



10th Sunday after Pentecost B
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+May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Strength and Redeemer. Amen.

A week ago last Friday, I had a plane reservation to fly to Philadelphia to be with my adopted family there. I finished up my work for the College around 2:30 and quickly jumped in my car to drive north to the Manchester Airport for a 6:15 flight.

As you might guess the traffic was terrible on a Friday night in which there were storms raging all over the place from New England down the East Coast past Philadelphia. I just about got to the airport when my cell phone rang. It was Expedia, an automated voice, telling me that my flight had been cancelled. 1.5 hours in the car to drive about 42 miles, and my flight had been cancelled due to bad weather.

So, I pulled over and called the 800 number, was on hold for about 12 minutes, only to be told that the next flight was completely booked. While on the phone, that flight, too, was cancelled. Then, there might have been a possibility for a connection through D. C. but that, too, didn't look promising.

Rather than find myself stranded in D. C. over night or somewhere else where my flight might have been diverted, I cancelled my reservation and drove back home. Anticipation: foiled. Hoped for trip: spoiled. Folks in Philly: disappointed. Nothing I could do. Nothing they or anyone else could do but I was surprisingly calm about it all. Perhaps because I've been working lots of hours in several different arenas as you might guess, I perhaps didn't have the energy it might have taken to be upset. Something inside of me was able to let go and be resigned to the fact that I had no control over the situation.

This past Thursday, the Church celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration. Luke's Gospel for the feast chronicles a familiar story in which Peter, James and John are really not in control of their situation. They go up the side of a mountain where Jesus is miraculously transfigured before their very eyes. If that wasn't spectacular enough, Moses and Elijah appeared alongside Jesus. And if all of that wasn't spectacular enough, the voice of God was heard letting the disciples know in no uncertain terms that Jesus was God's Son, the Chosen One, and that they were to listen to him.

In the Gospel passage from John appointed for this the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, John tells us in no uncertain terms who Jesus is. The passage begins with the first of the Jesus' "I am" statements: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty," and "I am the living bread that came down from heaven."

These very familiar statements are powerful indicators of who Jesus said that he was for the disciples and for us as well. As spectacular as the statements are, rich in symbol, rich in content, "I am" in Greek is really the same as the four-letter Hebrew word that translates to "YHWY," the now familiar, *Yahweh*."

John, a Greek speaking Jew, would have clearly known the significance of these words. Jesus, then, claimed that he was *Yahweh*! In my book, that's astounding. That's a kind of mountain top revelation, a spectacular admission that most of us might not have ever realized. I, myself, only realized it while doing my homework in preparation for today's message.

Both of these accounts from Scripture, though seemingly different in many ways, are similar in others. They tell us much about God in the person of Christ, and they tell us much about what we are called to believe as followers of Christ, as followers in the footsteps of Peter, James and John. They also tell us much about how letting go of our complex notions about life and about God can perhaps enable us to see more clearly the path to follow, to let go of the controls we have in life, to let go of the past, to embrace the present and to hope for a brighter future.

So often when I preach, I find myself face-to-face with the stern message of the Scriptures, a message that is indeed challenging, a message that requires me to look at my life, recognize my failures, my ability to hurt others, my ability to put on others far more expectations than they perhaps could ever possibly shoulder. In order to step back from all those things, I can picture myself on that mountain with Peter, James and John or I can see myself in front of Jesus preaching and teaching and telling us that it is he who is the answer. It is he who is the transfigured one but he who is also the down-to-earth sustenance of life.

In these two passages, we hear about powerful symbols of God, the Greatness of God and the gentleness of God made flesh, One who conquered sin and death but who also left himself for us as the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. You and I come here to be nourished and fed. We come with all the baggage of our lives, the good and the not so good.

We come with who we are, all the vulnerabilities that are ours, all the controls we attempt to muster and offer ourselves to God with hope that we will somehow be transformed. This Bread that we share and this Cup that is given are powerful symbols of the One who calls us from the dark places in our lives into the transfigured light of God's abundance. And how is that light of God's abundance made ours in the Eucharist we share?

It is through the power of the Holy Spirit, alive in the Church, alive in this community, alive in our hearts, a living breathing presence of God deep within each of us, sustaining us, nourishing us, and enabling us to be far more than we could ever be without it.

We come because we have experienced that Pentecostal Fire that remains with us and the Church far beyond Pentecost Sunday. Remember that Jesus told his disciples that he would send his Spirit and that he surely did.

So throughout these many Sundays after Pentecost when some would say we're in Ordinary Time, I say there's no such thing as Ordinary Time in Christ. There's nothing in our relationship with God and with one another in this community that's ordinary. We're moved by the Spirit of God to worship, to bow down, to lift up our hearts and minds, to sing, to praise, to pray in joyful thanksgiving that God dwells within us, and there's nothing ordinary about that.

But, we are challenged to put aside those things that hold us back from being people of joy and expectation, hope and anticipation, of love, mercy and forgiveness, to be people on fire with the love of God, a love that can drive us to mountain top experiences of God if we just let it. May God's Spirit make it happen today and each day of our lives. Amen.