

Growing up again, you know, I was about 35. I've always thought that transfiguration was a part of Lent, and we always do it right before Ash Wednesday. We always talk about what Transfiguration Sunday means, and I just always thought it's been a part of Lent. But when you read it, in the Bible, in the gospel according to Matthew, it's at the beginning. And then Mark and Luke, it's more in the middle. None of it is actually near the resurrection. And I started thinking about that this week because I haven't had enough time to think about all kinds of things going on in the world. But that one got me to move aside for a little bit. I started thinking about why is it in different places in the gospels? Why don't we include it with Lent? What makes it different? All this time, I've been thinking about the significance Of Jesus changing, about him physically changing, about him no longer looking like he did, no longer looking like a normal average person. And I'm using the term normal there very loosely.

But on that day when Peter sees him, he starts to look more like God. His appearance changes, his physical appearance changes, his clothes change, everything. He does change and Peter starts to see him in that new light. And that's what it says in Matthew and Mark. But that's not what it says in today's reading. It doesn't say that Jesus changed. It says that his appearance changed. He didn't physically change. He didn't physically become somebody else. Peter's idea of who he was changed. Peter started to see him for who Jesus really was. He sees him not on the physical outside, but he sees him as the Savior In the reading.

There's a lot of prophecy, you know. The Old Testament says that when the Messiah comes, Elijah will be there. And it says that Moses will come, and they're at the mountain when they're talking and the cloud overtakes them. Again, like they did; like it did. When Jesus was baptized. It's one of three times that we actually hear the voice of God come down for everyone to hear and not just certain people But it hasn't changed who Jesus is. It hasn't changed anything at all. What it changed was Peter's perception. So many times in the world we have those a-ha moments. They're not nearly as big as this. But we have those a-ha moments where we think we see something and then one day we wake up and we realize we were wrong, We were wrong about so many things. And how does that affect other people?

Peter immediately starts to try and correct his ways. He immediately tries to build a shrine. He immediately tries to build housing because he tried to make up for everything that he knows he's done wrong. But John and James don't see it. At the end Jesus is frustrated because again he is telling them that he will be betrayed. But they can't comprehend it. They can't comprehend that one of their own people will betray him. They can't understand what is going to happen because they don't want to see it.

This week I've had so many discussions with people who have said to me, we never realized that these different things can happen to other people. We've never really thought about it. We've never really thought that we're marginalizing people because it's not directly happening to us. I had a guy go off on me for a half an hour this week because he realized that our tariffs are going to increase his beer prices. It sounds funny, doesn't it? That's the thing. That's the thing. We don't realize until actually physically happens to somebody or something. that we know. We don't always see it when it's right there in our face. We don't see it until it has to happen to somebody else. But now we have a point. We have an opportunity that we are being awakened. We are being awakened and seeing that Jesus has died for us. He has died for our sins. He has died showing us how to live.

In confirmation today, we had a great discussion. We had a great discussion and they were so scared because they thought I was going to make them memorize the 613 laws in Leviticus. And I let it go for a little while. I did; I'm not gonna lie. I let them sit there and sweat. And I said, there's all of these. All of these laws in the Bible, but Jesus tells us there are two there for us to worry about. If we worry about God above all. and that means, and I said this to them, that means that you love everyone. You don't love an Xbox. You don't. There was a big discussion on Xbox today. You don't love money. You don't love those things because they're great now but they're not going to mean anything later on. And the second thing that he tells us is that we love one another. We are kind. We treat people how we want to be treated and you will never go wrong. You will never go wrong treating somebody how you want to be treated. And unfortunately, we forget that so many times.

On Wednesday, Lent officially starts the 40 days of everything. Last Wednesday, we had a wonderful discussion about how giving up things for Lent is foolish because what do we give up? We give up stuff we don't like. I make the joke every year that I gave up giving up things for Lent a long time ago. And I have succeeded in keeping that. I am not going to succeed in keeping that this year.

The purpose of giving up something for Lent is to bring us closer to God. Me not eating kale isn't going to change anything in my relationship with God. We know that me giving up coffee and Mountain Dew, I'm going to fail miserably at that. And that's just going to make me feel guilty and push me farther away from God. So, what can I give up? What can I change in myself that will make me closer to God? Something that at the end of Lent, I'm going to carry on. I'm going to keep doing. I'm going to keep pushing. That's what I'm asking, each one of you to do.

And I've spoken with some members of Diaconate. They're going to help because it's going to be hard. That's really hard. How do we give up something that's bad about ourselves that will improve us. How do we give up gossiping? That's a really hard one to give up because we like knowing information. We like knowing about somebody else, especially in small towns and in small towns it's everywhere. How do you give up that? How do you give up going on Facebook and trolling people? Trying to think of how I can describe trolling in a way that everybody can understand if they don't. So many times, we get on there, and we think that because it's on Facebook, what we say has no repercussions. So we do what we can. So what can we give up? What can I give up myself so that all through Lent, I will become a better person? I will become closer to God And will carry that after Easter. And if you want to know what it is, you have to be here Wednesday night at six o'clock. We'll talk about it more then, but in seriousness, think about it. Think about what you can give up, that will make you a better person. If it's gossiping. If it's being like in today's story, walking across the street because you see somebody that you don't like, reaching out to that somebody, putting yourself in an uncomfortable situation to help people who you would not normally help. Those are all things that we can give up not doing. I'll think about that. Let us pray.