

**Voices!**

Exodus 24<sup>12-end</sup>; Psalm 2; 2 Peter 1<sup>16-end</sup>; Matthew 17<sup>1-9</sup>

*This is my Son, the beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!*  
[Matthew 17<sup>5</sup>]

'Can every body hear me?' So began the preacher. A voice rang out from the congregation, 'Yes! But I will gladly swap places with someone who can't!'

Voices are so important - they are what distinguishes us, even when we can't be seen. It always amuses me when people ask where I am from and then suggest, 'Wales?' If you had heard me speak before I left Aberdeenshire to study in London you would have struggled to comprehend anything I said: suffice it say that the TV series, *The Trawlermen*, based in my hometown has subtitles!

On this Transfiguration Sunday, what is clear in the Epistle and in the Gospel, is that Peter (one of the three witnesses of Jesus being transfigured and of the meeting with Moses and Elijah) recognised the voice of God when he declares, **This is my beloved Son, with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.** When he writes his second letter a generation later the merry of that voice still resonated in his memory: he remembers that in this event **we had been eyewitnesses of [Jesus] majesty** and that the **honour and glory** he **received** came by the **majestic glory** of **THAT VOICE!**

How we would love to have that certainty of having heard God, or even, with Moses, to have **entered the cloud** that was the evidence of God presence (alongside the other visual evidence: **the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days** or to have THAT VOICE again as God **called Moses out of the cloud. To settle any questions there might have been, Exodus records, the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel**).

How, then, do we recognise the voice of God, especially if we think he may be speaking to us?

- ✠ **Six days** before this event, Jesus had said, **If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.**

The relationship between that call to crucifixion and the Transfiguration is so important - in Christian discipleship there is no glory without the cross; no honour without service; no reward without sacrifice.

The authentic voice of God is always consistent with this call to self-sacrifice!

- ✠ The voice of God - THAT VOICE - said, after affirming Jesus, **Listen to Him!** Nothing that God will ever say to us will be inconsistent with the ministry and teaching of Jesus.

The disciples got it wrong when they wanted to fossilise that moment in a monument as the only fitting tribute to Jesus as he fulfils the law and the prophets is a live that becomes more and more like him.

The evidence of having listened to Jesus is that we have a lively, vibrant and infectious faith and we become attractive for Christ's sake!

- ✠ When the disciples had done what all of us would have done **they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear** - Jesus **touched them, saying 'get up and do not be afraid'**. So we learn that the voice of God - THAT VOICE - motivates and comforts us.

There is something quite proper about this exchange - it is right that we recognise just who God is and approach without presumption and with awe; it is also right that we recognise the grace of God that raises us up.

That voice - THAT VOICE - is the voice that we hear that tells us we are loved, accepted, forgiven and tasked to share Good News!

You may make the error of mistaking a Celtic accent (Even if I can give no assurance that forgiveness for such a sin is possible). But when THAT VOICE speaks there is no mistaking it. I remember the joy that my grandfather experienced when he first had his hearing aid - not only could he hear but he could also switch it off, especially to cut off my Grannie's voice! If we were honest the question isn't about recognising God's voice but whether we switch off our hearing!