

TRANSFIGURED
2 Kings 2:1-12; Mark 9:2-9

Sandy plowed through her day's errands, head down, eyes vacant. She was preoccupied. More than that, she was dejected, confused, and wondering what to do next. She was coaching her son's soccer team because there weren't enough dads to coach and here they were, halfway through the season, and they hadn't won a single game: hadn't even come close.

She knew winning was not everything, but they were a great team and they should win some. It wasn't their fault. It was hers. She was no coach and she knew it. Sandy assumed that interest in coaching, willingness to coach, and good physical condition was all she needed.

Well, that, and a coaching seminar. She went to the seminar; learned the soccer drills; ate, drank, and slept the rule book; led the devised strategies; and cheered them on until she was hoarse. None of it worked. Nothing she did worked. She must have forgotten something, but Sandy couldn't think of anything else to do.

There was one thing left to do; she could quit. Rick was available to take her team. He went to her church and was an experienced soccer coach. He could take these talented kids and make them into a winning team. He could succeed where she had failed. Sandy resolved to call him after dinner that night.

She felt better after the decision was made. She picked up the pace for her last errand, and turned into the next street. She was going to pick up a pair of shoes at the repair shop. She reached for the door handle, but stopped. Someone was calling her name. "Coach Sandy! Hey, Coach Sandy!" She turned and saw a young member of her soccer team hanging out the window of his mom's car. More than half of his body was sticking out the window, and a goofy smile was plastered on his face. He was waving his arms back and forth so she would see him, all the while hollering, "Coach Sandy! Coach Sandy!"

Sandy smiled and waved back, and in that instant, something happened to her. Something changed when she heard that six-year-old call to her. A transformation occurred, and she would never be the same again. At that very moment, right there on the street in her hometown, in front of the repair shop, Sandy became soccer coach!

She was on the right track after all. There was no reason to quit. She was doing it right, even though things had not quite worked out. The voice of that young team member had confirmed it. Sandy's confusion lifted, and her spirits soared. You could tell it by the way she walked, face bright, head held high. They might never win a game, but she was their soccer coach. She was on the right track.

Jesus' disciples were confused and despairing, needing to know if they were on the right track. Peter, James and John went with Jesus to the mountain. Maybe he would take back the things he had just told them: how he would be arrested, stand trial, and eventually die. His words confused and frightened them.

They had seen the miracles and heard the teachings. Peter spoke for them all when he confessed Jesus was the Christ, God's anointed. He also spoke for them when he corrected Jesus. They were not able to comprehend a suffering Messiah and Jesus owed them an explanation. As they climbed the mountain with Jesus, Peter probably was reminded of other mountaintop experiences. God often picked a mountaintop to show God's glory and might. Maybe God would shed some light on their confusion.

When they reached the top of the mountain, something indescribable happened to Jesus. He was clothed in white. His face shone like the sun. He looked like a flash of lightning. Then Elijah and Moses were with him! They stood with Jesus in the circle of light. The wind blew and a cloud of light overshadowed them all. And then, God's voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!"

In that moment, upon hearing the voice of God, the disciples received clarity. A light came on. They knew that something, everything had changed...in that moment.

God's confirmation comes to us in various ways, sometimes the voice of a six-year-old, sometimes on a mountaintop, sometimes in the ordinariness of the everyday...right here in Thomasville, NC. We ask, "Are we on the right track? Are we doing what you are calling us to do?" Maybe we are not bringing in a whole lot of new people. Perhaps we struggle with enough money to do what we think God wants. And then, we hear a voice, "This church is important to my family." And another says, "I wake up on Sunday morning excited because I get to come be with my church family."

In those words, God affirms for us that we are on the right track, that we are doing what God has called us to do. As we hear those words of affirmation, we are transformed, we embrace the ministry that is uniquely ours and we are blessed.

In the words of *Sidewalk Prophets*, in their most recent release . . .

*We all start on the outside
The outside looking in
This is where grace begins
We were hungry, we were thirsty
With nothing left to give
Oh the shape that we were in
Just when all hope seemed lost
Love opened the door for us
He said come to the table
Come join the sinners who have been redeemed
Take your place beside the Savior now
Sit down and be set free
Come to the table
Come meet this motley crew of misfits*

*These liars and these thieves
There's no one unwelcome here, no
So that sin and shame that you brought with you
You can leave it at the door
And let mercy draw you near
Just come to the table
Come join the sinners, you have been redeemed
Take your place beside the Savior now
Sit down and be set free
Come to the table
Just come to the table.*