

Sermons at Union Congregational Church

Preached by The Reverend Gail L. Miller, Pastor

February 14, 2010 Transfiguration Sunday

Luke 9:28-36

Not Seeing / Seeing the Glory

Once upon a time there was a bunny rabbit by the name of Mr. Hopewell. Now Mr. Hopewell was born in Minnesota, which is a state where it is very, very cold and very, very white with all the snow in the wintertime. Mr. Hopewell, this bunny rabbit, was born in the winter and so he'd never seen anything except the cold white of winter.

As he grew and talked to other bunny rabbits, he heard them talking about this thing called spring – how magnificent and beautiful spring was! Somehow, Mr. Hopewell, the bunny rabbit, thought that spring was a person, and so he kept saying to the other rabbits that he was really looking forward to meeting Mr. Spring.

Well, all the other rabbits laughed and laughed and laughed at Mr. Hopewell and his foolishness to think such a thing. And since Mr. Hopewell did not want to make a fool of himself, he didn't dare ask the rabbits any more about this Mr. Spring character.

Time passed and soon it got warmer and warmer in Minnesota. And as it got warmer and warmer, all the snow melted. So Mr. Hopewell went out and said that it was time to go looking for Mr. Spring. He wanted to personally meet him for himself.

So the bunny rabbit, Mr. Hopewell, came up to a daffodil and he said to the beautiful daffodil, "Are you spring?" The daffodil laughed and laughed and said, "Of course I'm not spring. But I would not have come out if spring weren't here." Hmmmmm.

So Mr. Hopewell went hopping along, being rather embarrassed that he did not know what or who spring was. Soon he came upon a mushroom. It was a large, beautiful mushroom and he asked, "Mushroom, are you Mr. Spring?" The mushroom laughed and laughed and said, "Of course I am not spring. But I would not have come out if spring were not here." Hmmmmm. What a puzzle.

So Mr. Hopewell hopped on and next he came to a big fuzzy ball, much bigger than his own furry self. Mr. Hopewell said to the big fuzzy ball, "Are you Mr. Spring?" And the bear growled in a roaring voice, "Of course I am not spring, but I would not have woken up if spring were not here." Hmmmmm.

Well, Mr. Hopewell, the bunny rabbit, could not find Mr. Spring anywhere. And Mr. Hopewell started to cry and cry, his tears running down his little bunny rabbit face. Soon a robin came by and stopped. "What is wrong?" the Robin asked. Mr. Hopewell replied, "Well, I have been looking for spring. Are you Mr. Spring?" And the Robin, being a kinder soul, said "O no, spring is all around you! You are living in the middle of spring." Hmmmmmmm.... Ohhhhhh....

Well time passed. And he was no longer a little bitty bunny rabbit but he was now a human being whose name was Mr. Hopewell. And NOW Mr. Hopewell was looking for the Presence and the Glory of God. Mr. Hopewell did not know who God really was or where to find God.

So he went walking through the woods one day, and he came to this large forest of old growth fir trees. These trees had giant limbs like arms and the pointed right up at the heavens. Mr. Hopewell said to the trees, "Are you God? Are you the Presence of God?" And the giant trees in nature's majestic cathedral smiled and said, "O no, we are not God. But we wouldn't be alive if God was not here." Hmmmmm

So Mr. Hopewell went on and found himself at the edge of the lake. He sat down. And as he sat there the sun slowly went down in the sky. There was no wind and it was perfectly still. The water was like glass and the reflections of the clouds were perfectly silhouetted in the water. As the sun set the sky turned a bright pink then a bright purple, and before it disappeared beyond the trees Mr. Hopewell asked, "Sun, are you God?" The sun smiled as it faded behind the trees and said, "O no, I am not God. But God is here and all around you in the beauty of the colors." Hmmmmm.

Then one day, Mr. Hopewell went to a church. It was a beautiful church with high vaulted ceilings, and there was a spectacular stained glass window in the front of the church looking like a vision of heaven. Music filled the rafters of this church with the sounds of the magnificent choir and organ.

The music cast a majestic spell over his soul. Then it all stopped. The organ stopped. The choir stopped. The movement of the people stopped. It was perfectly silent, and the silence was even more powerful than the music. Mr. Hopewell broke the silence when he whispered, "Are you God? Are you the Presence, the Glory, the Majesty of God?" And his questions echoed throughout the sanctuary, "Are you God? Are you the Presence? The Glory? The Majesty?"

The words reverberated, echoing in the perfectly harmonious sanctuary.

Mr. Hopewell went to the front of the sanctuary, and there was a Bible on a table there. Mr. Hopewell, becoming somewhat desperate, asked the Bible, "Are you the Presence of God?" And before there was an answer, a pastor started to preach. He told the congregation a story about Jesus and three of his friends. How they went for a hike up a mountain and when they got to the top, the friends got sleepy and then they saw Jesus and it was like he was glowing.

And then they saw two other men with Jesus who were also glowing, and they knew that something remarkable was happening. So they suggested that they build little houses for them all there so they could stay in this special moment at the top of the mountain. But then a cloud came and covered them, and they heard God speak, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him." And then the cloud went away, and the extra men were gone and the glowing was gone and it was just the four of them again.

The Pastor told them all about the glorious Presence of God in Jesus Christ, and that God was all around them on every side.

So Mr. Hopewell went up to the pastor and foolishly asked him, "Are you God?" the pastor laughed and said, "I have been called lots of things, but I have never been called God before."

Mr. Hopewell left, very discouraged, trying to find the glory of God, trying to find the Presence of God.

He went on and arrived at the hospital where we was going to visit a friend whose wife had just had a baby. Mr. Hopewell went in to their room and saw the family – the baby crying and cooing as the mother and father were glowing with happiness and joy at the birth of their child. They had never been so happy in their whole lives. They let Mr. Hopewell hold their little baby, and as it nestled in his arms he looked down at the perfect little face and asked, “Are you God? Are you the Presence of God?” The baby just continued to coo and gurgle. HmMMM.

Mr. Hopewell left the hospital even more discouraged, trying to find the glory of God, trying to find the presence of God. Outside the hospital, Mr. Hopewell stood at the bus stop waiting for the bus to take him home. There was an old man also standing there. Hr. Hopewell, exhausted by his journey and searching, and decided to approach the old man and ask him, “Sir, I have been looking for God. I have been looking for the glory of God, for the glorious Presence of God. Do you know where I could find Him?” The old man took a deep breath, gave a slight smile, looked with his kind eyes into Mr. Hopewell’s frustrated face, and said, “Why you are living in the middle of God. God is all around you...if you have the eyes to see.” HmMMMM. Ohhhhh.

The End.

I wonder what the glory of God looks like to you?
And I wonder where you will see God’s glory this week?
HmMMM....

Amen.