

**Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit
Service for 15 February 2026, Revd Gwyneth Owen**

Transfiguration Sunday

Here I am; in this space; held by God; embraced for eternity.

Hymn

Christ, whose glory fills the skies Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise, triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near, Daystar, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn unaccompanied by Thee;
Joyless is the day's return, till Thy mercy's beams I see,
Till Thou inward light impart, glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine, pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiance divine, scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display, shining to the perfect day.
Charles Wesley 1707-1788

Prayer

As you continue to be open to God's presence, reflect on these words you have just sung, hummed or read: **'Fill me, Radiance divine'**. As you quietly sit, let those words become your prayer, focusing on:

Fill me – what do you need to let go of to make room to be filled? Name these things and let God's embrace, forgiveness and welcome, surround and indwell you. (This can't be rushed)

Radiance - imagine brightness illuminating a dark space, literally or metaphorically. Offer praise for God's radiance and picture it in your longings and experience. (Take your time)

Divine - Be amazed that you are held by God, known by God, cherished by God, the Divine. Offer thanks for who God is in your life – or who you long for God to be in your life. (Please linger a while here)

Gracious God, Radiance Divine, fill me, fill us so that we glimpse the glory of your Being. As I reflect on the life and ministry of Christ, inspire my imagination, our imaginations, so that we have eyes to see your glory in unexpected places and through unexpected people – including me, including us. We pray in the name of Christ. Amen.

Now, before you read anything else, please close your eyes and tell the story of the transfiguration out loud. Don't worry if there's lots you can't remember – just speak out what you can recall (Jesus took 3 disciples up a mountain might be a good place to start).

Alright, let's see what Matthew's account sounds like:

Matthew 17:1-9 The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.⁷ But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.”⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

So, how did you get on? What do you notice about what you remembered....and what you forgot. What does that tell you about what you need to pay attention to in this passage this year?

Let’s sing again – or hum, or read:

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy one, is here;
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear
In him no sin is found we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy one, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned:
How awesome is the sight our radiant king of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace -
No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

David J Evans b.1957
Words and Music ©Thankyou Music

Reflection on Transfiguration

Well, what did you forget about this narrative when you tried to tell the story at the start of this service? It’s easy just to remember the dramatic bits – or bits we were taught as children. Matthew was very careful what he wrote down, so I think we need to give full attention to ALL the bits, so to speak.

The bit I missed out when I was telling the story to myself was the end of verse 4 and the beginning of verse 5. At the end of verse 4 Peter is talking, saying he’s going to start a building project of 3 shelters in order to house the important guests: Moses, Elijah and Jesus. It sounds a ridiculous suggestion now...even more bizarre then, don’t you think? If Moses and Elijah were let loose on a mountain hundreds of years after they had died, they are hardly going to be contained in a make-shift tent made of branches!

What I missed is, **whilst Peter was speaking**, God interrupted him with a newsflash: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” **Whilst Peter was speaking God spoke.**

In polite society it is rude to interrupt. I can hear my mother on my shoulder as I write this service. “Gwyneth, I’m talking”, she would say as I tugged at her arm as a child hoping it was time to go home from church or from visiting a neighbour – or anywhere where, honestly, I was getting bored. “Gwyneth, I’m talking”.

Well, as a rule of thumb, it is rude to interrupt, I guess. However, there are times when it's necessary in order to help people get to the salient point – at a GP's appointment, for example. Or when ambulance crew arrive at the scene of a road accident. There's no time to listen to what is not needed – they need to get to the needful priority.

My ministry nowadays focuses on providing reflective pastoral supervision (RPS) to a whole host of clergy and church workers of all denominations, and delivering training to others so they can do the same. Now, this kind of supervision is not me solving my supervisees' problems or telling them what to do, or assessing them. It is journeying with them and helping them to reflect on an aspect of their work and, maybe, its impact on them. To do this, I often interrupt them. Why? The tendency is for people to want to tell me a long story about the difficult relationship they have with the bishop, or the superintendent (not in this circuit, obviously), or the church treasurer. There's such detail, I'm almost waiting to hear what colour socks the bishop is wearing 😊. What I'm interested in is not the detail but the impact: how it leaves my supervisee feeling; what it does to their sense of vocation and self-worth; how they might like to address the situation in the future.

And so I interrupt: "May I just pause you there? I've heard a lot. Let's see which bit is most important for today". I interrupt in order that the most important information for today might surface.

I think that's what God did in Matthew's account of the Transfiguration. Peter's practical suggestions were wide of the mark and so God interrupted him with the most needful things for the disciples to hear in that moment. Which were 4-fold:

This is my Son.....I love him....I'm pleased with him....Listen to him.

It makes me wonder what we need to be interrupted in today in order that we may listen to God. Unlike Peter, who really did not need to build make-shift tents, our lives will be full of practical things we need to get on and do – whether that's at home or at church. Perhaps our partner has died and we have a mountain of paperwork to complete. Perhaps we've committed to an extra day each week looking after the grandchildren and we need to re-arrange our diary to make that practically happen. Perhaps it's time to get the church coffee rota done – or sort out when the engineer can come and look at the broken boiler that left folk moaning about the cold last Sunday! Perhaps the car's broken down and we're juggling how to get the children to nursery before we head off to work. Perhaps our frailty means it's an effort even to get out of bed, and we're trying to summons up the energy and the support of others to help us.

All of these practical things are the stuff of life and we need to get on with them. However, I wonder if sometimes we need to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God as we go about living our life. One interruption might be this service of worship where God reminds us who Jesus is and tells us to listen to him. What it looks like for you to listen to God, I'm not sure. I guess it's different for all of us. But, for me, this year, it is the truth that to get us to focus on the needful and important, God interrupts us, often when we are in full flow.

Do you want to be interrupted by God? I do. Let me invite you to find a 10 minutes space each day in the coming week just to be in God's presence and to listen – listen to your thoughts, your fears, your hopes, your doubts, your joys. Listen, too, when you're going about your daily life- when you're in full flow. In listening to the ordinary the extraordinary may surface as God's voice to you, communicated in Jesus Christ whom, like you, God loves. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God we listen for Christ's voice and know we hear it in:

- The despair of the hungry and homeless
- The hopelessness of the addict
- The eyes of the lonely

Help us to be your servants of light to them

Gracious God we listen for Christ's voice and know we hear it in those living in:

- bombed out towns and villages
- inhumane prisons
- corrupt political systems

Help others be your servants of light to them

Gracious God we listen for Christ's voice and we want to hear it in :

- our churches and communities
- our families
- our own lives

Be our light, Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen

The Lord's prayer

Hymn

Author of faith, eternal Word whose Spirit breathes the active flame;
Faith like its finisher and Lord, today as yesterday the same.

To Thee our humble hearts aspire, and ask the gift unspeakable;
Increase in us the kindled fire, in us the work of faith fulfil.

By faith we know Thee strong to save; save us, a present Saviour Thou!
Whate'er we hope, by faith we have future and past subsisting now.

To him that in Thy name believes eternal life with Thee is given;
Into Himself He all receives, pardon and holiness, and heaven.

The things unknown to feeble sense, unseen by reason's glimmering ray,
With strong commanding evidence their heavenly origin display.

Faith lends its realizing light, the clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
The invisible appears in sight, and God is seen by mortal eye.

Charles Wesley 1707-1788

May God's presence, voice and blessing: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be our deepest experience today and always. Amen.