I can’t show you what happened. James, John, and I aren’t really sure what we saw. It was wild. Maybe we were hallucinating or I was dreaming. Jesus said not to tell anyone, but I had to tell you all. How could I not? You all are his disciples too, and you won’t tell anyone, right?

You might be thinking to yourselves that this is just Peter running his mouth again or maybe that I’m making it all up. But I promise, I’m not and James and John can confirm all of it. I can’t show you, but if you’ll just listen and hear me out maybe we can make some sense of this together.

James, John, and I went up that mountain with Jesus. This wasn’t just a nice stroll up a hill; this was a hard hike. The mountain was so high, and the path was so rocky. We kept going up and up, higher and higher. It seemed that Jesus didn’t want to chance anyone seeing us, so we continued to hike. It felt like we had been walking for hours. James, John, and I were all tired and wanted to take a brief rest. We had no idea why we were even climbing up this mountain and just as we were about to ask Jesus if we could take a rest, he began to change. It was like he was someone completely different, but he was also the same. He began to shine so brightly and his clothes became such a dazzling white that it hurt our eyes and we could barely look at him. It was terrifying.

Then, as if bright and dazzling Jesus wasn’t enough, two men suddenly appeared. And you all are not going to believe this, but it was Moses and Elijah! THE Moses who led the people out of Egypt and THE Elijah who entered heaven on a chariot of fire. They appeared and were just casually talking with Jesus.

I didn’t know what to say, but obviously I had to say something. How could I not? It’s what I do; I’m the one who always says something. Jesus doesn’t just start dazzling every day and Moses and Elijah CERTAINLY don’t just casually show up and start talking to people. I had to say something, right? I just made a simple suggestion to Jesus. I said,
“Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” I mean what else was I supposed to say? I was terrified out of my mind and who wouldn’t think that we should have stayed there? Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were all there; why would we have left?

Then things got even stranger—a cloud completely enveloped us and we couldn’t see anything at all. I was reaching out, trying to grab hold of James or John but couldn’t find them. And then we heard this voice, unlike any voice I have ever heard before. We couldn’t see who said it, but the voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” The cloud vanished and only Jesus was there with us. I have no idea where Moses and Elijah went. I have no idea where the voice went. Only Jesus remained there with us.

I wonder who the voice in the cloud was. I have an idea of who it might have been, because it sounds like what we’ve heard about Jesus’ baptism. It seems pretty outlandish though, but how else would any of it have been possible? Do you think the voice we heard might have been God’s? Surely, we weren’t just imagining it all. We really heard it. If it was God, then that means our friend Jesus isn’t messing around with this Son of God stuff. He really is.

I’m not entirely sure what the “Listen to him!” charge was about though. We already listen to Jesus, right? He says let’s go to this town and we go. He says let’s go up a mountain and we go. We’ve seen everything he’s done. So why would this voice make the point to tell us to listen to him? Unless we’ve missed something. But we haven’t, have we? We watched him heal all those people, we saw him walk on water, we saw him cast out those demons, and James, John, and I saw him raise that girl from the dead. What more is there?

Sure, sometimes Jesus starts saying things that are really out there—he’s going to suffer, be rejected, killed, and then rise from the dead after three days—and we all know that I’ve tried to talk to him about that. And we also probably all remember how he responded; he called me Satan. Which felt like an overreaction in my opinion, but I digress. Maybe we are missing something, maybe just watching
Jesus hasn’t been enough. Have we been listening—really listening?

Do you remember when we returned from the country of the Gerasenes? We got out of the boat and a crowd surrounded Jesus. The synagogue leader, Jairus, approached Jesus to ask him to come and heal his daughter. We were walking and the crowds just enveloped us, and that woman (the unclean one who had bled for all those years, who shouldn’t have been in the crowd) reached out and touched Jesus’ clothes and somehow in that big crowd he knew someone had touched his clothes. He asked who touched him, and the woman came forward and revealed herself.

I don’t think I’ve actually thought about how Jesus interacted and spoke to the woman until now. He sat there and he listened to her tell her whole story. He had all the patience in the world with her. And then when he did speak, he wasn’t upset that someone who had been bleeding and was unclean had touched him. Instead, he told her that her faith had made her well and to go in peace. I hadn’t thought of what he actually said to her until now. He praised her faith. How could she have had any faith? She hadn’t seen Jesus heal anyone or cast out demons. How could she have known he would heal her? I wonder if it’s because she listened. She must have heard about Jesus from other people. She heard about him and believed he wouldn’t turn her away because she was unclean or because she was a woman. No other sensible person would have spoken to her the way Jesus did. I’ve never heard anyone speak to someone like that the way Jesus did.

Jesus did the same thing when the leper came to him. Do you remember? The man with leprosy approached him and said, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” And Jesus wasn’t afraid of the man; he wasn’t even the slightest bit wary of reaching out to touch a leper and he said, “I do choose. Be made clean!”

The woman who bled and the leper shouldn’t have been people he gave notice to, except maybe for him to say, “don’t touch me.” But he spoke to them with all the kindness in the world. I don’t know if I had really given that much thought to how he spoke to them until today. He didn’t rebuke them at all, he spoke with
a gentleness and a kindness that I haven’t heard before. And I think the craziest thing to me is that the woman and the man expected nothing less; they had heard about Jesus, who he is and what he is doing and they believed.

You know what I have heard? I’ve heard that the religious leaders and the government aren’t happy with the things Jesus is saying, the things he does, or the people he’s spending time with. We’ve all heard Jesus say that he is going to suffer, that he will be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and that he will be killed. It’s probably because Jesus is dangerous. He’s a threat to them, their power and their positions. I’ve also heard Jesus say that he will rise again after three days. I hope that’s true.

Jesus listens and talks to women, lepers, other unclean people, the demon possessed, foreigners, and he never speaks to them with contempt or disgust. I can hear him now. I can hear the ways he has cared for them and shown them love and acceptance. He prioritizes caring for the people our world tosses aside. He listens to the ones who don’t have any power in our world. He goes against everything we hear that we are supposed to do as good, upstanding citizens.

I wonder if that was what Jesus was talking about a few days ago. Do you remember when he said, “If any want to be my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me? For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.” And then he made the comment about those who are ashamed of him and his words. He was telling us something, and I think I missed it. I think I’ve been missing it. I don’t know if I’ve been listening at all until now.

I have to start listening to Jesus. I need to listen to the people he listens to. Otherwise, all I will hear are the powerful in our world telling me and convincing me that maybe their way is best. I won’t listen to the women, the foreigners, the children, the sick, the unclean, the poor. I won’t see them. I too will toss them aside. I will sacrifice loving my neighbor to maintain the status quo. I won’t take up my cross. I won’t know Jesus. I won’t follow Jesus.
I won't know the man everyone is talking about.

“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

Listen to him, the voice said. Listen to him.

I've spent all this time telling you all what I have heard Jesus say. But I want to know...

What have you heard?