

When You Don't Know What To Do

I preach this morning in the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So today is The Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday, the Sunday in which we celebrate the transformative power of God and the glory of God at work in our lives. Now six weeks prior, we've been in the season of Epiphany in which we embraced the manifest presence of God in Christ, the revelation of God in Jesus. And now, six weeks later, on Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday, we come to the climactic point of Jesus' epiphany, where Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up the mountain, up to Mount Tabor, to be transfigured, to be changed in their midst.

Jesus is transfigured, which means that Jesus is changed. And when Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John, they witness this power of God so strong in their lives and they don't know what to do. They don't know how to think. They don't know how to respond. And because they don't know what to do, they do what they already know. Matthew chapter 17, verse 1, "After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'"

You see, when you don't know what to do, realize first that you will by default do what you already know. That's what the disciples are doing. They're doing by default what they already know. Peter says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." I mean the power of God has come upon the disciples. The power of God has transfigured, has changed Jesus, and they see God the Son, shining like the sun, radiating the glory from the God from eternity past here in this incarnational

moment. They see the power of God. They see the glory of God. And it's so strong that they don't know what to do.

And so what they do is what they already know, what any Jew, any good Jew that is, would do. Because, you see, in Leviticus the 23rd chapter, God commanded His people to make booths, temporary tents, to remind themselves that they are a covenant people with whom God has made a promise. He made a promise to their forefathers that out of the land of Egypt and slavery, He would protect them. He would guide them into the land of milk, flowing with milk and honey. And that same promise would be made to them. So, God commands them to take note that God's presence is always with them. To make temporary dwellings would be a very encouraging practice for a Jew.

It was called the Festival of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles. You see, they're doing what they already know. Any Jew would have done this when they experienced such power, such glory. They would have made a temporary shelter. And so Peter says, "Lord, it's good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

This is a deep, awe-inspiring moment that Peter is having and he's doing what he already knows. How about you? What experience in your life has God parted the heavens and the glory of God has been made known to you, has been revealed to you? And now you're experiencing something that you cannot articulate with words. You are experiencing something in your life that you have never experienced before. Realize that when you do not know what to do, you will do by default what you already know.

What is it that you are doing in response to God's glory that is a result of what you've always done? For some, it's doing what you always have done, over and over again. For others, it's staying in your comfort zone. Something like this. Check this out. *[Video]*

When you don't know what to do, realize that you will do by default what you already know. For some of us that may be doing what we've always done. For others, that may be reverting back to our level of comfort. When you don't know what to do, be prepared for God to interrupt, verse 5, "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'"

The disciples have no idea what to do. Peter does what a reverent Jew would do. He asks the Lord to celebrate and to recognize the Festival of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles. "Lord, the presence is so good in our midst. We want to dwell here. We want to soak all of this up." (*interpretation my own*) And they don't know what to do. They revert back to their comfort zone. They revert back to what they've always done and practiced as a Jew. And so sometimes when you don't know what to do, God has to interrupt your plans. He has to interrupt you in mid-sentence, verse 5, "When he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son. (That's him. That's my Son), whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (*addition my own*). And then the scripture adds, "Listen to him!" Listen to him.

These are the same words spoken over Jesus' baptism. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the heavens were opened, the glory of God came down and the identity of Jesus was secure for all to see. "This is my beloved Son, the one in whom I have set forth from all eternity to go to Jerusalem and to lay down his life for the sins of the world. This is my Son." (*expansion my own*) And now the Lord says, "Listen to him!"

Who are you listening to? When the voice of confusion sounds around you, whose voice will you listen to? There are a ton of voices in our culture speaking to you: what you should do, what you ought to do, how you ought to parent your children, how you ought to spend your finances, how you ought to leverage your time and your passion and your zeal. Who will you listen to when the voices of chaotic confusion are always around you? Be careful, because if

you begin to speak, doing what you've always done, be prepared for God to interrupt.

How is God interrupting you? Maybe you feel really confident and assured that you are following the Lord's leading and guidance in His plan for your life. And that's wonderful, but may I caution you, don't get too comfortable in thinking that you know the ways in which God is leading you and directing you and calling you. Always submit and lay your plans down on the altar.

This is what Paul says, "to offer your body as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). And you see, that's the reality of a living sacrifice. It wants to get up off the altar and it wants to crawl out and it wants to do its own thing and it wants to have its own way. It wants to say what it's always said and do what it's always done. And Paul says, "no, this is a living sacrifice, which means that we have to die to ourselves daily" (*expansion my own*). Your plans are not your plans. God has a plan for your life. And be prepared for God to interrupt your plans and to confirm His way for your life because the call and the will of God is irrevocable. You cannot revoke the will of God for your life. You may think that you know the plans, but God has plans for you. And many times I have learned in my life and experience, my plans are not God's plans.

Our plans are not the Lord's plans. When you don't know what to do, be prepared for God to interrupt. And when you don't know what to do, be slow to speak and quick to listen, verse 6, "When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. 'Get up,' he said. 'Don't be afraid.' When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, 'Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.'"

When you don't know what to do, be slow to speak and quick to listen. You cannot hear God's voice if you're the one doing all the speaking. You cannot hear God's voice if you listen to the chaotic confusion around you telling you

what you ought to do, how you ought to live. You cannot listen to the Lord's voice if you're always going from this activity and to that activity. You cannot listen to the Lord's voice if you are always doing and not receiving. You cannot listen to God's voice unless you are slow to speak and quick to listen. And once the glory of God comes upon you, once the power of God opens the heavens for you to see, for you to hear, then will you listen to His voice and follow Him? For Jesus said, "Do not tell anyone what you have seen until..." (that's a timely word) "...until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

Be slow to speak and be quick to listen. What is God speaking to you today? How is God calling you to slow down so you can hear His voice. You see, the disciples, when they hear the voice of God, they are stuck in fear. And when you don't know what to do, don't get stuck in fear, let Jesus touch your life. Don't get stuck in fear, trust in Jesus. And you know, a touch can go a long way.

I once heard a story about a taxi cab driver. He was driving a passenger and the passenger had a question to ask him. So he leaned over and tapped the shoulder of the taxi car driver. And all of the sudden, the driver lost control of the car, weaved around to not hit a bus, and then ended up only inches away from the neighborhood house. It was silent in the car, and the driver looked over and said, "Man, I'm so sorry. You startled me. I don't know what happened, but you startled me. I wasn't expecting your tap on the shoulder." And the passenger said, "No, no, no, no. I'm sorry. I didn't realize that such a small little touch would have such a dramatic effect on you. I'm so sorry." And the driver in response said to that, "No, no. I'm the one who's sorry. I wasn't expecting your touch. For the past 25 years, I've been driving a hearse!"

Little touches can go a long way.

How is Jesus touching your life today? Are you stuck in fear? Because when you hear the voice of God, when He begins to open up the floodgates of heaven, when He begins to direct your course and your life in a new trajectory, a new plan, you will be frozen in fear. When God sounded His voice and confirmed His

call in my life to ordained ministry, I said, "Heck no, Lord! I can't do that! That's not for me. Call someone else. You have to lift someone else up out of that. That's not me." I lived in understanding from my grandfather what ministry was like, and I wanted nothing to do with ministry. I was very comfortable where I was and indeed God was using me where I was. And that was my pulpit, teaching music for seven years in the classroom. But when God begins to pull your heart, when God begins to speak to you, when God begins to shake you and say, "You're going to be a world shaker. I'm calling you, so rise up!" Don't trust in yourself. Don't get stuck in fear. Trust in the Jesus who is calling you by name. Trust in the Lord who sounds your voice. Trust in the Lord who says to you what He said to Jesus, "This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

Whose voice will you listen to today? God is speaking, I believe, to you right here, right now in this moment. And when you hear the voice of God, the natural proclivity of humankind is to get stuck in fear. But Jesus comes to you and he touches you and he says, "Get up, get up, don't be afraid."

When you don't know what to do, realize that you will do by default what you already know, so be prepared for God to interrupt. Be slow to speak, quick to listen and don't get stuck in fear. Trust in Jesus.

Amen