

*28Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. 30Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" —not knowing what he said. 34While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 36When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.*

Every time you come to this place you must decide. Does God speak here, or a man? The word of scripture, the words of a sermon, are these the word of God for you, the word more powerful than sin and death, more powerful than depression and recession, the word that brings the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ to you, and you to him? As you sing, as you pray, do you expect your words to touch the heart of God? Your praise making God's heart dance, your inattention, your distraction a source of deep hurt to the almighty.

In every neighbor you encounter, especially everyone in need, do you expect to see Christ, hidden beneath all that is everyday and common? Christ hidden in this one person who is like no other? What do you expect?

From the distance of nearly two thousand years we cannot know what those who flocked to Jesus expected. But maybe like us they expected a quick fix for all their problems. Maybe like us they just wanted to feel better, and see things more clearly, and know that tomorrow would be better. Just like me, maybe they hoped that today's hard efforts would mean that tomorrow they would be secure. A good sermon this week, a thousand dollar surplus in the offering next week - that's what I would like.

You work hard for three years, and your boss says how delighted he is, offers a raise, more vacation.

You give your best effort, and your children do better in school, and stay healthy, and are happy.

You eat the right foods and get plenty of exercise and every sickness and disease is banned from your house.

You pray, "Please God," and you get just what you want.

But in times like these nothing seems to be working out. Jobs disappear; children go astray, sickness visits. And we gather here, maybe wondering where the power is that we came expecting, the miracles, the faith to move mountains.

Were people in 1st century Galilee like us? I think so.

Though Jesus walked on water, fed five thousand with a few fish and loaves, made the blind see, the deaf hear, even raised the dead, faith in Jesus, the bringer of miracles did not last. People became busy with their lives, drifted away or didn't always like what Jesus said.

They expected far too little of Jesus. They were disappointed in how little they received.

They expected him to overthrow Rome and Caesar who oppressed them. He came to overthrow Satan.

They expected a little help in making them a little bit better. He came that the righteousness of God would be theirs.

They expected him to give them a few years of good living. He came to grant them all eternity.

So when Peter and James and John went up a mountain with Jesus it seems they expected only a good nap - a little sleep. But as Jesus prayed the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.

Moses and Elijah appeared there with him, spoke to him about his exodus at Jerusalem.

As the disciples became alert, Moses and Elijah were gone, and a cloud enveloped them all, and God spoke out of the cloud, "This is my Son, my chosen, listen to him."

And it was over. Jesus was Jesus. The sky was clear. No more voices, no more visions.

But for Peter and James and John and us there is now a new expectation. Everything that Jesus does, God is doing. Those who were not on that mountain might not know that this man from Galilee was divine, but we do.

Pilate and the crowds might not know that in putting Jesus to death, they were killing God's own Son, but we do.

We will listen to his voice knowing we hear God himself when Jesus speaks.

We will hear his story knowing that Jesus story is God's own story.

And we will try not to expect too little of him for he wants to give to us the forgiveness of all our sins, and life forever with him.

What shall we expect in this place, and in our lives and in our hearts? Jesus, whom God declared his Son - Jesus who was crucified for us - Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. In his Word, in every poor and needy one, and in our hearts he has promised to be present. We should expect nothing less. Amen.