WELCOME 11TH FEBRUARY 2024 – TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY '24 B

1 John 2:15-29 & Mark 9:2-8

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! Along with your worship order you have Growing Praise inserts & Bible Study Qs that are able to lead you deeper into God's word/work in your life & help you share that "/ someone else. We also use them for our Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week... Victor Gruen... Austrian-born architect best known as pioneer in the design of shopping malls If you've walked through a Westfield's in one of our major cities or even our local malls... you've been treated to Gruen's design. What's called the Gruen effect was ingenious from a marketing standpoint. Malls are built to incorporate into their design an intentionally confusing/distracting layout so shoppers lose track of their original purpose & become more susceptible to making impulse purchases...spending more \$\$\$\$\$ than they intended. Yes...it's a thing.

Getting distracted isn't limited to the shopping mall experience. Individuals, families & even churches are vulnerable...distractions happen, original purposes & intentions are forgotten, & the vibrant community of life & joy...the deep relationships that pulse to the beat of Jesus' heart...the vibrant discipleship that bears God's hope to the world in word & deed is left wanting...the light of the good news of Jesus ends up under a basket.

As a church we say...

God has called Living Water Fellowship to be a vibrant Christian community that glorifies God by inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus who grow in his grace and go in his power to show his love to the world.

John said... So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son & with the Father. In this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us. IOW "Don't get distracted/lose focus!"

<u>Today...</u>our special guest: April Miller...a Compassion International Communicator will help us remember how crucial our gifts are in shining the light of Christ into the darkest corners of our world & how the gifts we offer back to God through Compassion International actually bless those who receive them.

We'll explore, experience, & live that together today...

Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord God, heavenly Father, you know that we are set in the midst of so many challenges & seemingly great dangers. We become fearful & anxious & seek shelter instead of perseverance. We duck & cover instead of holding our heads high. Grant us your strength & your protection. Defend us from fear in danger & fatigue in our daily work. Equip us to stand triumphant over all temptations. At every step let our feet move in time to your stride & walk confidently in your way; according to the life you give through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord alive in us...Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY '24 B - VIBRANT LIVING: VIBRANT DISCIPLESHIP

My friend Mark is 10 yrs younger than I am & infinitely more susceptible to the next "whizbang thing." So when his daughter suggested he should **get** on Instagram he handed her his phone & said, "Set me up." A few minutes later she handed his phone back & said "Now click the icon & see what's there." He was aghast. He asked, "Why are there women in their frilly underwear & skimpy bikinis on my **feed?"** The daughter was completely unruffled. "Dad...you have to set your profile. I just said 52 yr-old man & I guess their algorithm thinks 52 yr-old men like looking at scantily clad women." He quickly added, "married, 4 kids & a border collie" & now his feed shows him dogs & campervans. Whew!

It was in fact the algorithm...what media/mktrs call "predictive analysis" that uses mountains of data from millions of users to predict what certain kinds of people want to see on their screen. Like Gruen's mall design w/ out-of-the-way toilets, escalators right in the middle of everything & food courts & play areas & kiosks that block the flow of a walkway...It's a sophisticated expectation of what's going to grab your attention & cause you to be drawn toward a certain thing. And in all fairness to Gruen & social media...it's as old as human life...as old as "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" – Gen 3:1

Truth is...we all live by some "algorithm," some filter or set of lenses through which we see & engage the world & sets the patterns & pace for our days. Sometimes it's convenience ease comfort habit...sometimes it's something else. As the fellowship of the baptized...as followers of Jesus, Jesus is supposed to be that algorithm. It's Jesus who sets the pattern/pace of each day & guides us in our encounters w/ the people around us & our interaction w/ the world in which we live. John helps us here:

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, & pride in our achievements & possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. Then...

So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son & with the Father. In this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us. When Jesus is your algorithm... sets the pattern/pace of each day & guides us in our encounters w/ the people around us & our interaction w/ the world in which we live...he'll be seen & experienced in every step of your day & life is transformed w/in & all around you...anything else fades away...

As Living Water works alongside Compassion, it's an exciting partnership. Compassion helps us keep Jesus front & center as we engage the world. They help us remember how crucial our gifts are in shining the light of Christ into the darkest corners of our world & how the gifts we offer back to God through Compassion actually bless those who receive them. I'm going to let April tell you all about that... & re-set our algorithm to the mission of Christ in the world.

When distractions happen...when original purposes & intentions are forgotten...then the vibrant community of life & joy suffers...the deep relationships that pulse to the beat of Jesus' heart are lost...the vibrant discipleship that bears God's hope to the world in word & deed is left wanting & the light of the good news of Jesus ends up under a basket.

But When Jesus is your algorithm...when he sets the pattern/pace of each day & guides us in our encounters w/ the people around us & our interaction w/ the world in which we live...he'll be seen & experienced in every step of your day & life is transformed w/in & all around you...You'll find strength you never imagined, hope despite the odds, joy multiplied, peace that lasts, light brighter than any shadow, & the presence of God at every step. When Jesus sets the pattern/pace of each day & guides you in your encounters w/ the people around you & your interaction w/ the world in which we live Christ calls forth a boldness in you by his Spirit & His love life power Word fills & guides your life so your heart is changed & you invite others to join us on the way of Jesus...the journey w/ him.

Let's pray...

Let's pray... Sovereign Lord, your hand has touched the dry bones of our lives & given birth to faith in you. Your Word has breathed new life where there was death, your spirit raised us up from where we lay, your love has brought us home & to your Cross, and by your grace we stand forgiven, free. Make us now a living sign of your presence & generous gracious provision to the world. Every word & deed a further invitation to join you for eternity...from now on in Jesus Christ...Amen