

**“The Emerging Voice” a sermon for Transfiguration Sunday based on Mark 9:2-9
preached by Kerry Enright at Knox Church Dunedin on Sunday 15 February 2-15.**

What I am about to do is called “preaching a sermon”. Sermons emerge from the life of the community engaging the life of God, embodied in Jesus Christ. Sermons don’t come by a person like me living in isolation, reading the Bible in isolation, reflecting in isolation, receiving a message in isolation, and then coming to this isolated mountain (this pulpit) to deliver a message to you, only to depart again to isolation.

The Word of God arises in the rhythm of community – in the flow of our lives - the to and fro, the gathering and dispersing. It comes from amid **us**, **our** living with God, **our** following of Jesus, **our** engagement with God.

Mountain tops can be isolated places. Ed Hillary said that when climbing Everest, Tensing Norguay stepped back to let Hillary go ahead because only one person could get to the top of Everest at a time.

But that is not the mountain today. It was crowded. Peter and James and John and Jesus, and then Elijah and Moses turn up. And Peter contemplates adding three booths.

Scholars debate why Elijah and Moses appear on the mountain. Perhaps they represent the Law and the Prophets, the people of Israel. Perhaps it is how they died that brings them here, Moses dying just before he was to enter the promised land, Elijah taken in a whirlwind; prefiguring the death and resurrection of Jesus. Perhaps because they each experienced special revelations on mountains.

We don’t know exactly why they are there. We do know they brought the stories of the people of Israel. The people of Israel are there, and Jesus emerges from that community. The Word of God emerges from a community.

The Word of God needs the rhythm and messiness of community. We listen to the Word of God read, we see the word of God enacted, we hear the word of God proclaimed, we try to live it and then we reflect on our living, and we come back to the Word, back to the community gathered around the Word, so by an iterative process, by a spiral, the Word takes form among us.

This was evident last week. Last Sunday's sermon was about the healing presence of the risen crucified Christ in our homes, including in this home Knox Church. So the Word was proclaimed.

Then, no sooner was the word proclaimed, no sooner was last Sunday's service concluded, a young woman came and sat here, two or three pews back on the left hand side, distraught. She came here because she was alone and needed a place to be - she was here from overseas, on holiday, with her brother. But now her brother was in a coma in the intensive care unit and she was his only family, far from home, from another country and she was sleeping in the hospital. Her parents were on their way but it would take three days for them to get here, so this community, Knox community, provided a home. We spent time with her and her brother and she came with another friend to stay with us. And then ... he died. We were with him, in respect for him, in honour of him, in care for her. And then the parents came. And last Friday we had a funeral in the Crematorium looking across the sea he loved, the sea that stretched to their land, among the waves for he liked to surf. Yesterday we farewelled them. Throughout the week I was so conscious of last Sunday's sermon, the healing presence of the risen crucified Christ in our homes.

The Word emerges out of the community of Elijah and Moses, with James, and Peter, and John, with you and me. We are all there on the mountain.

And a cloud overshadows them, a mist descends and from the mist comes a voice. This Word that emerges, comes from beyond us, from mystery - we are people of the mist (while honouring Tuhoë as the people of the mist).

And from mystery, from the cloud comes these words, like a spotlight on the one to whom we are to listen -

"This is my Son, my beloved, listen to him."

From beyond us, the God who is beyond us, apart from us, not a product of us - listen to him.

It isn't about us. It isn't about what resources we have or do not have. It is about the one to whom we point - listen to him.

I want us to think about another cloud, this land of the long white cloud, Aotearoa.

What word is Jesus speaking from this place, from this community?

On Thursday, the Salvation Army released a report called “a mountain all can climb”.

The report says that some aspects of New Zealand are improving ... employment, gambling, teenage pregnancy, overall crime, number of cases of child abuse and neglect.

Some are essentially the same – incomes, living costs, child poverty, imprisonment.

Some are worse – housing availability and affordability, infant mortality and number of offences against children for violent mistreatment or neglect.

So extreme child poverty is still at 17% (child poverty is 25%).

From this land, Jesus speaks, calls for us to pay attention, not to accept, not to turn away, to grapple with and to be noisy about and to be smart in action about.

And from beyond this land,

You know that three months ago we sponsored Max to work with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea – the PROK.

He left in November and he returned last Sunday.

There followed an interview with Max around four areas -

- Tell us about your work with the children.
- Tell us about something or someone that inspired you and why.
- Tell us about something that challenged you.
- What was the riskiest thing you did?

Out of community, this community;

Out of community, this land;

From beyond us, from mystery;

From beyond us, our sister church,

The Word of God emerges.

“This is my Son, the beloved, listen to him.”

KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

growing in courage to live the Jesus way



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