

Reflection for the 2nd Sunday of Lent, Cycle C

The lectionary translation of the readings for this Sunday can be found at <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/031625.cfm>

1st Reading: [*Genesis 15:5–12; 17-18*](#)

This is the story of the covenant God made with Abram (later to be named Abraham) when he was old and childless. God promised him descendants as numerous as the stars. And promised to give them a land to live in. Notice that the covenant is sealed with a sacrifice.

2nd Reading: [*Philippians 3:17–4:1*](#)

Paul tells the Philippians to imitate him in their conduct. He tells them to not occupy their minds with earthly things but focus on heavenly things. And he tells them that ultimately their earthly bodies will become like the glorified body of the risen Christ.

Gospel: [*Luke 9:28b–36*](#)

And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Lk 9:30-31 ... Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” Lk 9:35

Gospel Reflection

I listen to PBS Newshour on a regular basis. One of my favorite segments is the Week in Politics discussion between Brooks and Capehart on Fridays. I have a lot of respect for David Brooks, a conservative New York Times columnist, speaker and author. He is the type of conservative I knew growing up.

David had a life-changing realization after what he called the humiliation of having a failed marriage. He realized that his response to that failure was life limiting. He had drawn within himself and experienced a self-imposed loneliness. He then made a conscious decision to focus on building deep relationships. That was key.

The take-away I want to share, comes at location 6:07 in his TED Talk that I reference below. He points out that one of the things we discover in deep relationship is our own soul. That’s significant because our soul is our connection to God! That is why we connect with God when we experience deep relationship. And I’ve previously shared the truth that when we are truly present to another person, we experience a mysterious third presence, the presence of God.

What does that have to do with today’s Gospel selection? I’m responding to the words from the cloud, “This is my chosen son; listen to him.” Lk 9:35 Now you might think the best way to listen to the Lord is to practice Centering Prayer, or to go to your room and, in private, ask him what he wants of you. Those are good for their purposes, but I think the most productive way to encounter the Lord is in those deep relationships about which David Brooks is sharing.

Encountering the Lord in our day-to-day lives, through relationship, is a form of contemplative prayer called active contemplation. It is a quiet place where you can hear the Lord speak because, to really connect with another, we have to turn off the distraction of our self-focusing habits. We have to turn off our desire to teach the other person or fix them. We have to turn off our desire to impress them with our response. We have to turn off our self-referencing thoughts. We have to turn off our mind and open our hearts and souls. We have to truly connect with the other; not with what they are saying but with the person who is saying. That is how we experience the Lord's presence in relationship.

Oh! And why would we want to listen to the Lord. That's in today's Gospel selection also. Remember he was talking to Moses and Elijah about his "exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem." Lk 9:30 Like the Israelites of the first Exodus, we are now being led to the promised land but, instead of the promised land in Canaan, we are being led to the promised land of eternal life. Our day-to-day lives is our forty years wandering. Jesus is our Moses, and we need to listen to him if we are going to get to our promised land.

Bingo... it's as simple as that... O.K., no it's not. It takes intentionality, commitment, and hard work. David Brooks was able to do it and he wrote a book about it last year. It's called "How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen." It's excellent. There are also several YouTube videos of talks he's given. I highly recommend his TED Talk that I mentioned earlier. It's entitled "The lies our culture tells us about what matters... and a better way to live". It can be found on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/iB4MS1hsWXU>.

P.S. David's talk also describes his excellent Examination of Conscience. I so much want to learn from him.

God bless...

Personal Reflection:

And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Lk 9:30-31 ... Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." Lk 9:35

Question:

What words or phrases attracted your attention during the Liturgy of the Word on this weekend? What connection do those words or phrases have to your day-to-day life? (Why do you think they attracted your attention?) What might God be trying to say to you through these words or phrases? What response should you make? What action should you take?

Alternative:

What is one significant experience, you've had, of another person in your life? How did you feel while you were with them? What is one important take-away from that experience? What might you need to change to be able to have similar experiences with other people?

Verse by Verse:

Lk 9:28b "...he took Peter, John and James..." | His original disciples maintain a closeness. They begin following him after the miraculous catch of fish Lk 5:1-11. They were the only disciples

allowed to enter the house when he cured the Jairus' daughter. They were with him for the agony in the garden, Lk 22:39-46.

Lk 9:28c "went up the mountain to pray." | For Luke, the mountain is a place of prayer here and in Lk 6:12, before the Sermon on the Plain, and at Lk 22:39-41, the story of his prayer on the mount of olives after the Last Supper.

Note that his purpose for going up the mountain is to pray not to perform his transfiguration. That happened consequent to his prayer.

Lk 9:29 "...his face changed in appearance and his clothes became dazzling white." | This describes a change external to who Jesus is but obviously points to the internal. Note verse 32 which notes that Peter and James and John saw his "glory".

Lk 9:30a "...Moses and Elijah..." | Many commentators explain that this is symbolic of Jesus' continuity with Hebrew Scripture, the Law and the Prophets of which Moses and Elijah are symbols.

Lk 9:30b "...who appeared in glory..." | The Greek word, here translated as glory, means bright splendor. It points to the transcendent, beyond the this-worldly, connected to God.

Lk 9:30c "...spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish..." | Many scholars believe this refers to Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, and ascension presented as his mission. If you see Jesus' resurrection as the conquering of death, as the Church does, it is easy to see this as a new and final exodus. With his ascension, heaven, then, is the promised land.

Lk 9:32c "...they saw his glory..." | They saw his transcendence.

Lk 9:33 "...Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents..." | Pete evidently experiences the transcendent and wants to hang on to that experience.

Lk 9:34 "...a cloud came..." | Like the cloud over the tabernacle during the desert wanderings, it is an instrument of God's presence.

Lk 9:35b "...this is my chosen son..." | Like the voice at Jesus' baptism except that this time the words are directed to Peter, John and James, not Jesus. The Greek is literally "my son, the chosen one." This may point back to the servant of Is 42:1-9. Like the servant of Isaiah, who will be a covenant for the people and a light for the nations that will bring justice to the earth, chosen one here implies "chosen for a purpose."

Lk 9:35c "...listen to him." | This is connected to the concept of chosen. It seems to say "Since he is the one I have chosen, listen to him."

Lk 9:36 "...and did not at that time tell anyone..." | The story is not told until after the resurrection.