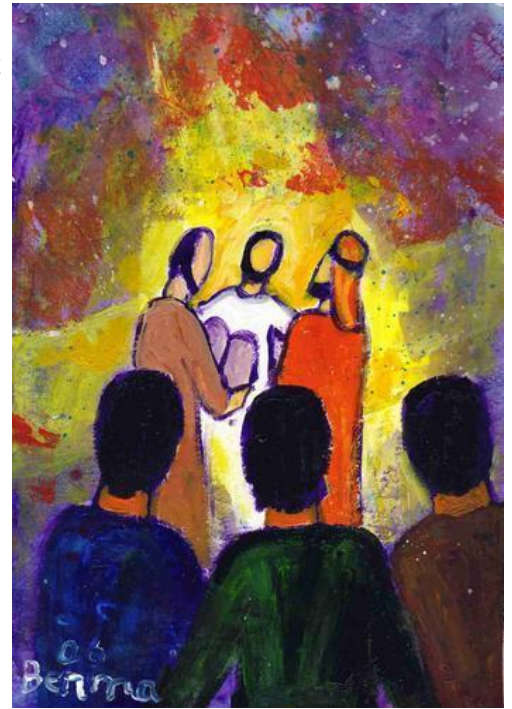


WHO IS THIS LORD OF GLORY? – 2 CORINTHIANS 3:12-4:2

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¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. ¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.



This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it,

The memories of the Lord's 10 plagues were still vividly etched in their minds. The sand of Egypt was still matted in their hair. The sight of a mountain shaking as the Lord descended upon it mimicked their wobbly knees. Moses, their leader, had ascended the mountain to speak with God, and they waited patiently for what the Lord would say. Moses would descend the mountain and speak with the people the words of God. The residual effects of an encounter with God were clearly seen on Moses' face – it shone with a holy glow. He would then cover his face with a veil until he went and spoke with God again.

This would be a repeated event – God conversing with Moses, and Moses relaying to the people. And each time Moses' face would glow, and he would cover it shortly thereafter. Why did Moses cover his face? Paul gives us an answer in the second lesson for this morning from 2 Corinthians. **“[Moses] would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away.”** The glory that shone in Moses' face after he spoke with God would only be a temporary glory, it wouldn't last forever, like those glow in the dark stars you may have had in your bedroom growing up – they would glow for a time after the light was turned off, but then their glow would fade.

Moses didn't want the Israelites to associate the temporary glowing of Moses face with the keeping of God's covenant – as if they didn't have to obey the covenant all the time. But Paul takes that a step further with our lesson from 2 Corinthians. In the lesson he shows how the new Covenant (or

agreement) God made in Jesus is far superior to the Old Covenant given to Moses. This supremacy is shown clearly in the transfiguration of our Lord, which we remember this morning. Between that event and 2 Corinthians, Paul shows us WHO IS THIS LORD OF GLORY.

1. Unveiled on the mountain
2. Reflected in our lives

(1)

From the foot of one mountain to the foot of another. On the foot of Mount Sinai, there was fear and trembling from the presence of a holy God upon it. On the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, God was still upon it, but there was a different sort of fear and trembling. Jesus took his big three – his three closest disciples – Peter, James and John with him to ascend this mountain. He had taken the three away alone before, but never for this purpose. As they reached the appropriate spot, everything changed – Jesus’ appearance changed, into something they had never seen before. Yea, they knew Jesus was the promised Messiah, but did they really know what that meant? Did they really know WHO IS THIS LORD OF GLORY? Well, they found out as he was unveiled on the mountain.

“His face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.” Not only did his clothes become bright, but like the flash of a lightning bolt, the flash of a strobe light. This was the only way that Luke could describe it. Jesus glory was unveiled upon the mountain, he was unveiled not only to be the Son of God, but God himself – the one who created the heavens and the earth, the holy one who demands holiness from his creation. He was unveiled with all the glory of God – glory that he always had, glory that for much of the time he kept veiled.

It’s no wonder then that Peter, James and John felt inadequate among such company – here they were sinful creatures in the presence of holiness. They recognized this to be a glorious event and wanted it to continue, but it was not to be. Once again, the voice of God sounded down out of heaven, **“This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him.”** Only one other time did God break into the course of history and speak, that was at Jesus’ baptism. What a privilege Peter, James and John were given to be there on that mountain, to take in the majesty of Jesus. We would think that from this glimpse of his glory, they would know WHO IS THIS LORD OF GLORY.

We feel like they should have known so much about Jesus, they should have seen him all over in the Old Testament, for he spoke about them, **“These are the Scriptures that testify about me.”** They should have realized Jesus’ mission was not to establish the earthly kingdom like so many thought, but to get us to his heavenly kingdom. Didn’t they know WHO IS THIS LORD OF GLORY? Especially after he was unveiled upon the mountain. But hindsight is 20/20, and it’s easy for us to comment on a time where we never were. It is true, the disciples did eventually come to this knowledge. They saw Jesus throughout the Old Testament, they realized Jesus had come to suffer and die for them, and they spoke of it. But at the time, despite Jesus’ glory being unveiled upon the mountain, their eyes were veiled to his true purpose – the same veiling that Paul talked about in Corinthians.

But it’s not just unbelievers’ eyes which are veiled to Christ, there are even times within our own lives when our eyes are veiled. Because naturally our eyes are veiled to our Savior – we can’t know him.

Our eyes are veiled when we forget why Jesus came, our eyes are veiled when we think of ourselves as better people because we believe or because we are part of a particular church body, our eyes are veiled when our reason for coming to church, for giving offerings, for serving others is because we feel obligated to. Our eyes are veiled when we seek our own glory for being a Christian.

There was a reason that Jesus didn't reveal his glory all the time. If Jesus had crowds gathering around him when he concealed his glory, the crowds that would have gathered to see his glory would have been astronomical. The crowds would have come, but the crowds would not have been saved. Because the Lord of glory unveiled his purpose on that mountain too. His greatest glory would not be shone on the mountain, but in his sacrifice for us. He had to suffer for us, so that we might have glory – not here on this earth but in heaven.

We have more confidence and more hope now than if Jesus would have simply remained in glory. Because we know THE LORD OF GLORY unveiled on the mountain is our Savior. We know he went to the cross with the same power and glory he unveiled on the Mount of Transfiguration. We know he showed that power and glory not by coming down from the cross, but by staying up there. He showed his power and glory over death itself by rising from the dead. He showed his power and glory when he chose us, before the beginning of the world to believe in him.

THIS IS THE LORD OF GLORY unveiled on the mountain, and we have seen him. Not with our physical eyes, but with our eyes of faith. Because God himself has removed the veil that covered our eyes. God himself brought us back from spiritual death and spiritual blindness. He has removed the chains of sin that bound us and has given us freedom. This is why Paul says, “**we have such a hope**” and “**we are very bold.**” Because we have seen THE LORD OF GLORY.

(2)

Because we have seen THE LORD OF GLORY, we can't help but reflect that glory like a mirror. A mirror has no image except that which is reflected. And when our faces are turned toward Christ, we reflect that image of THE LORD OF GLORY. Paul says, “**And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory.**” This transformation is being done to us, for us.

But it is not as if THIS LORD OF GLORY just came to be an example – to show us how to live, to show us how to act, to show us how to think. Because if that were the case, we would look at ourselves and think that our transformation hasn't taken place, or that we need to do something to transform ourselves, the focus turns inward and then we get down on ourselves and lose heart. THE LORD OF GLORY did not come just to be an example, he came primarily to be our substitute, a substitute who gave his life for us.

But even as Bible believing Christians who know this, we can get down. Because even though we know the suffering that Christ went through in this world, even though we know that we must “**take up our cross and follow him,**” it can be difficult to do. This is why Paul again reminds us, “**since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.**” Whenever we are tempted to look inward – whether at our own goodness – or outward – at the world's despising of the Christian faith, we can

remember where this faith comes from, where our hope rests. It rests not in ourselves, but in THE LORD OF GLORY reflected in us.

It is this LORD OF GLORY that has caused us to “**renounce secret and shameful ways**” and “**set the truth forth plainly**.” Because truth is not the relative idea that so many people think it is, truth is not open for discussion. We proclaim what God’s Word says – plainly and clearly. This doesn’t just mean we state the truth correctly, but that we oppose the error which seeks to couch itself in the very same words. Is this difficult? Yes! Will this cause hurt feelings? Yes! Will this result in people calling us unloving, uncaring and unkind? Yes!

And yet, instead of backing down, instead of compromising, instead of allowing error to stand with truth, we set forth the truth plainly – whether that is in something as simple as a six-day, 24 hour creation, or something as vital as original sin which condemned us before we were even born. And even when we set forth the truth plainly, we do it with the attitude of love and respect, not animosity – so that claims of hatred might fall upon deaf ears.

We set forth the truth plainly not only when we come to worship our God, but we set forth the truth plainly with the actions in our lives, actions that reflect God in us. We set forth the truth plainly whether someone knows the truth or must be reminded of the truth. It is not the glitz and the glamour which unveils the blind, but this simple and plain truth which unveils the eyes of the blind. May we always remember this.

Maybe there have been times when you have not been as bold as Paul, where you have veiled the Lord’s glory maybe there are times where you have lost hope. That’s where we must heed our own words regarding the plain truth of WHO IS THE LORD OF GLORY. He is Christ our Savior, he is the one who gives us strength and hope. May this LORD OF GLORY which you have now seen again on this mountain of glory, give you strength and hope as you return again to the plain. Proclaim this Lord of glory unveiled on the mountain, who is reflected in you! Amen.