

**The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa**

February 3, 2008

Exodus 24:12-18

2Peter 16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

Last week I preached a SAD sermon. I cited all the reasons which made the past couple of weeks the saddest of the year. There was sad economic news, sad weather, the sad state of the union, with sad events in the world, our state, our community and even many of our families.

Well, if the last two weeks are notable for being sad, the next couple weeks may be notable for being super. We will quickly pass the midway point of winter. Soon pitchers and catchers will report to spring training and a baseball season with super possibilities will begin. The awards for the super movies and music of the year will be given soon. This week a super party will take place at Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Super Tuesday is just two days away, almost two dozen states will cast votes for party nominations. And of course, today is Super Bowl Sunday. A day of Super parties, super entertainment, super commercials, and a super football game that may just crown the New England Patriots as the most super duper football team in the history of the world.

Whoever wins these super contests--either in politics, entertainment, advertising or football, will cash in big. More money, more publicity, more endorsements will be awarded to the super stars or the super candidates who win these super contests. I have to say, that after two weeks of SAD, I am ready for some weeks of SUPER.

Well, a reading of the scriptures offered for today highlight some pretty super events as well.

It's a Super week for Moses. After leading the Hebrew people through the Red Sea and out of the slavery of Egypt, Moses ascends the mountain of God. For six days he waits on the mountain until on the seventh day God invites Moses into to cloud where he is surrounded by the Glory of God. In the Glory of that Mountain God gives to Moses the covenant. He instructs Moses on what the people must do to remain the chosen, holy people of God. It has truly been a gloriously super week for Moses.

Jesus likewise comes to the end of a fairly super week. Six days previous Peter has proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah of God, the anointed one of God. For six days Jesus and the disciples may have pondered its meaning. Now, on the seventh day, Jesus takes Peter, James and John to the mountain. We are not told why they go there. Perhaps, like Moses before him, Jesus is looking for direction, looking for a way to understand all that has happened. Perhaps, he needs some time to consult with his closest advisors. There on the mountain the Jesus is surrounded by the glory of God. Peter, James, and John are amazed to see Jesus in conversation with the ancient leaders of Israel, Moses and Elijah. They are amazed to Jesus transfigured. The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus.

This is truly super. This is more than they could have ever dreamed. Can you imagine their excitement!!!! Peter's first response is to want to stay. Let's build some dwellings and stay here longer. Jesus though leads them down the mountain. Surely on the way down Peter, James and John could hardly contain themselves. Just think of how jealous the others will be. Just think of how famous we will be. We were there....we say Moses and Elijah. We have seen for ourselves and we the inside scoop of who Jesus is!!!! We will be famous, we will be super stars!!!!

Can you imagine how devastated they must have been when Jesus ordered them to be silent. Surely they must have wondered... “what’s the point of being part of something so super if you can’t cash in on it.” What is the point? Jesus has been shown to be superior to Moses and Elijah. Jesus is declared to be God’s beloved. Peter, James and John are told to listen to Jesus. The glory of God shined radiantly in the face of Jesus. Why the command for silence?

The disciples are told to be silent because the light that shined when Jesus was transfigured on that mountain is nothing compared to the light that will shine when Jesus is resurrected. Jesus has been shown to be God’s beloved, but that title is not given as an award. The title is given for a purpose. God’s beloved, God’s chosen, has been given mission. God’s beloved is chosen to bring God’s healing to the world. Jesus has been chosen for a mission that will save the world from destruction. God’s beloved is given the mission to conquer evil and death. This mission will be accomplished not on the mountain where he is transfigured. This mission will be accomplished on another mountain. After the transfiguration, Jesus descends the mountain and turns to Jerusalem where he will ascend the mountain of Calvary to die. On that mountain, when he is raised from the dead, the Glory of God’s Triumph over evil and death will truly shine. On that mountain, Jesus will bring healing to the world.

And, dear friends, what then are we to do?

I would suggest that the message Jesus gives to us today is no different than that which he spoke to his disciples when he touched them and said, Get up. Don’t be afraid.

Following his time on the mountain, things got pretty rough for Jesus. In the days ahead he would face rejection, betrayal, suffering and death. His radiant clothes would be stripped. His face would be slapped, his back whipped, he head crowned with thorns. The voice that proclaimed Jesus beloved will be silent. The only voices he will hear will be those which mock him as he dies. In the days to come, no one will imagine that through this man, the radiant light of God once shined brightly. When it comes, Jesus tells his followers, don’t be afraid. You will see the glory of God shine even more brilliantly than you do today.

Jesus tells us the same. There are difficult days that come. They come in all life. We often feel betrayed, abandoned, and rejected. We too face suffering and death. But, in those days, do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. You too will know the healing touch of Jesus. You too will conquer death. You too will be victorious. You too will shine with the radiance of God.

Do not be afraid.

By God’s grace, you too will conquer all that is sad. By God’s grace, you too will share in the healing power of God’s love. You too will know the fullness of life. Do not be afraid. By God’s grace, and in God’s love you too will know life that is truly Super.