

# Sermon for Sunday, February 22, 2009

## Last Sunday After Epiphany

By Tim Ljunggren

<b>First Lesson</b>	<b>2 Kings 2:1-12</b>
<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Psalm 50 1-6</b>
<b>Second Lesson</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 4:3-6</b>
<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Mark 9:2-9</b>

*“Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!’...”*

Today, high on a mountaintop, we stand on the edge of Lent. Today, on this Last Sunday after the Epiphany, we are enshrouded by the cloud of God, which both masks our vision and enfolds us into the Divine Mystery of Jesus Christ.

This is where we stand today.

Our epiphany is almost over—instead of following a star, we are now going to be tasked with following a cross. For the past several weeks, we’ve heard the stories of Jesus doing miraculous things—exorcising demons, healing the sick, performing miracles like turning water into wine—all of which add up to only a portion of the story.

This day joins together two moments of Jesus’ future: his death and resurrection with his being the ultimate prophet and final judge of the people of God.

Today’s Gospel lesson speaks to us out of that cloud with a strong, firm voice, as if to say: if you really want to know who this Jesus really is, you must see his future. It’s not enough to see him exorcising evil spirits, healing the sick, preaching the Good News, and teaching about the reign of God. One must see him suffer at the hands of the religious establishment, die by the command of a Roman governor, rise three days later through the power of God, and finally rule as victorious Lord.

Today, with the reading of our Gospel lesson for this Sunday, Jesus’ fate is joined to his ministry. In the words of Saint Mark, we are invited to see and worship Jesus in the wholeness of his being.

Here, on the mountaintop, Jesus is profoundly revealed, even though our own eyes may be clouded over.

Our weekly gathering around both word and sacrament is a weekly gathering in wholeness and holiness—we come together to celebrate the wholeness of the Lord's true being while, at the same time, recognizing our own true worth and holiness in the eyes of God. Each Sunday, we gather together as a parish family to allow ourselves time to meditate on—and to answer the call of—Jesus' invitation to us.

An invitation that was forged through our very own baptisms.

Today's lessons, joined with our Sunday liturgy, not only reveal Jesus as final judge and prophet, but also reveals our unity with him. When we hear his word, take, eat, and drink his body and blood, we are joined to his future.

We are able to see past the hazy misgivings of our hearts and open our souls to the Son of God in such a way as to honor the very Baptismal Covenant that we all share.

Today, Jesus takes us to the top of a mountain and asks us to take another look—what do we see? What do we feel? What do we yearn for?

The question this morning is not whether Jesus is actually revealed for who he really is, but whether we slow down long enough to notice it. Today, we will baptize another member into the Body of Christ, and we will remember our own Baptismal Covenant that asks us to slow down, to look around, to notice mountaintop experiences like the one in today's Gospel lesson.

Amen. ...