

## Pastor Roy's Sermon from February 10, 2013

Exodus 34:29-35, Psalm 99; II Corinthians 3:12-4:2, Luke 9:28-36

Our gospel reading today feels like a dream. It's the stuff of visions and dreams. It's the Good News. Jesus shines forth with the glory of God. He speaks in the tradition and with the authority of Elijah and Moses. Prophets who spoke the law of God to the people. --Who proclaimed how God is calling us to live. That faithfulness to God is not random rules to be followed for the sake of a score keeping God, but instead it is mercy and kindness applied to family and neighbor alike. It's all about love.

Paul speaks of the freedom of a faith transfigured even as Christ was before the disciples' eyes. Freedom to let go of our "score cards." When we learn that God's only score card is merciful love. All the rules and regulations drop by the way side. The judgment of God is love for everyone and all of creation. That's it. Perfect freedom for those who can embrace it. Freedom to love and be loved. Do we accept this judgment or do we walk away from it?

Faith doesn't get any simpler than that. Paul says, "Because it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. Free to serve. Free to care. Free to take chances. Yes, even free to fail, and to get back up again after we fall.

We know this mercy, but later in the day, or tomorrow, or anytime, we forget and we pull out the old scorecard and get back to figuring out whether we are ahead or behind in the big race.

Even though we get it in our heads, our hearts are so much slower to catch on. We're so busy trying to prove ourselves and figure out who is ok and who is not.

We come in out of the fray, and sit before our gracious God who reaches out to take back, yet again, our scorecard. God takes a look at it, sighs, tosses it in the fire place, and listens to what we have to say. Then...

Here is my chosen Son, listen to him. Suddenly we are alone with the prophet/Messiah/Son of God Jesus who is revealed in so many ways at so many times. On a good day we listen, take in the grace, smile, and allow the mercy to wash over us. On a bad day, we whip out another score card and get back to work comparing and contrasting ourselves to those around us. What do we even know about our neighbor and what's going on in her head?

This is my Son, my Chosen One, listen to him! Listening takes time.

As we look around the corner into the season of Lent, the season of preparation, we are challenged to start by listening, yet again, to our Lord Jesus Christ who whispers, and sometimes has to shout, of love and peace and hope and joy.

The ashes of this coming Wednesday remind us to let it all go. To confess, gladly, our dustiness. To hear those words, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Oh, we have many opportunities, many points of grace, many promises spoken over us and through us. We are set free by these words and promises. Set free to take God much more seriously than we take ourselves.

Now there is a thought! When you feel you've blown it, and we all do, remember!--it matters much more that **God** is sufficient and that you and I realize it's ok if **we've not** gotten it right. We try. Then we must leave the rest for God to work wonders out of our incompleteness, our brokenness, our lostness, even our points of brilliance—it's all the Spirit of God at work both in our success and failure.

Maybe if we allow God to take us off the hook, we can allow God to take our parents, our children, our friends, our neighbors, even our enemies, off the hook. To allow the score cards to be shredded, or burned, or composted into life giving mercy which invites us to engage in ministry with a light, free heart. Grace. Freedom. Hear it again:

The Spirit is speaking to us today, "This is my Son my Chosen, listen to him!" May we find the grace to do so. Let us meet him at the table. Let us meet him in one another's faces. In our work and in our rest.

Amen.