaking directly to them. This experience showed them just how great God is and how nothing is impossible to Him, even bringing the two greatest prophets back to earth. They could never, again, believe that Jesus was just a prophet. If any prophet can be described as just. They should have realised how special they were. Perhaps in their later lives they did. After all they did go on to do great things. A fisherman as the leader of a religion? A man with no real education challenging authorities? A brusque, plain speaking man talking to men in ways that they all understood? That couldn't possibly happen, but the Bible records that it did. Peter wanted to build tents. They were no doubt all bursting to tell everyone and anyone what they had seen and heard. However, Jesus cautioned them not to. This was HIS preparation for HIS road ahead. One that would lead him into indescribable misery and unbearable pain but one He had to take. For our sakes, yours and mine. This was another experience that had consequences. This time, however, those consequences were not just for the participants or the witnesses – they were for the whole world. For history. For us. Wow experiences matter, they transform our perception of the possible. They open our minds. I suggest to you, however, that the most awesome

experience you can ever have is meeting Jesus. We don't say "Wow" to Him often enough do we?

Hymns and Psalms 158. Stay, Master, stay upon this heavenly hill.

Prayers of Intercession.

When we don't recognise how awesome you are. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power.

When we fail to see your face in the face of our neighbour, or a suffering stranger. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

When we the world to be ours to control, not yours. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

When we don't want to share. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

When we treat your world carelessly. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

When we fail to turn to You. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

When we don't bring others to you in prayer. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

When we no longer want to be wowed. Father forgive us and change us with your omnipotent power

Take time for your own prayers for others.

The Lord hears our prayer. Amen

The Lord's Prayer.

Hymns and Psalms. 280, StF 370, MP67 Breathe on me, breath of God.

Say the words of the Grace, with the knowledge that others are doing the same.