

# *“Perfectly Pure and Holy Whole”*

*Mark 9:2-10*

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It's interesting. In the church, today is the day we celebrate the Transfiguration of Christ. In the world outside, however, this is better known as Valentine's Day.

Transfiguration Day is by far the more important of the two, but I certainly hope everyone in the church remembered it is Valentine's Day. You're in trouble if you didn't. It's so important that someone has prepared a list of ways, "**How to Tell You Forgot Valentine's Day.**" Here are three of those ways:

1. Hallmark texts you, offering discounts on apology cards.
2. The kids tell you that Mom "*went to bed early*" . . . and "*locked the door*" . . . while you were taking out the trash.
3. You wake up with a florist's ad stapled to your forehead. 😊<sup>1</sup>

So, I hope you remembered . . .

I remembered Monday as I started preparing for this very sermon. I felt inspired and so I wrote the following:

My Beloved Jenny,  
 You have helped me learn that  
 nothing can outgrow  
 the Love that makes us one –  
     not the past  
         or the future,  
 not pure goodness  
     or pure badness,  
 not when the ball bounces our way  
     or the other way,  
 not our realized dreams  
     or our worst nightmares –  
 absolutely *nothing* can get between us  
 because the Love that unites us  
 is so purely perfect that  
     it fills our cracks,  
     it transcends time,  
     it humbles us and lifts us up,  
     it turns accidents into happy lil mistakes,  
     it transforms our deepest desires  
     and darkest fears  
 into a Holy Whole Love  
     that willingly lays down itself,  
     that freely gives its entire self  
     without a single question or thought  
     as to our value or worth  
 simply because it is  
     Perfectly Pure  
     and Holy Whole,  
 simply because it is Love.<sup>2</sup>

What from the transfiguration inspired that? As I was searching and searching for a piece of art that captured the transfiguration, I came upon Jorge Paz's "**Transfiguration 3**"<sup>3</sup> that's on your bulletin cover. What happened next was really a roller coaster ride of polar ends of a continuum that covers all of the bases, even bases that don't even exist in our lil minds, on our lil world.



I don't know, I think it was really **"of God."** I saw, right there in that simple, single flame Jesus and Moses and Elijah nearly unrecognizably morphed from the inside out into something shimmering, glistening whiter than bleach. And then I saw that it's just a candle flame and thought to myself that no one would see it. Then I remembered that a flame of a candle, being pure light, if perfect, it never has a shadow, what a brilliant depiction Jesus getting wise counsel for the journey ahead of him from the Law and the Prophets, from Moses and Elijah. And around it, what an ingenious representation of the *shekhinah*, the cloud that traversed with the Israelites and enveloped Moses on Mt Sinai as a sign of the divine presence of God. What a magnificent foreshadowing of the resurrection.

Then the blue planet, the earth appeared to me. Again, I was enthralled. This must have been what it was like to have been there, to be so overwhelmed that you either blurt something out stupid like building 3 memorials or are stunned to silence.

You are after all, at God's table, that vase, that holy vessel holds the essence of everything we need, it quenches our thirst, it satiates our hunger, it mends our cracks. Just a drop from it provides the waters necessary to cover 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the earth. We are so inconsequential in the presence of God that if we wanted to show up in this piece of art as a dot on the face of the earth, we'd have to zoom in a million times.

From that dot we can see the flame of the transfiguration and yet can't full comprehend how massive in comparison, how perfect in relation, how magnificent it is to be invited to the table of God. **"This is my Son,"** said God, **"marked by my love. Listen to him."** There we have infinitely more color and depth than in history's every sunset or sunrise, every stary night, every rainbow. All are invited, all are welcome, all may sit at table and dine to their delight and be healed and made whole at the table of God. It's so Perfectly Pure and Holy Whole because it's Love.



Remember that feeling when you first fell in love? Recall what you felt when you got engaged or married? Try to fathom what it was like when you first beheld the miracle of love uniting to create new life at the birth of your children? Now take all that and multiply it by the power of infinity and we still cannot comprehend all this.

That’s why we’re here, to fall so in love with the self-sacrificing, unconditional, nonjudgmental love of Christ that it morphs us in ways that are powerful and intrinsic and beyond beautiful. That it makes us so spiritually strong that we become loving and healed vessels of God’s healing, salvation and grace.

As disciples, all of us were meant to be healers, and lovers of God’s people. We comfort the ill. We feed the hungry. We befriend the lonely. We invite those different from ourselves. We love the unlovable. For when we do, Christ’s transfiguring grace transfigures them too!

Friends, now it is our turn to witness with our lives that we have been in the presence of the transfigured Christ—Son of man . . . Son of God . . . Savior of the world . . . Immanuel . . . God with us . . . Perfectly Pure, Holy Whole, Love incarnate.

Amen?!

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<sup>1</sup> Duncan, King. *Mark’s Musings*. (Dynamic Preaching First Quarter Sermons 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Rev. A. David Paul, *Perfectly Pure and Holy Whole*. expansion of Romans 8:38-29 (Valentines 2021).

<sup>3</sup> “*Transfiguration 3*” by Jorge Paz (2018), oil on canvas.

[http://www.absolutearts.com/cgi-bin/portfolio/art/your-art.cgi?login=ankor&title=transfiguration\\_3-1533674324t.jpg](http://www.absolutearts.com/cgi-bin/portfolio/art/your-art.cgi?login=ankor&title=transfiguration_3-1533674324t.jpg)

