



## Grain

“God places us in the world as God’s fellow workers-agents of Transfiguration. We work with God so that injustice is Transfigured into justice... –Bishop Desmond Tutu

## Field

<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. <sup>31</sup>They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem... <sup>33</sup>Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” —not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup>While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” <sup>36</sup>When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. <sup>37</sup>On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. <sup>38</sup>Just then a man from the crowd shouted, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child... But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father....” <sup>43</sup>And all were astounded... Luke 9:28-31; 33-38 & 43

## Thoughts

Some people benefit from going to retreat centers removed from the crowds in the mountains or in the rural Midwest. By the end of your retreat, you may feel replenished or even have gained more clarity about who Jesus is and how God is at work in your life. But if you move into the retreat center, your attention will shift to a flawed community with its own joys and struggles. Your private retreat will largely become about engaging in relationships.

Even if James, John, and Peter remained on the mountain, with other followers of Jesus joining them, how they would have experienced God’s presence would have needed to change, but that point was mute. Jesus led them back to the valley, to a society thick with problems. Their first encounter involved Jesus helping someone suffering with a demon. His care for people’s well-being without questioning their status or their right to receive care exuded a message about God’s love in a different manner than on the mountain. In the valley, oppressive power and fear created a seductive narrative for those who occupied the land, the religious leaders who were complicit, and those most directly oppressed, but Jesus offered another way of being; that also amazed people. Sometimes we find a remote place to catch our breath and reflect on the scenery of Jesus, but we always return loving God publicly in the valley.

What mountain top or valley experiences do you recall that have given you a clearer vision? Where do you see God at work now in the midst of busyness and challenges, lingering conflicts over masks, and conspiracy theories that sometimes seem too close to home? In our valley of social media algorithms that tempt us to believe half-truths and lies, remember who Jesus is and how we are called. With God’s love and grace, are the mountaintop and valley ever that far apart? Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy