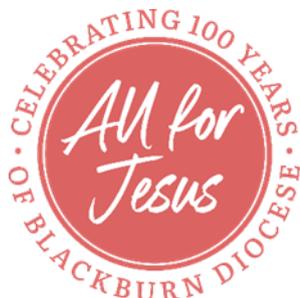


# +WEEKLY SERMON

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## Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord

*Exodus 24.12-end, Matthew 17.1-9*

In both our readings today, God meets his people on a mountain:

In Exodus, Moses is summoned upwards: “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there.” He ascends into cloud and fire, into the thick mystery of God’s holiness. And there, Moses receives the law: having delivered them from Egypt, God begins to form a people who can live in the light of his presence.

In Matthew, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up another mountain. And they see him transfigured, his face shining, his clothes dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appear (the law and the prophets) standing with him. And the voice comes from the cloud in an echo of Sinai: “This is my Son, the Beloved... listen to him.”

Today, you and I still go up the mountain to meet with God, the Christian life should include moments of ascent: times of prayer; transcendent worship whether liturgical or contemporary; times with community that draw you out of yourself. We need the mountain because we are so easily dulled by the valley: by noise, by technology, daily anxiety, and the endless churn of distraction. Sometimes in his mercy God interrupts us, calls us upwards, to shows us again who he is.

But the gospel will not let us camp out on the mountain. Peter tries, of course: “Let’s make three dwellings.” Who wouldn’t want to stay in that moment? Yet Jesus leads them down again. God’s glory is given not so we can escape but so we can follow Jesus carrying that glory into a broken world.

Because the one who shines on the mountain is the one who will hang in darkness on the cross.

He does not simply deliver the law from above; he fulfils it. He does not merely expose our transgression; he bears it. After ascending to the mountain top, Jesus descends into our failure, our fear, our sin, and our death. And he does this so that when we break the law, we are not condemned by it but redeemed through him.

So enjoy those mountain top experiences: seek God in worship, in Scripture, in prayer. But do not build your tent there. Listen to the beloved Son and follow him down the path of obedience and costly love, trusting that the one who descends with us will also raise us up with him.

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HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES