'That's my boy!' - a Bible Study on the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-9)

Opening: Leader opens in prayer.

1. Gathering (each member of the group can choose one of the following):
   - Tell the group about a time when you experienced a sense of awe or wonder. What brought it about? How did you respond? Did it change you in any way?
   - OR: Apart from Jesus, who is your favourite biblical character? Why?
   - OR: Have you ever had what you would call an adventure? What was the setting? What happened?

2. Wrestling with God's Word


What puzzles you about this passage? What questions do you have?

Why do you think Moses and Elijah appear on the mountain with Jesus? What are the connections between these three figures?

(You might want to check out Exodus 34:4-9, 1 Kings 19:11-14.)

What are the words that God the Father speaks in his revelation?

Read Matthew 16:13-21.

At this stage of Jesus' ministry, why do you think it is important for Jesus to hear these words from his Father?

How does Jesus' identity and security lead on to what God calls him to do?

Which is more important – Jesus' identity or his activity?

The disciples are terrified when they see the cloud, sense the presence of God, and hear God's voice. In the Jewish understanding of God and the world, what was unholy would be destroyed - consumed, burned up - by the presence of the Holy God. No sinful person could see God or be in his presence and expect to live.

As God introduces the true identity of Jesus to them, he also gives the disciples a command. He says 'This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased. Listen to him.'

What are the words Jesus says to disciples after the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration?

(Note: the root of the Greek word Jesus uses in verse 7, which is translated as 'Get up' in the NIV, is actually ergerthete – which literally means 'Be raised.' It is the imperative form of the same word used in verse 9 – Jesus will be raised from the dead. It is a widely used word for 'resurrection' in the NT.)

With this understanding, what added significance do Jesus' words to the disciples take on?

3. Wrestling with the World: Identity vs activity

The Transfiguration is not just 'good news for Jesus' – it is also 'Good news for us.' Jesus comes to
touch his disciples, to raise them up from fear and certain death, and to bestow upon them an identity – children of God, brothers of Jesus, beloved ones in whom God is well pleased. Jesus does the same for all his followers, including you and me. In baptism, the name of God is placed on us, we are adopted and given an identity as God's beloved children. In Holy Communion, Jesus touches his disciples in a powerful and personal way, to raise us from sin and death and to make us holy and able to stand without fear in God's presence, through his forgiveness.

As Christians, our identity as Children of God, whom he loves, and our security, as people with whom God is well pleased, are prior to our activity. Our identity is more important than what we do! God is pleased with us for Jesus' sake.

How does the world often turn this equation upside down? How does the world find security and identity in activity (who we are, and what we are worth, comes out of what we do – so we think)?

Read Matthew 28:16-20. How are Jesus' words connected to the words of God the Father in Matthew 17:5? In each verse, what is the command? what is the promise?

One of the few places apart from the gospel accounts of the Transfiguration that the word 'transformed' is found is in Romans 12:1-2.

How does this passage describe the life of a follower of Jesus?

How is our mind renewed?

Get practical now. How will we, as disciples of Jesus, as beloved children of God, 'Listen to Jesus' in daily life?

What are the factors in our lives that make it hard to 'listen to him'?

What are the disciplines that will help us to live as beloved children of God, people who listen to Jesus?

**LSF – LOVE one another, SERVE the world, FOLLOW Jesus**

How does the Transfiguration of Jesus invite you and equip you for the life of

-Loving One Another?

-Serving the World?

-Following Jesus?

What could your group do together (that you couldn't do alone) to practice these aspects of life in the next month?

In your group, plan a non-Bible-study get together to Love, Serve or Follow.

What will you do? Plan now.

**CLOSING: end with prayer for one another and the group. You might do this in groups of two or three, or as a whole group.** Especially pray that you may live out of your identity as children of God, secure in his love, listening to Jesus.