

Let me ask you a question...Now be honest?

How many of you hate to wait?

Most of us hate to wait.

There was a commercial many years ago with that tag line.

I don't remember what it was for.

But the line stuck with me.

Because it is true.

We hate to wait.

As a culture, as a people, as individuals, we hate to wait.

Patience may be on a list of virtues,

but it isn't one we cling to very well.

Last week, Susan wanted to go to First Watch on the first day.

I had in my head mega lines and a huge

wait time too early in the morning.

Susan went early to scope it out, called back,

and said she was second in line and there wasn't any wait now.

We hate to wait.

Maybe because it is forced upon us so often, this need to wait;

that's why we chafe against it so much.

And we aren't the first ones.

Throughout the history of the Bible,

there are many wait haters.

In Exodus 24, there is nothing rushed about Moses encounter with the glory of God on Mt Horeb.

God says to Moses, "Come and wait."

Moses says to the elders, "Wait until we come back."

Moses is in the cloud for six days before God speaks.

Then Moses is on the mountain for forty days and forty nights while everyone waits.

And you know what kind of trouble comes about because of the waiting.

Golden calf, anyone? We hate to wait.

Then Matthew starts our Gospel text with the words "**six days later.**"

What could have happened six days ago? After what?

Well, we look back, and it is after Peter is called Satan.

Six days after Jesus told him that he was hindering the progress toward the kingdom.

Those had to be the longest six days in Peter's life, at least so far.

It's about to get worse,
but that's a story for later on in Lent.
For now, he's just hanging out,
dodging the glances from the rest of them,
and glad it wasn't them.
Ever been there when you said something you
wished you could take back and had to
live through the aftermath of it?
A long time to wait.

Then Jesus calls Peter to take a field trip,
and he isn't sure whether he is in for another chewing out or what is next.

17:1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.

Up a mountain they go, Jesus' inner circle –
or sometimes I believe they are the ones
Jesus needed to keep the closest.
It depends on how you look at it.
What happens up there defies description.

17:2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light.

In the church year, we call this the Transfiguration of Jesus.
It is always celebrated on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday.
The Transfiguration is a foretaste of the glory of Resurrection,
a revelation of Jesus' divinity that has been hidden, up until now.
The Transfiguration does not erase Jesus' humanity
but demonstrates the union of his full humanity
and his full divinity in the person of Jesus.

17:3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

And I always have the same burning question when I read this...
how did they know it was Moses and Elijah?
Words escape any thoughtful mind.
So, of course Peter speaks. Sigh.
We would say in the south Bless his heart
and we all know what that means.

17:4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Is he making up for what happened six days ago?

Who knows.

Maybe he is just filling an awkward
silence with his own inner voice.

You know those things we should never say out loud but we do?

But this time, he doesn't get called out.

He just gets overlooked.

Or over spoken, perhaps, as another voice booms from the cloud:

"While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

Worth waiting for? That's the question, isn't it?

It seems the wait was worth it for the disciples.

17:6When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.

17:7But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

And when they raised their eyes,

they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

They were transfixed by the experience.

They were able to declare the wonder, awe,

and mystery that Christ's glory calls all of us into.

And of course, afterward, they were told to wait some more.

17:9As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

They probably appreciated it, since it meant

that they didn't have to try to explain it to anyone.

They could dwell on it, reflect for a while.

and maybe something would occur to them.

Maybe they would begin to grasp that glory

revealed is sometimes more subtle than we realize.

You can't help but notice the clouds in both Exodus and Matthew.

I can remember when I was a kid,

when we lived in the Chesapeake Bay

area of Virginia on our second naval base,

that we would go over to the Shenandoah Mountains and camp.

Camping back then meant that we would go

in our **1975 bright yellow VW Camper.**

And we would be on Loft Mountain in the campground,

and I would sleep in the pop-up top.

And in the morning, there would be fog everywhere.

But I learned then that wasn't fog.

It was lower level clouds. I was actually sleeping in the clouds.
Clouds speak of presence, but also of obscurity.
Entering the clouds obscures us.
The disciples saw but didn't really see.
How often does that happen to us?
Just when we think we've caught sight of something,
or just when we think we have figured something out, a doubt rises.
A cloud comes over us.
A question gets asked that we can't answer.
A circumstance happens that weighs heavily upon us.
There is too much that obscures our vision.
There is too much that makes us hesitant, uncertain.
We don't see as clearly as we would like.

Then out of the cloud, there came a voice.
That's another amazing thing about this story.
It wasn't out of certainty that glory was revealed.
It was from the cloud that the voice spoke,
that instructions were given, and love was shared.
It came after Peter's fumbled attempt
to give this incredible event some meaning,
to provide some permanence.
It came when shame rose up.

What was it that came from the cloud?
We could call it a declaration of love and a simple instruction.
Don't we try so hard to make things complicated?
We want something deep, something profound,
something obscure like Peter.
Instead, what do we get?
We get parental love and an invitation to pay attention.
Is that really it? Well, no.

The instruction, "**Listen to him**"
is more than just hearing the words.
It's more than just nodding along and slapping Jesus on the back.
What do you think it means to listen to Jesus
with this new attitude we have been
adjusting to since the beginning of the year?
One writer says "Listen to him" means
shaping yourself around his words.

It means taking them into your soul,
letting them take root and grow into a life worthy of the gospel.
“Listen to him” means letting the picture he
paints of the kingdom be the vision
by which you guide your life.

Behind it, all these words and all this life,
is the declaration of love.

That’s where the glory is revealed.

It’s not the iridescent light show at the top of the mountain;
it’s not the devouring fire as Moses saw;
it is in the simple statement, **“This is my beloved son.”**

It is in the affirmation, “With him, I am well pleased.”

When we listen, when we take in his words,
we too remember that we are God’s beloved,
and often we don’t have the words
or the actions to serve Jesus as we should.

But after all that, you know what I found most
interesting about their time on the mountaintop?

It is what happens after the Transfiguration.

First, they came down the mountain.

They didn’t just stay there in their mountaintop experience.

We can’t stay in ours either.

Then it was what they did after

they came down from the mountain.

14 When they came to the crowd, a man met Jesus. He knelt before him, 15 saying, "Lord,
show mercy to my son. He is epileptic and suffers terribly, for he often falls into the fire or the
water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him."

What did they do?

Same old, same old.

Jesus has to heal someone because of their lack of faith.

Jesus, along with Peter, James, and John,
returned to the real world and tried to carry
the true light they saw in Jesus to all
the people in need around them.

Jesus, in all his glorious light, went right back to work
healing and loving the people He came to save.

Let’s come back to my experience at First Watch again.

We sat down, had great food,
and an amazing server named Taylor.
Taylor was excited to be there;
she said it was hard to find jobs like this out there.

She had a child with special needs,
and this job enabled her to be at home
when school was over.

In my jacket, I had one of the **Jesus-is-the-Light lanterns**
we gave out on Christmas Eve.

So I gave it to her and told her
she had been the light for us today.

This week, you and I won't be able to stay
on the mountaintop of this moment.
We will return to the valleys of everyday life.
And we will see darkness in our world, and it will be cloudy.
What if transformation begins when we truly see who Christ
is and allow that vision to change us?
And what would it look like for you to share the true light
Jesus showed as his glory was revealed to the disciples up there?
How will you bring that light down with you
into your life and into our world?