

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 15 February 2026 - The Sunday Next Before Lent

Lectionary Readings (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Exodus 24. 12-18; Psalm 2 or Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1. 16-21; Matthew 17. 1-9

Homily – The Transfiguration

Today's homily has been written by the Revd Phil Marsh, Priest in Charge, Ely Benefice

Have you ever realised that you hadn't really seen something properly? Perhaps you mistook someone in poor light, or thought you knew what was being said, only to discover later that you had missed the point. Sometimes the issue isn't that things are unclear, but that our seeing and listening are incomplete.

That's where today's gospel meets us.

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain. Away from the crowds. Away from the noise and the questions. In the Bible, mountains are often places where God is revealed, places where heaven and earth seem to come closer together. What happens next is a gift. It is not something they sought, it is a moment of grace,

As they watch, Jesus is transfigured before them. His face shines like the sun. His clothes become dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appear with him — figures who stand for the Law and the Prophets, the whole story of God's dealings with his people. And suddenly the disciples are seeing Jesus differently.

This isn't Jesus becoming something new. It's the disciples being enabled to see who he truly is. For a moment, the veil is lifted. The glory that has always been there is revealed.

Sometimes Jesus does not change — our sight does.

Peter, as ever, is keen to respond to the moment. He offers to build three tents — one for Jesus, one for Moses, one for Elijah. It's an understandable instinct. He wants to hold onto the moment. To preserve it. To manage it. To turn encounter into something solid and lasting.

But before Peter can finish speaking, a bright cloud overshadows them, and a voice interrupts him, speaking from the cloud:

"This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him."

Note what that voice doesn't say; "Work harder. Understand more. Do something impressive for me."

Nothing like that.

It says: *listen to him*.

That seems to me is the heart of this story. Seeing Jesus for who he is, leads to listening. Revelation leads to attention. God doesn't simply want the disciples to have a powerful experience. He wants them to learn whose voice matters.

Peter's sudden activity is not required. His blurting forth of his own ideas is redirecting. Listening matters more than rushing to the activity of his own devising. Paying attention matters more than taking control.

And the disciples response to this is overwhelming, they fall to the ground in fear. This moment of glory is more than they can take in. But notice what happens next. Jesus comes near. He touches them. And he says, "Do not be afraid."

The glory of God presence, not distant or crushing, but strangely personal and reassuring. The same Jesus who shines with divine glory also kneels beside frightened disciples and speaks gently.

When they look up, Moses and Elijah are gone. They see no one except Jesus himself.

That detail matters. At the end of the vision, it is not the law or the prophets who remain in view, but Christ alone. All things are contained in Him. This is the one to whom they are to listen. This is the one who brings God's purposes into focus.

So, what does this mean for us?

First, it reminds us that **seeing Jesus clearly is a gift**. The disciples didn't earn this moment. They didn't ask for it. It was given. And for us, too, clarity about who Jesus is doesn't come simply through effort or intelligence. It comes as we stay close to him, as we allow God to shape our vision through Scripture, prayer, and worship.

Second, it teaches us that **listening is central to discipleship**. God does not say, "This is my Son — do great things for him." Or even, "Explain him." God says, "Listen to him." Listening takes time. It requires attentiveness. It means making space in lives that are often full of noise.

We live in a world full of voices — voices telling us what matters, what success looks like, what to fear, what to desire. This gospel gently but firmly asks: whose voice are we really listening to?

Listening to Jesus doesn't mean we suddenly understand everything. The disciples don't. In fact, as they come down the mountain, Jesus tells them not to speak about what they've seen yet. There is more they need to learn. Listening is often gradual. It's something we grow into.

Third, listening reshapes our priorities. When we really listen to Jesus, we begin to notice how he speaks about love, mercy, humility, faithfulness. We hear his concern for the overlooked, his patience with the slow-to-understand, his challenge to those who are comfortable and secure.

To listen to Jesus is to allow his words to question our habits, our assumptions, and sometimes our comfort.

And finally, this passage reminds us that listening sends us back into ordinary life changed. The disciples don't stay on the mountain. They come back down. The glory fades from sight, but not from memory. They carry with them a clearer sense of who Jesus is, even if they don't yet understand everything that lies ahead.

That's often how faith works. Moments of clarity don't remove all our questions, but they anchor us. They help us recognise Jesus more clearly as we walk through ordinary days.

The kind of discipleship Jesus invites us into isn't about chasing constant mountaintop experiences. It's about learning to recognise him and attend to his voice in the everyday — in Scripture read slowly, in prayer offered honestly, in moments when we pause rather than rush on.

And there is good news here. Listening is not something we do alone. The same Jesus who shone with glory on the mountain is the one who comes close, touches our fear, and says, "Do not be afraid." He walks with us as we learn.

So, today's gospel is an invitation.
An invitation to listen more attentively.
An invitation to see Jesus more clearly.

This week, perhaps the invitation is simple. To slow down with a passage of Scripture. To sit in silence and to listen, to ask, "Jesus, what are you saying to me?" To notice where his voice is already nudging us toward faithfulness, kindness, or courage.

Because God still says to his people:
"This is my Son, the Beloved... listen to him."

And as we do, we find that seeing becomes clearer, fear gives way to trust, and even ordinary life becomes a place where God is not only present, but at work.

Amen.

All-Age Adaptations

These ideas are designed to help children, young people, and adults see, listen, and respond together, without oversimplifying the Gospel.

Object Lessons (3 options)

I. A Torch and a Dimmer Switch – Seeing Clearly

- Begin with the room lights dimmed or a torch switched off.
- Ask: "*Can you see properly when it's dark?*"
- Slowly turn the lights up or switch on the torch.
- Link: On the mountain, the disciples suddenly saw Jesus clearly. Nothing about Jesus changed — but their ability to see did.
- Key idea: Sometimes God helps us see more clearly who Jesus really is.

2. Headphones / Ear Defenders – Listening Carefully

- Put on headphones or ear defenders and try to hear someone speaking.
- Then remove them and repeat the message.
- Ask: “*What changed?*”
- Link: God doesn’t say “look at him” or “talk about him”, but “listen to him”.
- Key idea: Listening takes attention and space.

3. A Picture That Changes When You Look Closely

- Use an optical illusion or ambiguous image (e.g. old woman/young woman, vase/faces).
- Ask: “*What do you see? Can you see something else?*”
- Link: The disciples thought they knew Jesus, but on the mountain they saw more.
- Key idea: Faith often grows as we learn to see more deeply.

Intergenerational Activity

“Listening Circles”

- Invite people to form small mixed-age groups.
- Read aloud the words from the cloud:
“*This is my Son, the Beloved... listen to him.*”
- Ask one simple question for discussion:
 - “*What helps you listen to Jesus?*”
- Encourage brief sharing (no pressure to speak).
- Emphasise: listening is something we learn together.

Prayer Stations (3 ideas)

1. Light Station – Seeing Jesus

- A candle or lamp with the words: “*This is my Son*”
- Invite people to light a candle and pray:
 - “*Jesus, help me see you more clearly.*”

2. Listening Station – Hearing His Voice

- A Bible opened at Matthew 17.
- A short written prayer:
 - “*Jesus, help me listen to you.*”
- Invite people to sit quietly for 30 seconds.

3. Following Station – Responding

- A simple footprint outline or path on the floor.
- Invite people to write or think of one way they will follow Jesus this week.
- Emphasise: listening leads to living.

Wondering Questions (All-Age Friendly)

- I wonder what it was like to see Jesus shining with glory?
- I wonder why God said, "Listen to him"?
- I wonder what helps you listen to Jesus?
- I wonder what Jesus might be saying to you today?
- I wonder where you are in this story?

Ways to Engage all Generations

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how _____ felt or I wonder how _____ felt when _____ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about _____?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why _____ said _____?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

Suggested intercessions

Introduction

Let us pray to God, who reveals his Son and calls us to listen.

The Church

Faithful God,
we pray for your Church throughout the world.
Help us to see Jesus clearly
and to listen attentively to his voice.
Keep us faithful to the Gospel,
and shape us as disciples who reflect his love.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

The World

God of glory,
we pray for the nations of the world.

Guide leaders in wisdom, humility, and truth.
Where voices of fear and division are loud,
may the voice of justice and peace be heard.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

The Community

God of our daily lives,
we pray for our local communities.
Help us to listen carefully to one another,
to notice those who are struggling,
and to act with compassion and care.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

The Sick

God of healing,
we pray for those who are unwell in body, mind, or spirit.
For those who feel afraid or overwhelmed.
In silence, we name before you those we hold in our hearts...
(pause)
Bring comfort, healing, and peace.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

The Departed and Those Who Mourn

God of eternal life,
we remember those who have died in faith.
Comfort those who mourn,
and strengthen us with the hope of resurrection.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Thematic Prayer

God of revelation,
open our eyes to see Jesus more clearly.
Open our ears to hear his voice.
And open our hearts to follow where he leads.

Conclusion

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Alternative Litany

Leader: Let us pray to God, who calls us to listen to his Son.

Help us to see Jesus clearly.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Help us to listen to his voice.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Help your Church to follow him faithfully.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Help our world to hear words of justice and peace.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Help the suffering to know your presence.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Help us to walk in the way of Christ.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Suggested hymns/songs

Traditional Hymns (first line only)

1. *Christ, whose glory fills the skies*
2. *Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart*
3. *Immortal, invisible, God only wise*
4. *O worship the King, all glorious above*
5. *How shall I sing that majesty*
6. *Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it*
7. *Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee*
8. *Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty*
9. *Jesus calls us: o'er the tumult*
10. *Crown him with many crowns*

Contemporary Worship Songs

1. *Open the Eyes of My Heart* – Paul Baloche
2. *Be Thou My Vision* – modern arrangement
3. *Speak, O Lord* – Keith & Kristyn Getty
4. *Christ Be Magnified* – Cody Carnes

5. *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* – modern setting
6. *Here I Am to Worship* – Tim Hughes
7. *Light of the World (Here I Am to Worship)* – Tim Hughes
8. *King of Kings* – Hillsong
9. *The Stand* – Hillsong
10. *Jesus, Be the Centre* – Michael Frye

Activities to accompany the service

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@lectionary resource)