Did you ever play that game “Red Light, Green Light” when you were a child? It’s a game where one person is the leader and the others have to listen and then are able to move (or not move) based upon what light color the leader calls. Red, of course, means you have to stop moving. Green means you can move. There are also variations where yellow light means skipping, purple light means walking like a crab and blue light means hopping. If you do the wrong thing at the wrong time, you’re out of the game.

The key to winning this game, then, is to listen. You can’t get ahead of the leader by anticipating what you think she’ll say or you run the risk of being out. You just have to wait, listen and act accordingly.

That’s a good metaphor for how we should interact with God. God is the leader and we have to listen to see if we should move forward or wait; change course or keep moving in the same direction; proceed quickly or more slowly.

But, sometimes, like Peter, we just go charging forward when our most Holy God is showing Himself to us or speaking to us. Maybe we’re babbling on literally to a friend about something unimportant and we miss what God wants us to see or what God says. Maybe our mind is babbling instead of being quiet and listening to God. Maybe we move forward with some ill-thought scheme because we don’t stop to listen to or to see what God is up to. We want to be in control and we think we know what’s right. But we haven’t been silent enough to hear God. We haven’t been alert enough to see where God is at work. We’ve been in our own little world and we miss what God is trying to tell us.

Seldom does God speak to us in such an awesome way as the Transfiguration. Yet God does speak to us. Sometimes God speaks through a still small voice as we pray. Sometimes God speaks to us through the faces and lives of other people. It could be a friend who just happens to say something that’s filled with God’s wisdom. It could be a needy person who we sense God wants us to help. It could be that God speaks to you when you hear me preach or hear Connie in Bible study or hear something in a reading at a Café service. The key is that we need to turn off those things in our life that shut out God’s voice. These things might be anxiety or worry or they could be our own focus on self or our need to be in control. It could be noise – noise of the radio or the TV, noise of too much social media, noise of our own monkey brain. When we turn off these things, we are better able to see God at work, more able to hear God’s voice. Then we can respond by moving where God wants us to go and when.

Jeanne Person, a canon pastor in Port Jervis, New York, writes:

“In the story of the Transfiguration, representing a movement from the river waters to the mountaintop, God offers spiritual guidance: Listen to him. Rather than being like Peter, who tried to build certainty, to domesticate mystery, we can quiet our souls and simply listen to Jesus. Pray contemplatively. Be open to God. Maybe this is why the story of the Transfiguration is told in churches just before Lent, the season of silence, wilderness, detachment, letting go. We can break away from old constructions and open ourselves to what God is revealing anew in Jesus Christ. We can courageously enter all clouds of unknowing, ever following Jesus into closer union with God and God’s will on earth as it is in heaven. The creeds don’t make sense? Doesn’t matter, really. Listen to Jesus. Alternative facts making you crazy? Listen to Jesus. Follow him. Live as he teaches us to live, love as he teaches us to love, steadfastly, mercifully, sacrificially. 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!”[[1]](#endnote-1)

As we begin Lent on Wednesday, let us resolve to led God lead and to be quiet enough to listen to Him. And let that listening guide our lives.

1. From Synthesis: A Weekly Resource for Preaching and Worship Following the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, February 2020. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)