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Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 33

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Matthew 17:1-9

March 1, 2026

Second Sunday of Lent

Last Sunday readings identified the importance of obedience to overcome sin and what happens if we choose the Garments of the Flesh over the Robe of Glory as we saw with Adam and Eve. We also witnessed the perfect model of fortitude and obedience in the wilderness when Jesus rejected the false promises of Satan.

Today's readings offer further reflection on such fortitude and obedience especially in the examples of Abram, Timothy, and Peter. We have Abram, 75 years old, when God asks Abram to "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk, his homeland, and go to a place I will show you." He moves his entire family and estate not knowing where he is going. And God tells Abram, "You will receive my blessing once you arrive at the destination I have chosen for you. No Questions asked, "Abram went as the Lord directed him." He has complete trust and obedience to God and his plan for him. Again, another example in our Sacred Scripture, yes, we can retire from our corporate duties, our worldly jobs but never to the task God presents to us in serving his Kingdom no matter our age. Remember Moses was eighty and Aaron eighty-three when they were called to lead the people out of Egypt.

Our second reading comes from one of the Pastoral Epistles which are The Letters of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. In Paul's Second Letter to Timothy, which we seldom speak about from the Ambo –has this tone of farewell and encouragement, a final will and testament from Paul. Timothy, was a convert, converted by Paul. He was of mixed Jewish and Gentile parentage. He was on Paul's second and third missionary journeys. He was often sent by Paul on special

missions. He was described as the administrator of the entire Ephesian community. Think about the times during Jesus' life and then afterwards, the persecutions of the Church, the destruction of the Jewish Temple, the execution of the leaders of the new Church. False teaching, gathering places were homes, not church buildings. Living a long life as a Christian at the time of Timothy was almost impossible. But again God, through Paul's words, is testing his young disciple's fortitude and obedience, "Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God." Timothy is exhorted by Paul, "We are ambassadors of Christ. We are teachers in word and example. We must learn the meaning and discipline of the Christian life. A message for not only Timothy but to us as well as modern-day Timothy's. Tradition has Timothy dying a martyr, stone to death by followers of the Roman god Artemis, in Ephesus.

In our Gospel reading, Matthew, Mark, and Luke share almost identical accounts of Jesus' transfiguration. Matthew places Jesus' transfiguration between the first and second predictions of His coming passion. A lot is happening with Jesus and his Disciples before the Transfiguration, Peter's great messianic confession, Jesus' telling them he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Peter being rebuked in front of everyone "Get behind me Satan. You are an obstacle to me!" Then Jesus telling them, you are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

There must be doubt and questioning setting in amongst his closest followers. For what have we signed up? One of my Commentaries wrote "Before a man can fight and adventure upon his feet, he must wonder and pray upon his knees."

Jesus understood what was ahead of him, the time was drawing near. He needed to get away from the crowds, he needed quiet, clarity, and assurance from his Father. To be in his presence, confirming with him in prayer, is this what I am to do? As in the Garden of Gethsemane. "Not as I will but your will!" Jesus received confirmation that evening, to begin his Exodus to Jerusalem and to calvary. But he was not the only one to receive confirmation. That night on that mountain was a private epiphany for Peter, James, and John. Jesus standing between Elijah and Moses, his face shining like the sun, his clothes become white as light. Pope Benedict XVI wrote on the Transfiguration; Jesus expresses his glory to the apostles so that they may have the strength to face the scandal of the cross and understand that it is necessary to pass through many tribulations to reach the Kingdom of God. Peter, along with James and John received confirmation directly from God, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to him!" And then Jesus touches them saying, "Rise

and do not be afraid." And in the end, like Abram and Timothy these men did exactly what they were called to do; to be obedient to the plan God had for them, to press forward in fortitude to the end.

So where is our mountaintop place to be quiet, to get clarity from God, to be transfigured? Cutting out all the noise, being still, being one-on-one with our Creator? All these apps, like Hallow and Amen. They are great resources and have their place, but can we hear the whisper of God? Can we be still and quiet enough to hear him speak directly to us? No filters, no human advice. Bishop Erik Varden, a Bishop of Norway and a monk wrote - - We must sit still and look at ourselves as we are. To learn to know God, we first must know ourselves. That is not always easy. We easily forget that God has hope for us. He knows we need to grow, and to grow up. Yes, of course we are conditioned by factors not subject to our choice; of course, we carry gifts and wounds of all sorts; these condition us, but do not determine us. What determines a life is not the mold from which it issues but the goal towards which it moves. The old Adam is not a model for the new, but the new model for the old. Lent is our time to be obedient, to draw on God's fortitude and work on our new model.