

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.

Message description:

The transfiguration is an event recounted in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in which Jesus takes three of his disciples away from the crowds and up the mountain to pray. While there, Jesus' appearance changed, and he began to glow. Then Moses and Elijah appeared standing beside him as the voice of God was heard saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." It was a mountain-top experience for Peter, James, and John. So powerful, that Peter wanted to build three tents or tabernacles to host Moses, Elijah, and Jesus and stay. But we can't stay on the mountain forever. We are transformed by such powerful theophanies, or encounters with the divine. Our lives are changed forever. But we are overwhelmed by the presence of God and his love and filled with the power of the spirit so that we can go and share that love with others.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 17:1–8

Mark 9:2–8

Luke 9:28–36

2 Peter 1:16–18

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. Have you heard the story of the transfiguration before? If you have, what stood out to you this time? Or what did you notice differently?
2. Share a story about one of your spiritual mountaintops. When was a time when you felt overwhelmed by the presence and love of God, and you just knew you were in his presence?
3. What do you make of Peter's desire to want to stay on the mountain? Why is it so tempting to want to stay on the mountain top?
4. Discipleship is more than just chasing or trying to re-create the next spiritual high. How can we remind one another that God's presence is available to us even in the regular, routine, or monotonous days? How can we remember the truth of the incarnation, that God is with us, even in the valleys of life?
5. What gives you hope for the future right now?

Going Deeper: Read the following statement by Rev. Kyle Meier, a fellow United Methodist pastor

Dear friends,

My name is Kyle Meier and I currently serve as a pastor in the local church. Like many, I have been following the news of what God is doing over in Wilmore, KY. I have to say that I am encouraged and inspired by what I am reading. It appears not only that God is at work, but the leaders are working hard to ensure this doesn't become a spectacle or merely spiritual euphoria. I am so inspired by both your humility and your hunger.

As a co-laborer in this Kingdom movement, I also have a challenge for you.

One of the things that I hope the leaders, speakers and chaplains will push you to ask is this...
What for?

What is this revival for? Eventually, like all revivals, this one will end and the next question...the most important question...is what was that revival supposed to do?

I need you to ask this question, because if I have a concern about events like these it is that they can produce Christians who believe what's happening at Asbury is not only the norm, but the goal. Sometimes events like these can lead young adults to believe that this is what the Christian life is all about...chasing, pursuing, even manufacturing moments when we need to feel intense proximity to the divine. On my most skeptical day, I get worried that these moments teach young believers to spend the rest of their lives chasing the next spiritual high and when they can't find it, they chalk their previous experience up to immature sensationalism and walk away from the faith altogether.

The reason I know this is because I am pastoring those very (former) students. They too had intense, spiritual experiences in high school, college, church, camp, conferences, etc. And then, several things happened. Life happened. Some of them burned out. Some of them were hurt by the church. For some, their brain caught up with their heart and they started to question and wrestle (which is healthy!) their beliefs, but were told they just needed to believe. Believe like they used to. Believe like they did "back then."

Again, as someone in the field, I am also here to tell you that if you don't ask the question "what for?" what will happen is we will send new Christians into the world in pursuit of a vertical-only type of faith. You will ignore the pain, suffering and injustice in our world like the priests in the Good Samaritan who had better, spiritual, more important things to do. Those who have been excluded, marginalized and oppressed will look at our revivals with disdain. They will say to themselves, "What kind of God pours out grace on his people...only for them to keep it to themselves?" The world will continue to see Christianity not as Good News for all, but merely good news for those who found the Light and chose to hide it or reserve it only for those they assumed were worthy.

Just like the disciples, there will come a time when Jesus will invite you to come down off the mountain. To descend into the valley. To reengage the hurt, pain and suffering of this world. And you will be tempted, like Peter, to want to stay. To remain in that place. To hold desperately to the "high" of being in the presence of modern-day transfiguration of sorts.

But I am begging you...please don't. There are many of us out in the very wilderness to which your college will be sending you. We need you. And furthermore, we need you to embody a Jesus who isn't just the savior to some, but to all. We need you embody a Jesus who doesn't just want our worship and affection, but our hands and our feet. We need you not only for the revival, but the reformation of our shared Christian faith.

- What stands out to you about this letter?
- How would you answer his question, what is revival for?
- Meier writes, "Sometimes events like these can lead young adults to believe that this is what the Christian life is all about...chasing, pursuing, even manufacturing moments when we need to feel intense proximity to the divine."
 - o What is the danger of this?
 - o Have you ever experienced (for yourself or others) discouragement, disappointment, or disillusionment from faith when you couldn't experience the same closeness?
 - o Have you ever experienced an event that felt manufactured?
- Where do you most regularly feel God or experience his presence?
- Meier writes, "Those who have been excluded, marginalized, and oppressed will look at our revivals with disdain. They will say to themselves, 'What kind of God pours out grace on his people...only for them to keep it to themselves?' The world will continue to see Christianity not as Good News for all, but merely good news for those who found the Light and chose to hide it or reserve it only for those they assumed were worthy."
 - o What gifts have we been given and how are we actively sharing those gifts with others in need?
 - o What will be our witness after our own moments of worship or "awakenings"?

Ultimately, the gift of God's presence being poured out anywhere in the world is *amazing!* We are called to abide in the love and presence and friendship with God!! But we can't forget to ask, for what? Or rather, for whom? The people of Israel were blessed to *be* a blessing for all nations. We now have been called to be in relationship with God for the love and service and reconciliation of others.

Let's be the Revolution!