

Show Me Your Glory!

Exodus 34:29

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.

We are fresh off the Season of Epiphany, following Transfiguration Sunday. Those of you who celebrated it may recall the story of Jesus' radiant appearance on the mountaintop, flanked by Moses, who represented the Law, and Elijah, who represented the prophetic tradition. According to an excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, pp. 148-149), "The Sunday immediately prior to Ash Wednesday is an appropriate time to celebrate the Transfiguration of the Lord, because this event marked a transition in Jesus' ministry in which he 'set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9:51), where he would die." It is certainly an ideal onramp for our journey through the season of Lent, leading to the agony of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb on Easter Sunday.

The passage in Exodus is not the transfiguration of Jesus but rather the "transfiguration" of Moses when he ascended the mountain and met with the Lord. After encountering God, he had to veil his radiant face because it was too bright for the Israelites to bear (Exodus 34:35). The light of God's glory was so powerful that it altered Moses' appearance. This is often compared to how Jesus' face shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2). However, the parallels between Moses' shining face and Jesus' appearance in glory are limited. Moses' face merely reflected God's glory, whereas Jesus' face shone with his own glory. Jesus is not a reflection of God's glory—he is its radiance (Hebrews 1:3).

In my recent discussions with new believers and seekers, I often receive questions along the lines of, *Why can't Jesus just make it easier to believe in him by appearing gloriously today or performing an undeniable miracle for all to see?* Don't you sometimes wish you had been there 2,000 years ago to witness Jesus firsthand? Imagine what a difference it would have made to personally see him perform miracles, tell parables, cleanse the temple, or display his incomparable radiance on the mountaintop. If I had experienced that, would it have made me a more faithful Christian? Would I be more willing to serve and sacrifice for him?

Of course, this perspective does not account for the fact that the Israelites witnessed God's mighty works—such as the parting of the Red Sea—yet their attitude toward Him remained unchanged. When Moses came down from the mountain, he found them worshipping an idol (golden calf), despite having rescued them from Egypt and giving them an explicit commandment not to do so (Exodus 32:7-8). Similarly, many who witnessed Jesus' miracles, teachings, and acts of compassion did not come to believe in him. Some followed him, but many others turned away (John 6:60-66). Even one of his own disciples betrayed him after witnessing most of his works. It is not merely seeing the works of God that ignites faith or strengthens faithfulness; it is recognizing *God's glory* in those works. A person's life is transformed when they behold God's glory and radiance. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians:

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Of course, the concept of God's glory is vast and difficult to define in just a few words. Some think of it as the manifestation of God's magnificence, beauty, perfection, and divine presence. Some may perceive God's glory in Christ, while others may not. Some may experience it through Scripture, corporate worship, creation, acts of mercy, grace, and justice, while others may not immediately recognize it. It takes the light of faith—ignited by God in our hearts—to truly see His glory:

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

As we enter this season of Lent, may we cultivate a receptivity to sense and see (through the help of the Holy Spirit) the glory of God in our lives. Whether through our Lenten spiritual practices, personal or corporate worship, ministries, relationships, or the circumstances we face, may we remain open to being touched by God's glory. Even in our broken yet beautiful world, may we be transformed by Christ's radiance in whatever comes our way.

Blessings,

**Blessings,
Peter Tan-Gatue**