

**Second Sunday of Lent**  
**March 1, 2026**

We have all had those moments that you wish could last forever: a family gathering where everyone was getting along, a winter vacation in warm sunshine, that time you won the state title, walking across the stage to receive your diploma, landing that prize Northern, holding your new-born child for the first time, receiving that coin marking your first year of sobriety. Moments of love-making and creation-beholding and heart-changing that don't happen all that much but when they do you can't believe you are so fortunate and you wish it could last forever.

But they don't, do they? Sometimes abruptly and sometimes gently, they all come to an end. Vacation is over and you're back to work; someone else now holds the record, "I love you" melts into the reality of relationships, the mounted fish collects dust and the newborn becomes a teenager. You wake up to another "one-day-at-a-time." We come down off the mountain, just like Jesus did with his companions. We come down to the valley, and the mountain becomes a memory.

It seems so wrong, doesn't it? Why would God provide those kind of moments for Jesus, for us, those moments that last only a short time? Because we couldn't do the rest of time without them. Because in our day-to-day challenges and sacrifices and struggles they give us something to hold on to. Because they are, in this earthly life, a hint of what awaits us in the kingdom of heaven. Those events and experiences are the very things that give us courage and strength and perseverance to continue the journey, to wake up the next day and face whatever it is that we have to face.

Abram was sent forth from the land of his kinfolks to make a great nation. He had no idea what challenges would await him. He had no idea what he would encounter or what would be required of him. But remembering and empowered by God's blessing, he and all those who followed made the journey to the Promised Land.

Thousands of years later, Paul would pen a letter to his friend Timothy. There would be hardships, Paul said. Bear them with the strength that comes from God, he told Timothy. Remember what it was like when you first believed, when you first knew the Risen Lord.

It is always tempting to want to pitch our tent on the mountain and stay there. It would be wonderful if our relationships were always a honeymoon, if every ticket was a winner and our parents were always perfect.

And sometimes it is equally tempting to wallow in the darkness and to seek pity in our hardships, to surrender ourselves to division and the forces of evil. It might be easier to give up on love or to think that truth no longer exists. But would that not deny the very grace of God that we have also known in our lives?

Our life with Christ, who knows both death and resurrection, allows us to use the moments of transfiguration to give us hope in moments of darkness. Our life with Christ who knew both suffering and glory helps us to find strength in the hardships that life inevitably dishes out. Our life with Christ, who knew both the voice of God calling him beloved as well as the voices of those who condemned him, helps us to listen to that voice of God declaring us beloved daughters and sons in those hours we feel anything but beloved.

So, we keep going. Completing our journey like Abraham did. Picking up our cross like Jesus did. Sharing our share of the hardship for the gospel like Timothy did. Like they all did, those faithful men and women who have gone before us. Just like we must do, not only for ourselves, but for the generations that are yet to come.