

**“Into the Darkness, Finding the Light”**  
**“The Gift of Being Thunderstruck: Awed and Confused”**

Today is a “transition” Sunday if you will. In the liturgical calendar, it is Transfiguration Sunday which is the last Sunday in Epiphany which in the Western Christian calendar Lent begins on Wednesday. I am using today as an introduction to our Lenten sermon series. The titles of my sermons will be based on the chapter titles of a book called *Gifts of the Dark Wood*, by Eric Elnes. Lent is a dark time, it invites us into confession and looking at those parts of ourselves that do not reflect the glory and light and love of God. Over the next few weeks we will enter the darkness in order to find the Light. In the service today, we bury the Alleluia and we will not speak or sing it again until Easter morning. May our love of Christ and our willingness to follow him into the darkness bring us fully into God’s marvelous Light. ---Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“The Gift of Being Thunderstruck: Awed and Confused”**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Prayer for the Week**

*O God, We open our eyes and we see Jesus, the months of ministry transfigured to a beam of light, the light of the world, your light. May your light shine upon us. We open our eyes and we see Moses and Elijah, your word restoring us, showing us the way, telling a story, your story, his story, our story. May your word speak to us. We open our eyes and we see Jesus, not casting us off, but leading us down, leading us out - to ministry, to people. Your love endures forever. We open our ears and we hear your voice, ‘This is my beloved Son, listen to him!’ And we give you thanks. Amen* (adapted from a prayer by William Loader, 2/2001)

---

---

---

---

**This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>**

## Study Guide

### **Monday, 02/27/17 Matthew 17:1-4**

This is Matthew's version of the Transfiguration. For those early believers who were from the Jewish tradition, this story took them back to Moses. Moses went up the mountain glowed with the presence of God. Jesus goes up the mountain and not only does he glow, Moses and Elijah suddenly seem to appear as well and were conversing with Jesus. There on the mountaintop, the presence of God with Jesus was affirmed, by Moses and by Elijah. They are awed and afraid. Thunderstruck by their experience of the Jesus. Think of your mountaintops.....how did you take that experience and incorporate it in a way that changed your life and changed others' lives?

### **Tuesday, 02/28/17 Matthew 17: 1-4**

So much has happened in the lives of the disciples. They have seen Jesus, heal, teach, perform miracles, and speak in ways that was inspiring and confusing. They had been sent out and they came back, and see Jesus reach out to the Gentiles. Who knows what they had expected when they went up to the mountain top with Jesus. Maybe they thought they would sleep and rest and enjoy the quiet away from the crowds. What happened was an experience like no other. JESUS transformed in front of them. It was simply amazing. Have you ever been "thunderstruck" like that? What did you do and how did you process it?

### **Wednesday, 03/01/17 Psalm 51: 1-4**

Today is Ash Wednesday, the first of the forty days of Lent. The Psalm passage is one of traditional readings for Ash Wednesday and reminds us of the solemnity of Lent. Traditionally, today is a fast day, when believers refrained from food in order to focus on their relationship with God. Lent is an invitation to evaluate our relationship with God and to grow closer to Christ and deeper in our faith. This confession of David is about his being thunderstruck by his sin and his need for grace. What are your intentions this Lent? How will you be open during these 40 days to travel Into the Darkness, Finding the Light? Today at noon, there will be an Ash Wednesday service at Mead's Corner. Tonight worship begins at 7:00 in our sanctuary. Please come and begin the Lenten journey with your brothers and sisters.

### **Thursday, 03/02/17 Matthew 17: 5-9**

Suddenly in the midst of the light there are clouds and a voice honoring Jesus, and telling the disciples to pay attention and "listen" to the beloved Son of God. Then it's all over and they started down the mountain and Jesus told them not to tell anyone. What? They were told not to tell anyone? Can you imagine what the disciples thought of that? Perhaps Jesus understood that those kind of mind blowing experiences of God need to rest in the heart and soul of a person. One can tell others about the experience, but the telling often lacks the power of what had happened. Being thunderstruck allows us to pause and ponder. The real test of the experience is how a person lives afterwards. Have you ever tried to explain a mountain top experience to someone? How was it received?

### **Friday, 03/03/17 2 Peter 2: 16-19**

In this letter the author encourages those receiving his words to pay attention. The author reminds the readers of the Transfiguration where Jesus is identified as God's beloved Son and then asks them to "pay attention to it, just as you would to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." As we enter the Lenten and go "into the darkness" may the Light guide us through those dark places until Easter dawns.