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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
February 15, 2015
Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture Lessons: 2Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9
Hymns: 359; 135; 315:1-5; 315:15

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

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. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God my Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Transfiguration: the glorious event on that holy mountain.
The disciples Peter, James and John didn't know what they were in for when Jesus invited them to ascend that mountain with Him. When they reached the top, Jesus changed. The Greek word for this

change is the one from which we get the word metamorphosis. It signified a very dramatic change. We use the word for changes such as when a rather unpleasant looking caterpillar changes into a beautiful Monarch Butterfly. As dramatic a change as that might be, the change in our Lord Jesus had to be far more glorious. And that was only the beginning of the sights and sounds for these three disciples to witness. Suddenly it wasn't only Jesus that stood before them but two of the prophets who had already been received into the glory of heaven, Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about His impending passion. There was still more to come. When Peter began to make a suggestion that this moment might be preserved by setting up some tents for Jesus and Moses and Elijah, that bright cloud came over them, and the voice of God the Father came from that cloud proclaiming God's good pleasure in Jesus as His Son. And then, as quickly as it all began it was all over. Peter, James and John had the experience of a lifetime, the kind of thing you can't wait to share with everyone you know. They had seen the Lord's glory! However, the Lord told them not to share, not to tell others, not until after His resurrection.

Now we live well after the Lord's resurrection, and the Lord not only allows us to talk Him and His glory but commissioned us to talk about the Lord,

THEME: Sharing the Glory of Christ.

However, we don't always possess the same enthusiasm to share as did Peter, James and John. Our text starts out with encouraging boldness in sharing, encouraging us to proceed with

I. Boldness to Reveal Christ's Glory.

2 Corinthians 3:12-13 "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."

This boldness comes from the hope which we possess. It is the hope of righteousness which brings life. It is a hope that does not come from the law with its power to condemn but from the gospel which brings righteousness and life. This is the glory that excels

the glory of the law. This is the glory of Christ. If it is only right for us to conclude that the glory of Christ would excel the glory of Moses, then it is only logical that the glory which brings life through grace would exceed the glory of the law which condemns and brings death.

Be bold to stand up to the pressure of the world to the deception of the ideas of work-righteousness which is of the law. What we have is real, and what we have is clear, and the hope we have in Christ and His glory shall not fade away. This hope has come to us by --

II. Removal of the Veil of the Law from Our Hearts.

Our text reminds us of how Moses wore a veil when he talked to the people during his presentation of the Law at Sinai. He wore a veil because his face was shining bright when he came out from talking to the Lord, but that glory would immediately start to fade. Moses wore the veil so the people would not see the glory fading.

2 Corinthians 3:14-16 “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.”

What is it that can't be seen because of the veil that is over people's hearts? What they don't see is that **the glory of the law fades**, that it is passing away. As real as the glory of the Old Testament Covenant, and the holiness of the moral law might be, it is not as glorious as the glory that is found in Christ. The glory of the Mosaic Law was not the end in itself but only a symbol of the grace that was to come. Paul wrote to the Christians in Colosse, lest they be deceived to embrace the passing glory of the ceremonial law.

Colossians 2:16-17 “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”

The substance is of Christ, and not of the law. Righteousness comes to us from God through Christ. As for securing

righteousness by fulfilling the moral law, it is a false misleading dream. The law is good and holy, but we are incapable of securing righteousness and glory through the law, for—

Isaiah 64:6-7 “We are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. 7 And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;

No one can secure the eternal glory that is necessary for one to come to God through the law, either by the moral law or the ceremonial law. That glory of the Law is a fading glory or a false hope for glory. By one self, one cannot see that this is the nature of the glory of the law because that veil is in place in unregenerate man. That veil prevents us from seeing the passing nature of the glory of the law.

That veil is taken away in Christ. It is when we learn of Jesus’ glory as our crucified and resurrected Lord, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification that the veil is taken away, and we can see clearly. We see clearly the glory of the Lord, and we see clearly the deficiencies of the law, for –

TLH 295:1,5 “The Law of God is good and wise,
And sets His will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness,
And dooms to death when we transgress.

“The Law is good; but since the Fall
Its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die
And has no power to justify.”

III. Blessings Coming to Us from Jesus’ Glory.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 “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.”

The first blessing mentioned here is that of **liberty**. As Americans we think we know all about liberty: it's freedom, personal freedom to live as we see fit, to live in the pursuit of happiness. This is not the liberty of which Paul speaks in our text. The liberty of which Paul speaks is far greater than being set free from the oppression of other men. It is the being set free from the oppression of the law, from the oppression of sin and death. Liberty from the law's condemning power comes to us by the glory of the Lord which we behold as we search the Scriptures and learn of Christ.

Of course we cannot now know the fullness of Christ's glory, for the glory of the Lord shall not be fully revealed to us until it is revealed to all the world in His second coming. However, something very special is happening with us right now by the glory and power of the Spirit working in our hearts and lives. **We are being transformed into the same image.** What image? The image of the Lord Jesus Himself. How and when does this transformation take place? It begins now, in this life. As we grow in faith and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit works in our hearts and lives. He brings us the righteousness and true holiness that comes to us from a forgiving God. We are cleansed of all our sins. He brings us the power of a new life, so that as we go forward in life we strive to glorify our Savior in our daily life. Having repented of our sin, we strive to remove sin from our lives. We share in His glory as we live in a manner that shows forth His glory.

We grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we live in the hope of the glory of God. We shall be like Him. We shall live in His presence even forevermore. **We shall be changed from the glory of the redeemed to the glory of the exalted Lord.** This is the blessing of God's grace. He shares with us His glory. He shares with us, creatures of His. He shares His glory with us fallen sinners whom He redeemed with His own precious blood. He shares with us the glory that was His from all eternity, the glory to which He was exalted as our brother, the Son of Man who came to save that which was lost (Matthew 18:11). He shares with us that heavenly glory through faith in His name.

How can we not be as excited, as exhilarated as were the disciples Peter, James and John after they witnessed the glory of the Lord on

the Mount of Transfiguration. And we have not been asked by the Lord to hold back, but rather **to share**, to share our knowledge of salvation, to share what we know, and have seen through eyes of faith of that **glory of Jesus**, that others also may have the veil of the Law lifted from their hearts, that they also may know the glory, and share in the gracious outpouring of glory that comes to us by the Spirit of our God.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.