

**First Baptist Church of Augusta**  
**Mark 9:2-8**  
**Come and See Christ Transforming You**  
**February 22, 2009**

Our pastor, Dr. DeLoach, has been preaching a sermon series on the subject, "Come and See." Today, I will conclude that series with a sermon entitled, "Come and See Christ Transforming You."

Stimulus Package - In the last few days, Congress passed and the President signed a \$787 Billion Dollar Stimulus Package. If you are like me, I don't understand where all those billions are going. Although, I did go to the website, Recovery.gov and learned as much as I could. But what I sincerely hope is this money stimulates the economy and pulls us from recession to productivity.

Stimulus Package - I sometimes think we need a spiritual stimulus package. We need to be stimulated or encouraged out of our spiritual recession into spiritual productivity.

If you need a spiritual stimulus, come and see a place for us to go. Come with me to the mountain – to the Mountain of Transfiguration.

"Come and see," Jesus said to Peter, James and John, "Come with me to the mountain," and they were in for a big change.

This transfiguration event, this vision, this epiphany is so important to the gospel story that it appears in all three synoptic gospels - Mark 9, Luke 9 and Matthew 17. This is a story of change.

From what do you need to change? What habit, what attitude, what toxic thought or way of living that is destructive? Maybe it is an addition, a craving, something you would not admit.

We Baptists do not have a formal confession like our Catholic friends, but we need to confess. Not that you confess to me or any other minister. We believe in the priesthood of all believers and can confess directly to God. But, do we? When was the last time you confessed anything to God, and then expected it to be forgiven, to go away, to be removed, to be changed.

The Bible is full of change stories from the Old Testament to the New:

Abram became Abraham and he was changed into the father of religious faith.

Moses became the deliver and he was changed into the leader of the Hebrew people.

Jacob became Israel and he was changed into the God's faithful servant.

Peter became Cephas, the Rock, and he was changed into The Big Fisherman.

Thomas became a true disciple, and he was changed from the doubter to the believer.

Saul became Paul, and he was changed into the missionary giant of the church.

All of these heroes of the Bible were changed. And you might be saying that this is well and good for Bible days, but what about these days.

Come and see that God through Jesus Christ is still changing lives, even today. God is still in the changing business.

A few months ago, the Augusta Housing Authority sold the public housing site, Gilbert Manor, to the Medical College of Georgia. Gilbert Manor was named for John Wesley Gilbert. Gilbert was an African American who was born in Hephzibah, Ga. on July 6, 1864.

He was a good student, but could only spend half the year in public school in Augusta and the other half working in the fields during planting and harvesting time.

With scholarships and grants, he attended college in Augusta and Atlanta. Gilbert continued his studies, and in 1891 received an MA degree from Brown University in Rhode Island. Graduate work was taken at the University of Berlin, Germany and Athens, Greece.

John Wesley Gilbert bears testimony to change. A black boy from Hephzibah, Dr. Gilbert became a successful businessman, a teacher, an archaeologist, a college president and a Methodist preacher. God is still in the changing business.

It happened to me a few months ago. Some of you recall I took a few days of continuing education leave and spent some time in England and Scotland.

Part of my time away was taken on the island of Iona, a remote Hebrides isle off the rugged coast of western Scotland. I stayed in an ancient stone abbey. It was there I experienced God is still in the changing business.

Worship was several times a day in the abbey chapel. The chapel was cold, often 58 degrees, poor lighting, with hard seats, and with songs and liturgy of which I was not familiar.

In the middle of the second day, I thought to myself, I have six days of this and I am supposed to be worshiping. And then, God through change, took a two by four and hit me right between the eyes. God reminded me that worship does not require central heat and air. Nor does worship require lighted chandlers, cushioned pews, and songs to my liking.

In my discomfort, God wrought His change in me. Before I would leave Iona, God had two more changes for my life.

The second, was in the refectory or dining hall. Some of you know I have serious culinary idiosyncrasies. Well, I am just really picky about food.

For my six days on Iona, three meals a day, they only served meat three times. One day lamb, one day fish, and one day beef stew, and you had to search for the beef. With me being rather carnivorous, I thought I was going to starve. Praise the Lord for peanut butter.

During one of my gastronomic pity parties, God reminded me, there is nothing wrong with this food, there is plenty of it and it is very healthy and nutritious. God was changing me and my dietary attitude. Changing me from griping to gratitude. God is still in the changing business.

One final change on Iona came on day four. We took a pilgrimage across the island. It was a six hour hike through marsh, moors, pastureland, and rocky terrain. The weather was harsh. We had rain, sleet, hail, and wind gusts between forty and fifty miles per hour. It was a tough walk.

The third stop on the journey was at a point where two rut filled dirt roads converged. Our guide informed us, this was the only place on the island where any roads crossed. The traveler had to make a decision which way to go.

After singing a hymn and reading scripture, our guide posed the question, *“Is there anyone at a crossroads in their life? Are you facing decisions you need to make? Which way will you go? Who will guide you?”*

I felt a holy nudge reminding, *“Guide me, O, Thou great Jehovah.”* God is still in the changing business.

Theologian, Martin Buber once said, *“All journeys have a secret destination of which the traveler is unaware.”* That was surely true for me on my journey to Iona. I learned once again that God is still in the changing business.

You might be saying, *“I can’t change, I can’t do this.”* Of course you can’t. You can’t do this by yourself. But come and see it is God who is in the changing business.

Remember the song we sang, “It Is Well With My Soul?” That third verse, *“My sin oh the bless of this glorious thought.”* When I first sang that many years ago, I thought, is it the sin that is glorious or the thought of sin that is glorious? And who would have the audacity to write something like that.

Of course, it is not the sin that is glorious, but the thought of nailing that sin to the cross, that is the glorious thought. And, as we confess and give our sin to Jesus, we are changed.

Yet, don’t misunderstand the change, the transforming change mentioned in this transfiguration story. The change is not just about you and me and our habits, attitudes, and sin. The change must start with our relationship with Christ. That will influence every other change in our life.

God said on that mountain of change, *“This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.”* The story is about Jesus, and who He is. Jesus was transfigured. This story is not just about Peter, James, and John and their need for change. Their change, like ours, is only understood in the transfiguration of Jesus.

C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity says, *“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”*

When we look at life through the lens of Jesus, everything comes into focus. The decisions we need to make and the changes that should happen in our lives are much clearer and understandable when we are in right relationship with Jesus.

Our lives have been stained, stained by divorce, hatred, prejudice, addiction, selfishness, pride; so much stain.

If you could change one thing about your life, what would that be? Let us take thirty seconds in the middle of this sermon to consider this matter. Thirty seconds of silence and you think about one thing in your life you would like to change.

Now, you have thought about that one thing in your life that you would like to change. But you have decided, you cannot do this, you can’t change, or you are not willing to change.

Then let me ask, what stimulus package will make us change? What stimulus, what encouragement would it take to change us?

To be caught - to be caught in your sin, by your wife, by your children, by your boss, by your preacher. What stimulus do we need to change? What motivation? Just what would it take for our transfiguration?

“Come and see,” Jesus said to Peter, James, John, “Come with me to the mountain.” Do we have the courage to go with Jesus to the mountain? Oh, it will not be easy. Most things that are worthwhile in life are not easy. But the pain is worth the gain. Because going to the mountain with Jesus is a transforming changing business.

My friend and fellow church member, Les Powell reminded me this week that Aslan, the Jesus figure of Narnia, is not a tame lion. He has claws and he will use them. Not in wrath, but in redemption. He will pick off the ugly scales of sin and we will be new baptized.

Looking over this room, is there anyone who needs a change in their life? Anyone need to go from recession to spiritual productivity?

If so, then come with me to the mountain– the mountain of transfiguration, the mountain of change. Jesus is waiting. Come on, let’s go, Come and See Christ Transforming You.

Sources:

John Wesley Gilbert: [Wikipedia](#)



**Transfiguration of Jesus By Raphael**