

Transfiguration
February 14, 2010
Exodus 34:29-35
(2 Corinthians 3:6ff)

What can we learn from Moses' shining face? The Holy Spirit tells us of Jesus' shining face, too. The Holy Spirit instructs us further about this by the Apostle Paul who compares the glory connected to Moses and the glory of Jesus Christ. There is much here for our hearts.

May we take to heart especially that

There Is No Fading of Christ's Glory.

It says that Moses came down Mt. Sinai with the two stone tablets of the testimony in his hand. This was the second time.

Do you remember what happened the first time Moses had come down the same mountain with two stone tablets in his hands? Well, while up there – forty days – the people of Israel got tired of waiting, lost faith in everything God had done for them and in all of God's promises, and built a calf of gold, declared it the real "Lord" and had been wildly worshipping it since very early in the morning.

It was a disaster. They had cut themselves off from the LORD's rescue, from His help, from His blessings, from His fellowship, from His promises of the land flowing with milk and honey. Moses smashed the two tablets. This showed them what they had done in violating the very first commandment. Moses burned the wooden frame of that calf, ground that gold into powder, threw it on the water and made the people drink it. I bet that was an awful drink! Some of the people impenitently continued their rebellion and 3,000 were executed that day.

Wow! They experienced God's holy wrath. They tasted death. They got to know what a broken fellowship with God felt like. They wondered if they'd ever get to the land of promise.

This severe preaching of the law uncovered their sin, declared them guilty, and announced a guilty sentence of death. They knew they deserved it!

The law of God has no trouble uncovering our sin either. Our impatience with God shows often. We don't hesitate to use our gold with little thought of God at times. When the funds run short, we can be tempted to view our offerings for the Gospel ministry as the first discretionary item to cut.

Well, happily for most of the people, the severe discipline of God's wrath led them truly to repent of their sin. They went into a spiritual mourning. They were really distressed

and upset when they heard about God's ending of His fellowship with them. They respectfully and humbly showed a heart willing again to cling to every Word that came to them from the LORD through Moses' ministry.

To the repentant, God quickly spoke the Gospel. He reestablished fellowship with them and promised to go with them on their way to Canaan. He preached the mercy, grace, compassion and love of His great forgiveness for all who trust in His wonderful Name re-inscribed, His 10 commandments on stone tablets, letting them know that He wanted them in His covenant to be able to show their faith in Him by living a life guided by His will.

Moses at this moment was coming down the mountain, back to them, with those two stone tablets of the 10 commandments. Unknown to him, Moses' face shined brightly.

When Aaron, Moses' brother, and the other people saw Moses' face, they were frightened, really afraid, for they literally ran away from Moses.

Why that reaction? God's glory shows the whole of God's greatness and goodness and awesomeness. A sinner, when suddenly confronted by that, always reacts with fright. Automatically and instantaneously the sinner senses the seriousness of his sin and knows it is repugnant to God. He knows at once that he is in trouble.

May the glory of God's commandments always let us know that those commands are holy. They are perfect. They do speak to our whole life, to every attitude, idea, thought, word, and deed. We are to take them seriously.

But what's with the veil? Exodus tells us that after Moses spoke the commandments to all the people, he put a veil over his face. Whenever God delivered more words to Moses, Moses would remove that veil, kept it off until after he told the people God's Word and then put the veil over his face again. 2 Corinthians explains why. The glory faded. Moses didn't let the people see the fading. Only after it was recharged in the LORD's presence did Moses let the people see it again. He knew how easily these people would use any excuse to rebel.

But Paul sees something very encouraging here. Christ's glory does not fade.

We get to see a glimpse of Jesus' glory along with Peter, James, and John. We even get to see it a moment of the Father's glory there, too! And Jesus forever tied that visible glory to what He was about to do at Jerusalem by His departure, and the Father tied that glory to listening to Jesus!

Our Redeemer would suffer and die at Jerusalem. He'd rise and ascend from there. Wednesday begins Lent. We will worship here on Wednesday evening, even with the Lord's Supper. We will be reminded of our sin, of our mortality, of Jesus' cross of forgiveness and life for us.

The LORD's greatest glory was accomplished in Jesus, in His perfect obedience to all those commandments, in His self sacrificing, freewill offering on the cross, in His powerful resurrection from the dead. Jesus accomplished the Gospel, the full, free forgiveness of all sin, accomplished our life, new spiritual life, new physical life and eternal life.

This glory of our Savior and His Gospel is not only brighter than the glory of the commandments, it is unfading! It never fades. It never will go out. It won't disappear. God's merciful forgiveness for eternal life is always there for us. It will bring us to heaven.

And it reflects off us. Paul wrote, "We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory..."

May many see the reflection of our Savior's glory from us. Amen