

Pastor Keith E. Wiens
Text: Luke 9:28-36

February 14, 2010
The Transfiguration of our Lord

NOW WHAT?

Now what? You come to a fork in the road and you ask, now what? You finish school, you graduate, and you take a deep breath and ask, now what? You move to a new community, you start a new job and you ask, now what? You go through a tough time, you are at your wits' end and you ask, now what?

This congregation is at such a time. As a congregation there may be some who are asking, now what?

Life is a journey. We are on the journey and while we may know where we want to end up, we don't always know how to get there. The journey of life doesn't come with a detailed map, carefully drafted instructions or a GPS device. We don't know what tomorrow will bring. We don't know what is around the corner. And that can be scary. And it can leave us asking, now what?

Today we heard the story of Jesus and three disciples spending some time on a mountain in prayer. While there, the disciples had an amazing experience with Jesus. They saw Jesus as they had never seen him before. The appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. The disciples saw Moses and Elijah, two heroes of the Old Testament. It was a fantastic experience! But the experience ended and they had to leave.

As they climbed down from the top of the mountain they didn't know what was ahead of them. They didn't know that their journey would have surprising twists and turns. They didn't know that their journey would be filled with difficulty and danger. They didn't know that the journey would take them to Jerusalem, and then to Golgotha, the hill outside Jerusalem where Jesus was put to death on a cross, and then to the graveyard nearby. This would be a journey that would rip their hearts apart and bring them to the brink of despair.

They had no idea of what was in store for them as they descended from that mountain. But Jesus knew. That's why he took them up to the top of the mountain. He wanted to give them help for their journey. And help they did receive! They saw Jesus revealed as the Son of God. They saw that Moses and Elijah and the whole Old Testament tradition pointed to Jesus. And they heard the voice of God saying, "This is my Son, listen to him!"

Do you know what is ahead for you? Do you know what tomorrow will bring? Or next month? Or next year? Do you know what you will be doing in five years? Or ten years?

Of course you don't! You have plans for the future. You have hopes and dreams of what the days and years will bring. But you don't know what will happen. You may have the excitement of great mountain top experiences, or you may have to walk through dark and lonely valleys. You may be happy, or happiness may elude you. Life may go well for you, or it may not. You don't know.

But one thing is for sure - the great and awesome God, loves you! And because God's love for you is strong, God has a gift for you. It is the gift given to the disciples upon the mountain. The gift is Jesus.

Keep your eyes focused on Jesus. Listen to him. He is the Guide for your journey. He is your Strength when you are weak. He is Bread when you are hungry. He is a Shield when you are threatened. He is Deliverance when you are in danger. He is Healing when you are broken. He is the One who leads you through the wilderness, takes you across the Jordan, and lands you safe in Canaan, the Land of Promise.

We come here today to go up the mountain and pray with Jesus. We gather to listen to him. We gather to hear his word and be fed at his table. We gather to be lifted up and nourished and fortified for the days ahead. We gather to receive support from one another, but even more, to receive support from the One who journeyed to the cross, and then to the grave, and then beyond, to God's new Life. Jesus is the One who brings you that new Life. No matter where your journey is at the moment, no matter where your journey may take you in the days to come, Jesus will bring you God's gift of new Life.

In the early days of the TV show *Survivor*, there was a participant named Dirk. Life was not easy for the participants. They ate rice three times a day. Rats were everywhere, crawling over them while they slept. They didn't have toothbrushes, deodorant or soap. They had to do things like eat stingray and beetle larvae. But for Dirk, the hardest part was that he was the only Christian. He didn't get homesick, but he did get lonely for the companionship of other Christians. In spite of the fact that the others on the island made fun of his faith, he read his Bible every day and spent time in prayer. He listened to Jesus. And that is what helped him survive.

And that is what helps us survive as well. You may never be a participant on a TV Survivor show, but you are on a journey called Life. Now what, you may ask. What is next? Where does the journey lead? While we don't know all the answers, we do know that Jesus is here and he will journey with us and he will bring us God's gift of new Life!