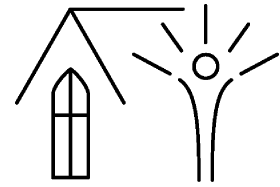




**ROSELLE**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

206 S. Rush Street  
Roselle, IL 60172  
(630) 529-1309  
www.RoselleUMC.org



*Our Mission Statement:*  
*“To Know Christ,  
To Grow in Christ,  
To Show Others Christ”*

February 26, 2006      **Sermon: “Gold, Silver and Bronze”**

Mark 9:2-12

Reverend Thomas Kim

Many of us have selective listening, don't we? We hear what we want to hear. We certainly know people who have selective listening. Some of us are probably married to someone who practices selective listening.

A 91-year-old fellow went to the doctor and had a checkup. Two days later, the doctor saw his patient, smiling, with a 30-year-old woman on his arm.

“Thanks, Doc,” the old man said, “I did what you said.”

The doctor asked, “For heaven's sake, what did I say?”

The 91-year-old man answered, “You said, ‘Find a hot mamma and be cheerful.’”

“No,” replied the doctor, “I said, ‘You have a heart murmur and be careful.’”

Listening is not only important for your relationships but a key for you to grow spiritually. Are you listening?

It is the last Sunday after epiphany and Transfiguration of the Lord.

Today's Gospel lesson says “Jesus took with him Peter, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. He was transfigured before them, and the disciples saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.” Two of the great celebrities of the Old Testament are Moses and Elijah. Moses, of course, received the Ten Commandments from God on the Mt. Sinai, and gave the people of Israel the Law. Elijah, on the other hand, was the greatest of the prophets. One of the most famous events of the Old Testament narrative is the spectacular defeat of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. (2 Kings 18) He set the standard for all prophets who would come after him even Jesus was compared to him.

So, here were the highest representatives of the Law and the Prophets, and the transfigured Jesus was in their company. And the disciples heard a voice: “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” The disciples were terrified.

A crucial statement, that the disciples were terrified. I believe that you remember the story Peter and his friends caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break as he followed Jesus saying, “Put out into the deep water.” He fell down at Jesus knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” (Luke 5: 4-9) In front of an absolute authority and reverence, their terrifying response was very common since they were but ordinary mortals.

Being in front of the glory of Christ, they were aware of their inadequacy, their imperfection. Therefore, it is almost every time that in front of God's authority, people were terrified. They confess their own unworthiness. No wonder they were terrified.

However, do you know why Jesus transfigured? I believe he did to transform each of us. Are you listening?

Bishop Emerson Colaw writes that during one Lenten season he went to see a drama that portrayed the life of Jesus. The drama, *THE MAN BORN TO BE KING*, reached its climax in the Crucifixion scene. *The three Marys entered and approached the Roman guards. Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoke to the captain requesting permission to minister to the needs of her son. He roughly pushed her away. Then one of the other women came forward and made the same request. But she added some interesting words. She asked the captain to do this “for old times' sake.”*

*The captain refused her request also. Then with a sweeping motion of her hand she loosed her golden hair so that it could cascade down her back.*

*“Marcellus,” she asked, “have you ever seen hair like this?” And then she thrust out a foot and asked, “And have feet ever danced for you like these feet?”*

*An incredulous expression came to the captain's face. In amazement he said, "Mary Magdalene, how you have changed!" Slowly, with dramatic emphasis, she turned so that her back was to the audience and she was facing Christ on the cross. Slowly she said, "Yes, Marcellus, I have changed; he changed me!"* (Leighton Farrell, *CRIES FROM THE CROSS*, pp. 29-30.) The Transfiguration of the Lord was so each of us might be transformed. The love of the Lord transforms us, and sometimes urges and even forces us to transform.

Therefore, the proper response to the transfigured Christ is our own transformation. To see the transfigured Christ is to be aware not only of our inadequacies but also our possibilities.

While serving aboard a gunboat in Vietnam, Dave Roever was holding a phosphorus grenade some six inches from his face when a sniper's bullet ignited the explosive. In his book, *WELCOME HOME, DAVEY*, he describes the first time he saw his own face after the explosion: "*When I looked in that mirror, I saw a monster, not a human being . . . My soul seemed to shrivel up and collapse in on itself, to be sucked into a black hole of despair. I was left with an indescribable and terrifying emptiness. I was alone in the way the souls in hell must feel alone.*"

Finally Roever came back to the States to meet with his young bride, Brenda. Just before Brenda arrived, Roever watched the wife of another burn victim tell her husband that she wanted a divorce.

Then Brenda walked in. "*Showing not the slightest tremor of horror or shock,*" Roever writes, "*she bent down and kissed me on what was left of my face. Then she looked me in my good eye, smiled, and said, 'Welcome home, Davey! I love you.'* To understand what that meant to me you have to know that's what she called me when we were most intimate; she would whisper 'Davey' over and over in my ear . . . By using her term of endearment for me, she said, 'You are my husband. You will always be my husband. You are still my man.'" (Dennis and Barbara Rainey, *MOMENTS TOGETHER FOR COUPLES* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1995).

The love of Brenda transformed him, and healed him even though he had to carry scars and wounds on his face. As much as we understand our inadequacy, imperfection, ugliness, we understand the grace of God poured for us. The grace of God changes us.

John Maxwell tells us something quite fascinating about sharks. "*Those fierce leviathans of the deep: sharks only grow as large as their surroundings permit. The shark, strangely enough, is one of the most popular fish for aquariums. The reason for this is that sharks adapt to their environment. If you catch a small shark and confine it, it will stay a size proportionate to the aquarium in which it lives. Sharks can be six inches long and fully mature. But turn them loose in the ocean and they grow to their normal size.*" (John C. Maxwell, *DEVELOPING THE LEADERS AROUND YOU*)

I've noticed the same phenomenon with regard to followers of Jesus Christ. If you are challenged to live a transformed life for Christ and for others, you have that capability. Left unchallenged, however, most of you stay where you are— with an immature understanding of faith and a nominal commitment to Christ. To see Christ as he really is to experience personal transformation.

C. S. Lewis put it quite pointedly: "*He (Jesus) never talked vague, idealistic gas. When he said, Be perfect, He meant it. He meant that we must go in for the full treatment. It is hard; but the sort of compromise we are all hankering after is harder— in fact, it is impossible. It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.*" ("C. S. Lewis on Holiness," by Jerry L. Walls, *GOOD NEWS*, May/June 1995, p. 30.)

I like that imagery. Before we experience Christ's transforming power we are unhatched eggs. To experience the transfigured Christ is first of all to be terrified, then it is to be transformed. To see the transfigured Christ is to be aware not only of our inadequacies but also our possibilities. But not only are we to transform ourselves, but also to serve others, and hopefully to transform our society. Remember that God called and blessed Abraham to be a blessing to nations, and God calls you and blesses you to be blessings to others. God loves and transforms you to transform our society.

The Winter Olympics are closing on this Sunday. **Gold, silver and bronze** medalists are going back to their countries with pride and recognition. They will cover their hometowns' news papers for awhile.

And a week later, the red carpet is ready for Oscar. The Hollywood stars line up to receive that little golden statue from another smiling, couture-draped presenter and go home fabulously rich and famous.

However, the story of the Mount of Transfiguration ended differently. Peter wanted to build three booths— one for Christ, one for Moses and one for Elijah— and stay on that mountain. But Jesus rejected this suggestion completely. Jesus rather lowered himself toward those in need and extending himself forward into God's service. Jesus says to us as well, "Go to your home, to market places, to your work place, and to your neighbor like the winners of **gold, silver and bronze** medal, but without any honor and recognition but with a transformed mind, heart, and spirit.