

Let Us Look At The Light Again.

Text: 2 Cor 3:12-4:2

1) God Has Shown His Glory In The Past

Suggested Hymns:

2) God Still Shows His Glory

520, 37, 206, 291, 793

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2, ¹² *Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech --* ¹³ *unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.*

¹⁴ *But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.* ¹⁵ *But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.*

¹⁶ *Nevertheless when one 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 liberty.* ¹⁸ *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

¹ *Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.* ² *But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

If there is anything we have learned from television in the last few years, it is that there is a lot of dirt to be found in this world of ours. Politicians seem to be forever grubbing about self-serving purposes. Movie stars seem to be caught in a web of immoral plots, confusing their private lives with

their professions. Sports heroes take bribes. Governments engage in immoral activities.

Neighbourhoods are falling apart because of the petty dealings of neighbours. Cities are scarred by crime and violence. Countrysides are ravaged by those more intent on making money than preserving the land. Our water is fouled. The air is filthy. Prices are going up and quality is going down.

And the TV that sits in our living rooms has only served to let us in on the latest of the dirt. Each evening the news programs seem to be doing their best to dump another load of muck into our homes. But let us not blame the news people for reporting what is there. That will not take it away. Dirt is dirt, and it is there if we want to look at it. But it is also the option for us all not to look at it.

The Transfiguration of our Lord presents us with a unique opportunity to look up at the light again, to see beyond the dirt of our world to the eternal glory of God. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. God Has Shown His Glory In The Past

One of the things that this passage from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians makes abundantly clear is that God has shown His glory in the past.

Certainly Moses was aware of the glory of God. On more than one occasion he found himself confronted with the glory of God in one form or another. From the burning bush, to the pillar of fire, to the bronze serpent, to the presence on the mountaintop, Moses knew the glory of God, and he knew it intimately.

And so did the other children of Israel. They saw time after time how God showed Himself in all His glory. One very special manifestation of that glory is found in the occasion referred to by St. Paul in our text.

You all recall that when Moses came down from the mountain-top of Mt Sinai after talking with God that his face shone so brilliantly that he had to keep a veil over it to prevent the people from being blinded by the light. We cannot even begin to imagine what it must be like to see a man's face shine that way.

But it was not only that mountaintop experience that impressed the Israelites with the glory of God. They knew of God's glory from one experience after another, year after year, generation after generation. They were thoroughly

convinced that their God was filled with glory. Throughout time the theme of a glorious God has been part and parcel of the thinking of spiritual Israel.

But our text tells us how a veil has fallen over the minds of certain Israelites. As time passed and the Children of Israel increased; as they grew weary with waiting for the final manifestation of the glory of God; as they forgot the promise of God and busied themselves with the day-to-day operation of a kingdom, the glory of God faded from their vision.

As the children of Israel busied themselves with the things of this world, they forgot about the things of the other world. And that was the beginning of the end of the glory of the Lord in their midst. As they became involved in making new rules for the people of God, in effect setting up a new law, the Israelites and their priests gradually put aside the hope of the Messiah which was so much a part of the glory of God.

And today a veil covers the minds of those who think only of the glory which Moses saw on the mountain. Because they failed to look up, the Israelites lost the glory of God.

But it was not only to the Israelites that God showed His glory. On the Mount of Transfiguration we see that glory shown again. Let us take a moment to look again at that event, the central theme of today.

James, Peter, and John went with Jesus up on a mountain to be alone. While they were there a really remarkable thing happened: Suddenly the whole appearance of Jesus changed, and He began to take on a brilliant glow which must have reminded the men of the glow that Moses had in the presence of God.

In fact, within moments Moses, and Elijah the prophet, were seen talking to Jesus. What a fantastic sight that must have been to these men! Peter got so excited by the whole thing that he wanted to do something special by building three small tabernacles for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

This was Peter's responses to the glory of God of which it had been his privilege to witness.

And then came the climax to the whole event. A voice came out of the clouds saying, ***"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"***¹ No one needed to ask who was speaking. The glory of God was more

than apparent. The disciples fell to their faces, to arise only when Jesus lifted them up.

What was the meaning of all this? We don't know. The disciples were instructed not to speak of it. We only know that this was another instance of the glory of God being seen by some of His children. We only know that this was a glimpse of Christ's glory.

On that occasion Christ lifted the veil for a moment for the benefit of Peter, James, and John. That veil is now lifted for us. We can look back through the years, through the pages of the Scriptures to see that event and others like it, and we can be privileged to believe.

Christ removes the veil for us today. All those who turn to Jesus see clearly into the glory of God. Some see more clearly than others, but all who have faith see the glory of God.

You see, the glory does not stop. When Moses came down from the mountain, that was not the end of the glory of God. When Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain, that was not the end of the glory of God. People who have climbed mountains have been able to see seemingly thousands more stars while they were up there, but the stars do not stop when you come down from the mountain.

2. God Still Shows His Glory

To those who care to look up, God still shows His glory. We can talk about something as simple as looking up to God in prayer, and seeing His glory. That may not be as glamorous as seeing the shining face of Moses on Mount Sinai, or seeing Jesus take on a heavenly glow on the Mount of Transfiguration, but it can be just as real, if you care to look up.

We are bold to trust the promises of God, we take Him at His word that He will be with us. When Jesus promised that He would be present in the midst of two or three who gather in His name, we have to assume that He was serious and that He really is present.

Since Jesus is, then we are able to witness His glory by simply gathering together for worship. Whether that worship be on a mountaintop, or in a

tabernacle, or in a country church, or in a cathedral, the glory of the Lord is present according to His promise.

Let us understand that God's glory is present for a purpose. Our text tells us we have been given a ministry by God. God gave us that ministry as something to do until He comes again. We have this ministry so we do not lose heart, almost as though keeping busy with the work of the Lord will help us keep our minds off of our troubles. And it will.

As long as we are busy doing the work of the Lord, it is pretty hard to look down into the muck and mire of our world. Doing the Lord's work will not take away the troubles of the world, but it will keep us looking up at Jesus, who is *the light of the world*, rather than into the slime of the existence of so much of the world.

God has given us a ministry for all to see and believe in. It is our duty and our delight to be permitted to tell others of the blessed hope of salvation which is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have the rare joy of announcing to the world that there is salvation for all people because of a Babe who was born in Bethlehem, who eventually suffered and died on "*the place of a skull*," nailed to a cross between two criminals.

That is pretty hard to believe, isn't it? How could the suffering of a man who was stripped and beaten and then nailed to a wooden cross save anyone or any thing? But that is the way God had planned it. To atone for our sins it was necessary that Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly in our stead, and to suffer the punishment that we deserved. And that is exactly what happened. That is the message we have to tell about in our ministry.

To a world which seems to be mired in the mud and muck of crime and corruption, we hold up a cross that was once stuck in the dirt. To people who see only trouble and confusion, we hold up the Saviour who was brought to a criminals' death by a group of men who couldn't stand for the truth.

In our nation we see a love for what is showy and pretentious, for what is luxurious. We see a vast gulf between those who are very rich and those who are very poor, and that gulf seems to grow wider every day. We see an obsession with sex which could only disappoint a God who created something lovely and tender.

We see a headlong race to decline which would surely trouble the founders of this great nation. The cross of Christ which is the centre of our ministry does not take away those problems, but it does help us to rise above them.

The ministry that we have will not cure all the problems of our country overnight, but it can help us look up to another way of life and to another life that begins now and stretches into eternity. And that is what we hold up for all people to see.

If we hold up the glory of the Lord which we have seen, then others will see Him and come to give Him glory. We have a freedom in the Lord which enables us to rise above the troubles of the world because we have a confidence that all will ultimately work out, if not in this world, then in the next.

As men and women who are able to look up to see the true meaning of life, it doesn't really matter what takes place in this world, and in this life. But that very knowledge puts us in the curious position of not caring, but daring, nevertheless, to do what we can to alleviate the suffering of man wherever we find it.

The world does not matter to us in many respects, but we feed it and clothe it and heal it, just to let it know that God cares and that we are acting in God's name to be merciful, loving and caring.

To those who see clearly, we observe that we are being changed from one degree of glory to another. As God works in us to will and to do what is pleasing in His sight, we find ourselves transformed in this life, seeing the light, and doing things that will bring glory to God. God is moving through us to work wonders in His creation, gradually transforming us.

We gradually put aside worldly ways to take on the tasks that have been given us by the Lord. We can put aside hate and take on love. We can give up on strife and take on peace-making. We can step up from the things which are self-seeking and turn to those things which are selfless.

In short, we can step up out of the mud that seems to cover the world, spread by those who serve only self, and if we look at the light of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can see the path which He wants us to take, the one which is high and dry and which safely leads to eternity at the foot of the throne.

Today as we celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord, it is fitting that we urge one another to look up and see the light from on high and that we further urge one another to reflect that light so that others who have not yet seen it may come to see the glory of God.

Much of the strife in our nation stems from those who are misguided, who are led by distant lights, rather than Jesus, *who is the light of the world.* ²

Let us look up beyond the commotion of the world and see the eternal beauty of God. May God grant that we all see the light and that we lead others to see it as well, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Matthew 17:5

² John 8:12