

**Devotion:** Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Matthew 17 1-9

*Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. <sup>2</sup>And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>3</sup>Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup>Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' <sup>5</sup>While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' <sup>6</sup>When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. <sup>7</sup>But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' <sup>8</sup>And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.*

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Superman	Doctors
Spiderman	Nurses
Aquaman	First Responders
Wonder Woman	Police
Captain America	Postal Workers
Green Lantern	Truck Drivers
Fantastic Four	Grocery Clerks
The Flash	Trash Collectors
Black Panther	Gas Station Attendants
Iron Man	Pharmacists
Batman	Essential Workforce

Do a Web search today on your local news station's Web sites and at least one if not all of them will have a spot that features exemplary individuals who stand out in the local community for their service and valor — they're our "Hometown Heroes."

Fantasy heroes, like the ones listed on the left, have unbelievable superpowers, that make them heroes.

The list on the right, have believable superpowers. Superpowers like compassion and patience and faith and courage. They are out there every day, Covid or not.

But perhaps our cultural elevation of heroes is saying something deeper about the human soul. What if human attraction to figures of power and potential and mythic accomplishment is about a desire to be heroes *for others*, and not just for our own status?

What if God wired or coded some sort of unselfish data string into our DNA that was full of hero-hope as a way to line up our values with God's values? What if God wants to awaken that desire in his people? How would God call us to heroism?

What if the fascination with heroes — with characters like Batman — the glorifying of their abilities and the desire to be like them — is what God has spoken into humanity?

God is saying: *"You were designed for something greater — the greatness of living to love others."*

What we often miss in the transfiguration narrative is that Jesus is extending love to those whom he sends out to love the world. He's calling out to the hero in each of them — the desire for lowly fishermen and tax collectors to become something greater. Men on a love mission from God himself. Living lives of greatness for the purpose of loving others, not for the sake of being loved by the masses.

Henri Nouwen captures this idea.. He writes: *"The basis of all ministry is the experience of God's unlimited and unlimiting acceptance of us as beloved children, and acceptance so full, so total and all-embracing, that it sets us free from our compulsion to be seen, praised and admired, and free for Christ who leads us on the road of service."*

Being a hero in God's eyes is about being a hero to others.

Which means that all those on the right side of the page, are the real heroes.

Let us pray:

Gracious and loving God, creator, sustainer, redeemer, and healer, we are in awe of Your love for us. We are in awe of Your love for the whole world. We confess that we often struggle to feel Your love in times of disasters or crisis. It's hard to see You past the reports on the news, or past our own personal loss.

We are so blessed to be able to call on You in prayer Lord. We are grateful for all of our essential workers risking their health to serve us. But most of all we are grateful for Your steadfast love. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Stay Safe. God Bless

Pastor Jack