

*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.*

Have you ever sat across from someone you know well and kept back all the words that fill your mind and come from your mouth and wondered about this life that is in front of you? Have you ever looked at your mother, your father, your wife, your husband, your sister, your brother, your son, your daughter, your friend -looked at this person in a new way – as if you had never seen this one before and wondered? If you forget all that you know about this one and just see what is what would surprise you? Make you curious? Would you see someone who is very much like you, known to you yet different, hidden, unknown?

I think of Peter and James and John that day. Jesus they had eaten with, walked beside, accompanied across the lake in their boat. They had witnessed his great power to heal; they had heard his teaching, marveled at his authority. But on that day they must have sensed that they knew him not at all.

For on top of the mountain that day Jesus was changed – the appearance of his face was changed – his clothes became dazzling white. All along they must have thought of themselves as his closest friends but now he was talking with Moses and Elijah – company that Peter and James and John were not used to keeping. And a cloud came over the mountain and out of the cloud God spoke – “This is my Son, my chosen, listen to him.” When the voice had spoken Jesus was found alone. And Peter and James and John kept silent and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

They thought they knew Jesus just the same way we think we know one another. But when they caught this smallest glimpse of whom Jesus really was they were reduced to silence.

They did not come off the mountain and tell everyone what they had seen. What a story they could have told, but they did not tell it. Even now as this story is told in scripture it is not nearly as descriptive as we might like. What did Jesus look like? And Moses? And Elijah? And God's voice, how did it sound?

The scriptures tell us none of these things. Instead they tell us what Jesus did, what he said, what happened to him.

Oh that you and I could become as Peter and James and John were that day! If only we could be reduced to silence and wonder and awe before our Lord.

For then he might break out of all the boxes in which we confine him. We would tremble before this presence, God with us.

And yet he comes to you this day not in glory and majesty that overwhelms you but in bread - in wine - in a most common and ordinary way. All the glory and power of God enter you masked by what is most common. This is my body, given for you. This is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Don't be fooled by appearances. Your Lord enters you in bread and wine – your Lord is as near as your needy neighbor.

Wonder in silence.