

Lectionary passages:-

II Kings 2 v1-12;

Psalm 50 v1-12 ;

II Corinthians 4 3-6:

Mark 9 v2-7

The books of I and II Kings are not ones we read from much in Church these days, they are a collection of what some see as some very strange stories! Today's passage is no exception. The great prophet Elijah, who did many miracles, including raising a boy from the dead and bringing down fire on a sacrifice dowsed in water on the mountain top, is travelling with his apprentice Elisha. This is the day of his "death". But, Elijah, like Enoch before him is not going to die in the normal sense! He is one of the only two people in the Old Testament who did not die but went straight to heaven.

Elisha has the blessing of watching the angels come down in a chariot and take Elijah!

What an incredible event! The blessing is twofold. He is previously promised by Elijah that if he witnesses first hand Elijah's removal to heaven then he, Elisha, will inherit a double portion of the spirit of God from Elijah! In due course Elisha himself does see Elijah go and does go on to perform twice as many miracles as his teacher Elijah. It is all good stuff for us, it is encouraging our faith.

So we are probably not surprised to read the gospel today about the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain top, this will lead us then nicely this week into the 40 days of Lent, starting on Ash Wednesday. (17th Feb)

In Mark 9 we see Jesus taking Peter, James and John up a mountain in what many see as the mid-point in his ministry. This follows Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah in Caesarea Philippi. Jesus meets with Moses and Elijah. They are surrounded by a very bright light, the presence of God.

The three chat, discussing the next and final stage of the ministry of Jesus. A voice comes from the cloud similar to the voice at the Baptism of Jesus which clearly says:-

"This is my son who I love, Listen to him!"

So again today we are presented with a supernatural event. This event stuck in the minds of the disciples, and is repeated for us in each of the first three gospels.

We are reminded Jesus is on a mission from God. His life and ministry is God's work and plan. History is set up so Jesus can make sense of it and bring it to the proper conclusion.

And we hear the voice of God who says to us as he says to the people gathered that day:-

"This is my son Listen to him!"

Can I be bold enough to say many today do not listen to Jesus or heed his words? Often his words are interpreted, changed, put aside, with no decision made as to whether we ought to believe him!

In a sense we are like Elisha, we witness the presence of God on the Mount of Transfiguration and as we believe, we receive God's Spirit which makes a significant difference to the world we inhabit.

(Why not read Jesus' words for yourself and check for yourself what he says?)

Read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 or Jesus' words to his disciples in John 14, 15 & 16?

I am sure you will agree it is a challenge, but the blessing comes when we listen and do his words.