

**My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**Jesus really does get around, doesn't He? Last week we were with Him in the desert of temptation. This week we find ourselves with Peter, James, and John on the mountain top where Jesus is revealed in all His Glory. Think about it—one week in the desert; the next on the mountain top.**

**It kind of speaks to all of our lives. Who hasn't found himself or herself in the sweltering desert of temptation? We touched on that last week in speaking of temptation as a universal human experience. I suggested that Jesus showed us the way to deal with it—standing on the Word of God by reading, praying, and studying your Bible; surrounding yourselves with like-minded, value-sharing kind of people by involving yourselves in service to others; and staying away from those people, places, and things that lead you into temptation in the first place; and, finally, by giving alms with the monies saved from staying away from those people, places, and things.**

**Likewise, most of us have had Glory-experiences. Maybe it was a sharing in a particular Eucharist when you powerfully felt the Lord's Presence within you. Or was it that quiet moment of prayer as you drifted off to sleep, waking up with renewed energy and a sense of purpose. Perhaps, it was recognizing the Glory of God in a magnificent sunrise or glorious sunset. It could have been the birth of a child; exchanging marriage vows; even the holiness of the death of a loved one. Hopefully, everyone here has had that kind of moment that caused Peter to say to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here."**

**However, all of us live our lives, for the most part, somewhere between the desert and the mountain top. Most of our lives are spent in the drudgery of the plain—the same-old, day-in-day-out chores, tasks, responsibilities—that wear us down little-by-little. We feel like we're spinning our wheels and getting nowhere fast.**

**At times we find ourselves climbing up the rough side of the mountain, trying to reach the top—striving in our prayer; struggling to do our jobs; trying our best to raise our kids; reaching out to each other wanting to make marriages work.**

**Inevitably, having reached the mountain top on occasion, there seems to be always the reality of sliding down the slippery slope when pride or anger or lust or sloth or jealousy or selfishness knocks us down.**

**Then, there are the times when we find ourselves lost in the dark valleys of anxiety, sickness, fear, death of a loved one, or facing our own death.**

Each of us journey in our lives through all of this landscape. The journey is, not only bearable, but can be truly joyful if we recognize that Jesus really is on the journey with us, hearing the voice of God speak to us, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.”

What is it we are to listen to? No matter where we find ourselves on our journey, the words that Jesus speaks to Peter, James, and John on the mountain top are the words that will sustain us as we travel through the landscape of our lives, “Rise, and do not be afraid.”

Why you ask? How can I not be afraid. Because, even though taken out of the context, the last words of the passage given by Jesus are “...the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.

The refrain of this beautiful song written and performed by Bill and Gloria Gaither says it all:

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;*

*Because He lives, all fear is gone;*

*Because I know He holds the future;*

*And life is worth the living just because He lives.*