

When God's Glory Shines Through

Bible Reading:

Exodus 34: 29-35

2 Cor 3: 12 - 4: 6

Luke 9: 28-36

PREPARED BY
KEN GEHRELS
PASTOR
CALVIN CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF OTTAWA
ONTARIO, CANADA

When the glory of God shines into our lives, we can't help but be impacted.
The glory of God changes us.
It shines through us.

Please read with me of how that happened in the life of one of His servants.
As we enter the scene the leader of God's people, Moses, is guiding the nation of Israel in a time of spiritual recommitment. They've come through a rocky time and need to rebuild their relationship with God.

The 10 Commandments are carved in stone and presented to the nation.

God's will is given from the top of Mt. Sinai.

Moses is on top of that mountain for 40 days surrounded by cloud and the brilliant light that was a reflection of the light of heaven.

Moses was as close to the actual glory of God as any human being could come without being totally annihilated. For 40 days and nights he is surrounded by that glory.

Read with me what happens next.

EXODUS 34:29-35

When the glory of God shines into our lives, we can't help but be impacted.
The glory of God changes us.
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That's what happened to Moses - his face glowed.

The power of the Lord had overwhelmed him and rubbed off onto him.

You could tell where and with whom he had been.

Moses was with the holy, awesome, powerful, pure King of the Cosmos.

And it showed.

Moses was physically changed - he glowed with heavenly brilliance.

The people, though, couldn't handle it.

It seemed strange.

It was frightening, overwhelming - too much.

They backed away.

It was a brilliant glow.

A pure light.

A power.

The Hebrew word used to describe the light is a rather rare one, and indicates that the glow comes from the exterior; from **outside** Moses.

It is applied to him; done to him.

It is applied to Moses by God Himself;

and it comes as a sign of God's affirmation and authority.

Moses calls to the people.

They had backed off in fear; but God's representative calls them back.

They approach and the man of God speaks to them of God's covenant – the holy bond and relationship that God was establishing with these people.

It was as if God was calling the people through the man Moses.

Calling them not to back away in fear.

Not to run.

And not to wander in disobedience.

And the people come.

And they listen.

How different from what happened two chapters earlier, in Exodus 32.

There we read how Moses was on Mt. Sinai.

The smoke and thunder and glory light of God were on top of that mountain and Moses was in it.

The people become impatient and demand to have something tangible to hang their faith on. So the high priest begs some gold from them and produces an idol - what was supposed to be a physical representation of the invisible God; a tangible conduit to heaven where the very power and presence of God would rest. The people go nuts and dance in a raving party around the thing.

God's anger burns.

Moses comes down and smashes the first copy of the 10 commandments on the rock.

And many people die as a result.

God was close, caring for His people.

But because of horrible, sinful disobedience God became distant.

Now in chapter 34 God calls Moses back.

And God reestablishes a relationship with His people.

And **this time** the people respond by coming forward

quietly

humbly

obediently.

This time they listen.

Moses' face was a sign to the people -

S it symbolized that God was again with them, leading them, among them.

S it symbolized that God had given authority to this human being; that God was uncommonly close to this person - Moses spoke and acted for the Lord.

The veil - well, the people simply couldn't handle the heavenly glow all the time.

It overwhelmed them - reminded them of how ordinary and sinful they were, and of how great the power of God was. The people were in awe of the glory of God.

When Moses would remove the veil, they knew that Moses was speaking with the authority of God.

When the veil was in place he would be speaking as Moses the man.

Well, that glory eventually faded.

And Moses died.

But we see him one more time.

For that account we go to the New Testament -

Luke 9:28-36

In Exodus 34 God gives His word to the people through the shining face of the man Moses. Here God reveals His ultimate Word, what the Gospel of John in chapter 1 describes as "*the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us*".

And up on that mountain top the power and authority of that Word is revealed to Peter and John and James. The layers of Christ's humanity are peeled back and the full glory of heaven breaks through - the same glory that had shone on Moses face now shines from Jesus' face.

Only with Moses it had come from outside and was applied to him, skin-deep.

With Jesus it came from within - from the inside out - from the core.

Standing with Jesus, also in blazing glory, is Moses. This time it is not only his face, but his whole body that glows. For now he has been translated to live forever in the pure, holy, powerful presence of God. No longer skin deep; that purity of heaven has soaked right through him.

Ditto for Elijah.

And then the cloud - just like the cloud on Mt.Sinai that had swallowed Moses up - here the figures on the mount of transfiguration are swallowed up. And a voice - same voice as the Old Testament voice;

God's voice.

The response of Peter and James and John is the same as that of the Old Testament people. They are frightened. They want to back off.

They lay quivering on the ground.

And who wouldn't?

Wouldn't you?

It all seems pretty contained and tame when we read it.

But really – try to imagine it. Imagine if it came here.

The overwhelming light.

The powerful voice.

The awesome, holy presence of God.

Can you imagine if God showed up at Calvin some Sunday, no holds barred, nothing held back?

What would happen to our quick talk, or stubborn opinions, or determined agendas?

What would it do?

How would it change things?

It knocked the disciples to the ground.

And God spoke: *"This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"*

Not just some representative of God, like Moses or Elijah.

This is God's very own Son.

Come to fulfill for humanity what Moses had begun. To live to complete perfection the will of God that had been revealed to people through Moses and the Law.

The perfection, the completion – the Way, the Truth, the Life.

And of this one God says, *"Listen to Him!"*

Pay attention.

Obey.

Overwhelming!

Powerful!

That is the One we serve as Christians.

To whom we pray and sing.

Of whom we speak.

Whose name we carry.

For whom we work.

Not one to be taken lightly, or fooled with, or treated casually.

Not one to casually yawn about or endure as we reach for another peppermint.

Do you catch that, people?

So what do we make of that for our lives?

We could speculate and wonder.

But, thankfully, we don't have to.

We can and will go one more time to the Word of God.

And we can figure out what to do with all the glory light of heaven streaming from human faces and breaking on the world stage.

Read with me, please -

2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:6

This passage begins by saying,

"Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness...."

What "*hope*" you ask?

Go back to v.6 – it speaks there about a new covenant.

Remember - covenant refers to the relationship which God establishes and keeps up between Himself and humanity.

God had established a covenant with the people in Moses' day.

It was based on the code of Laws written on the stone tablets.

It was held in place by external conduct.

It was communicated by a person with an outside glow, hidden behind a veil,
a glow behind a veil that eventually faded away.

But now Jesus has come.

And there is a whole new way that God relates to people.

A whole new covenant has been established.

A relationship where nothing has to be hidden.

There is nothing to fear.

And unlike the first covenant, the relationship that people experience with God through Jesus is a relationship

- not from the outside in -

but from the inside out.

Jesus sends His Holy Spirit to give us a whole new life.

We are brought to freedom.

We don't have to play pretend games of any sort.

We don't have to hide behind any masks.

It's a real relationship with a real God

meant for real people.

It's a real relationship with a real God

who sends a real power to begin working a glow and shine in the lives of these people — a glow and a shine that starts **on the inside**.

And the more it works, the closer these people are brought into contact with the Lord.

And the longer that Holy Spirit's power shapes and sculpts these people, the more they begin to reflect and look like Jesus.

And - you can even begin to see it in their faces.

Bitterness and anger start to disappear.

The Spirit drains it away.

Worry doesn't hold them down so much.

For they hear a heavenly whisper that the future is in God's strong hands.

Guilt can't control them.

For the glow of the Son of God, who gave His life for them on the cross, has cleansed them and forgiven them.

It is an incredibly wonderful and free way to live.

Ah, there still remain challenges.

Pain in life is still real.

The heading over 2 Corinthians 4 describes human life as being contained in jars of clay.

Dull jars.

Not very shiny.

Sometimes even chipped or cracked by being banged around.

The sort of stuff so many in our congregation have experienced over the past half year; and the reason why we're coming together for a special service this evening.

But even with a clay, chipped exterior, believers in Jesus know that the Holy Spirit is at work inside them, going through the process of changing them, fixing them, and shining them up.

So they don't lose hope.

They don't let the chips and scratches and knocks stop them.

In fact, they have found such a freedom

and a hope

and an inner light and glow

- a glow that, unlike the glow on Moses' face, **doesn't** fade

that they make sure to let other people know about it.

Not by putting their outer clay lives on display.

But by telling people about the One with the real glow

the through and through glow

the One who can bring a glow and hope and freedom into their hearts.

by telling people about Jesus.

So where is it for you?

Moses was just an ordinary person like you and me.

His life was changed forever when He encountered the power of God.

You could see it on him.

The lives of Peter and James and John were changed by an encounter with that same power - an encounter that was theirs because they were with Jesus.

They got up from that mountain, and went on to share the hope and joy and freedom and glow of the Spirit of Jesus with many people.

That same power, that same glow - inner glow -

an inner glow that eventually will begin to show itself on the outside
is there for us, too.

It's there for all who will submit their lives fully to Jesus;

welcome Him in;

invite His Spirit to control them.

If you haven't done so, may I urge you to do it today!

And those of you who have, always remember:

Your affirmation in heaven doesn't come from some glow or shine on your face. That fades away.

Your relationship with God doesn't depend on mountain top experiences. They fade away, too.

Your living, freeing, renewing relationship with God is based on, and continues to grow out of your surrender to the One who has the steadfast affirmation of heaven: "*This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.*"

And as you live in Him, He will then empower and enable you to become an agent of hope and healing in the lives of other people.

Nothing you'll have to hide.

But eventually they'll see the glow - they'll see that there's something real and different about you. And you'll be able to bring them to the Saviour.

You'll be a jar of clay holding a treasure of gold!

And blessed with the opportunity to share that gold with others.