

Even I Can Fly

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2 Kings 2: 1-12 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6 Mark 9: 2-6

Psalm 50: 1-6

Summary: There is only one way to follow Jesus and that is: all the way.

The title of my sermon and the idea to use an image of Elmer Fudd came from an editing suggestion last Tuesday. Transfiguration Sunday is great day for

the theme of transformation. “Going the distance” was my original sermon title, and I have an opening analogy from my own life.

My journey is not done yet and Jesus gives me hope that there is no “finish line,” but Jaime and I have tallied up 29 years in marriage today. It is because Jesus has already gone the distance for us in the great race of divine love versus sin and death that we have hope in this and every other journey.

Our marriage cannot compare to the importance of our spiritual development, of course, but God knows my relationship with Jaime is vital to me. Jaime and I trust that we can go all the way with each other only because God travels with us and guides us with grace. We have needed patience and the ability to forgive each other. Jesus demonstrates patience to us, and we have discovered the quality of forgiveness through experiencing His mercy.

The Bible tells of many personal relationships, great and small, affected by God’s grace. For example, Elisha clearly went the distance with his mentor and example in prophecy, Elijah. And what a prize, Elisha asks for! He wants a double portion of the spirit inspiring a man so faithful that he stands beside Moses during the transfiguration of God’s Son! Elisha reaches high, but don’t all of us aspire to be like Jesus? No one can reach higher than that. Yet, we can and will go that distance because God gives us His Holy Spirit to complete us.

The Apostle Paul knew well that only those who do not believe will find God veiled. He speaks of “the god of this world,” small “g.” The lord of a judged and passing world is the enemy, who uses darkness that people might not see the light of the gospel, So, Paul takes care. He does not preach about himself, but goes the distance for Jesus, God’s true image.

And it is God’s image, fully seen by a select group on the mount of transfiguration. Peter, James, and John were with Jesus on that hike. Then, suddenly there is Moses and Elijah next to Jesus. This gathering can only mean that one world is ending, and a new world is about to begin. Staggered, blinded by the light, Peter offers to build ritual tabernacles from which these three leaders will first judge and then rule all creation.

In this moment, the transfiguration of Jesus transforms those who witness it, as represented by Peter. A moment ago, he was on a hike with his rabbi, perhaps expecting some special message or parable. What happens to his Master makes him feel like the whole world has just dropped away and an unknown, unknowable abyss threatens to swallow him.

Oddly, I can relate to this. Years ago, I was helping a friend and was hammering a pry bar into a huge rock pile. I thought I was on secure ground; yet I must have struck a crevice exactly right with that bar, and it slipped out of my

hands and vanished into what had looked like solid rock. I had the most eerie sensation that my footing was on nothing more than mist. Peter must have felt that way.

Someone once wrote that if the Earth falls away, one of two things will happen. God will bear us up on His breath or He will give us wings with which to fly. Peter, James, and John are transformed from mere friends and companions of a famous rabbi; their lives take flight and they now look for a way to usher in a whole new age.

That is where the rather humble image of Elmer Fudd comes in. He is, when all is said and done, a rather silly and ineffective figure. One of the creators of the cartoon once wrote, “Elmer wasn’t much of a challenge for Bugs; he has the brains of a chicken.” Sometimes, I feel about as effective, like the world beneath me is as substantial as a puff of air. Yet, any of us can be transformed by faith in the Transfigured Christ. With that silly cartoon character, we can say: “Even I can fly!”

Then, even as his friends take flight into new roles, there are only the disciples and Jesus left on the mountaintop. The Voice which now speaks is surely God and the One spoken of can be none but Jesus. Christ then asks them not to speak of all this until He has risen from the dead. Of course, these words puzzle,

frighten, and confuse his friends. Jesus wants them to wait until He has gone the distance to the Cross and the tomb.

Today, we need not wait to speak of the glory of God that we see in Jesus. He has gone the distance. It remains for us to do the same. There is only one way to follow Jesus – all the way. Let us go out of worship today to do just that. One world is ending, and another is about to begin. As Jesus has already done, into God's hands let us commit our spirits. Amen.