

## “Crossing over”

By Rev. Edgar F. Solís

### **Intro**

We all are aware that our life is marked by innumerable big and little “decision points,” we all have experienced times and places in our lives where we cannot stand still but are also almost too afraid to move forward.

For many the future looks bleak, and we know that once we set foot upon a particular course of action, there will be no going back. Crossing over is a reality for all people of faith, crossing over represent a great opportunity to discover, to move forward and to follow Christ.

### **Context matters.**

Let’s learn what Christian author and communicator Matthew M. Boulton commentary states about the context of this passage in Mark. *The Transfiguration stands as the fulcrum, a high point and pivot point between these two great sections of Jesus’ journey. In the verses just before this passage, Jesus articulates what is arguably his most disturbing, difficult teaching of all; that he must suffer, die, and rise again, and that anyone who wishes to follow him must “deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me”. The disciples are understandably bewildered by these ideas, and Peter even argues with Jesus, rebuking him and refusing to believe. The Transfiguration’s brilliant light, then, acts as a kind of reassurance for the disciples (including us!). It’s as if Mark is saying: We’re now making the turn toward Golgotha, and that means descending into the valley of the shadow of death. But fear not! Keep this astonishing, mysterious mountaintop story in mind as we go. Carry it like a torch, for it can help show the way — not least because it gives us a glimpse of where all this is headed...*

Rev. Tripp Gullledge wrote an interesting insight in the UMC discipleship preaching notes about the lesson from readings in the book of Kings, he said; *The author is preparing us to hear about Elisha's work as prophet, but not before Elijah can make his famous departure.*

*Elisha doesn't get to see Elijah's face during his ascent as he had asked, but he does receive power that is at least comparable to that of his teacher. He literally takes up the mantle and parts the waters of the Jordan as he crosses over into the beginning of his own prophetic ministry. At the very least, he can take this first step by performing as his first sign the last one his teacher had done. The crossing over was painful for Elisha in the moment, but his prophetic ministry would go on to be considered one of the greatest in Israelite history. The growing pain of the transition seems to have borne fruit that was worth the struggle.*

### **Reflection and application.**

All changes represent a challenge, God is inviting us to explore new opportunities and new experiences to grow and move forward, God is inviting us to cross over the river of a new time of mission in our church.

You may remember that I enjoy watching movies and taking the best lessons from them.

Some years ago, when we had just arrived in Iowa, my family and I were discerning God's direction. We received an invitation to stay and collaborate with a local Methodist church in southeast Iowa; it was a big challenge for us; we had to leave everything behind home, friends, family, and jobs; the future was uncertain at that time. However, I do believe God used a biopic film of one of the most famous Latin-American revolutionaries, Ernesto Guevara, to show me that many times, crossing over is a necessary experience to grow and achieve a new goal in your Christian journey.

The *Motorcycle Dairies* film's plot is the exciting and challenging narrative of an idealistic medical student, Ernesto Guevara, and his biologist friend, Alberto Granados. They made a perilous journey through Latin America and route using an old motorcycle to a work assignment in a Peruvian leper colony. Now, it is fascinating to see that along the way, they encounter the indigenous people's poverty, hardship, and working-class struggles, inspiring a revolutionary change in Ernesto's way of thinking; he later participated in different revolutionary movements all over Latin America and the Caribbean. I consider a particular scene in the movie pivotal in Dr. Ernesto's transformation—the crossing over of the river.

Having taken up his volunteer post at the San Pablo leper colony in Peru, Ernesto is distraught by the patients' and physicians' segregated living quarters. After delivering a birthday toast championing Latin American unity, he leaves the party, stands at the shore of the river, and looking the lights of the poor village of lepers on the other side of the shore in a dramatic scene based on witness narratives, Ernesto jumps in and swims across the river, when he finally got to the other side, there, he was embraced by the leper patients in a final act of defiance against this unfair class system. My interpretation of the river crossing scene is that it could be a metaphor for understanding the awful reality of many suffering from class disparity in the world. As Dr. Guevara, are we willing to cross over the river that separates us from the marginalized?

Ernesto saw and experienced that the wealthy elite of colony doctors was auto segregated from the colony lepers, then he challenged this separation and injustice by an act that slaps the hypocrisy of those who claim to love the people; all of these coincides with Ernesto's realization of the iniquity of this class system that rules the world.

Dear church, it is worth reflecting on and wondering: how many occasions does the real blessing of God happen when we dare to challenge and upset the equilibrium by crossing over what separates us from the needs of the world to experience a different new reality? Crossing over is a powerful principle in our Christian journey, mainly if we cross over to encounter God manifested in people's lives.

We all are still beginning a new year; new opportunities, challenges, and people will come, and new ministries will be part of our ministry; fear not! As the disciples, let's focus on Jesus' manifestations of power, love, and grace for everyone! As Elisha, let's move forward, starting a new time of connecting our faith with the needs of many out there! As Ernesto Guevara during his young age, let's jump on the river and experience a new life with the people of our city, the beloved people of our community! Amen!

*Row on.*  
*By Jorge Drexler*

*I dip my blade in the water.*

*Holding on to both of our oars.*

*I think that I see a light just on the other shore.*

*Slowly but surely the night*

*Gives in to morning once more.*

*I think that I see a light Just on the other shore.*

*After all, I believe it's not the time to give up*

*All these tears, all these tears and I'm still an empty cup.*

*I hear a voice whispering me clear, don't give up.*

*Row on, row, row on!*

*Down on this edge of the earth what doesn't kill you ignore.*

*I think that I see a light just on the other shore.*

*I am rowing with all of my might and smile down deep in my core.*

*I think that I see a light just on the other shore.*

*After all I believe it's not the time to give up*

*All these tears, all these tears and I'm still an empty cup.*

*I hear a voice whispering me clear don't give up.*

*Row on, row on, row on.*

*I dip my blade in the water holding on to both of our oars.*

*I think that I see a light just on the other shore.*