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*"The Face That Shines"*

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Sermon Text: Exodus 24: 12,15-18 / 2 Peter 1: 16-21 / Matthew 17:1-9  
Mariner Sands Chapel: Transfiguration Sunday

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This week completes our season of Epiphany. Jesus has taken three of His disciples high up on Mount Hermon and has revealed himself to them in a way that displays His glorious appearance. We call the event the transfiguration because there is some unexplainable change in Jesus' appearance, as He discusses things with Moses and Elijah. Jesus doesn't ask to be changed, He only obeys the Father and takes with Him three witnesses. (Incidentally, three witnessed were required to validate a testimony). The Bible says His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light. It was not a light shining ON Him, but a light shining OUT of Him. And suddenly as his appearance changed, there appeared with Him Moses (giver of the Law) and Elijah (the greatest prophet). In Luke's Gospel (Luke 9:31) we read that Jesus spoke with them about His "exodus" or departure which He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem.

My first observation about this transfiguration connects the change in appearance just before the arrival of the two witnesses from old. We have no biblical explanation why, but my hunch is that is Jesus is returning to the way he looked with them while he was in heaven, before His royal birth. After Jesus' resurrection, He returns to this appearance. The Apostle John also sees this new appearance in Rev 1:14. In Paul's letter to the Philippians (Phil.2:6-8), Jesus is described as one who was found in appearance to be a man, but humbled himself and was obedient to suffer death on a cross. Later in the same chapter (vs.15), Paul exhorts us to be blameless and pure, to "shine like stars" in the universe.

This experience on the mountain is expressed by Peter and John in their own letters. John 1:14 says that "we have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only." Peter gives us his recollection in his letter we read today, "We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain." We should "pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place." Our Old Testament passage captures the experience of Moses, when he was on Mount Sinai receiving God's law. The Bible says the glory of God came down in a cloud, and Moses entered the cloud to meet with God. The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:7 that the Israelites could not look steadily in the face of Moses after this event because of the radiant glory left upon his face. He wore a veil to cover it. King David sings a psalm (Ps. 34:5) to Abimelech about we who believe have radiant faces. "They looked to Him and are radiant, their faces are never covered with shame." Daniel too, had vision of a man who visited him (Dan 10:6) and his body was like chrysolite, his face was like lightning. When we walk close to God, we walk within the light of the Lord, everything looks very shiny and bright. Everything looks new.

The face that shines with the promise of God is the face that not only looks radiant, but one that has begun the process of transformation into eternal life. Perhaps this is what we will look like with our new glorified bodies when we enter heaven. Matthew 13:43 says "the righteous will shine like the sun." So when Jesus has forgiven you of all your sin, and filled you with the Holy Spirit to live a life of faith, love, and hope, cleansed you from unrighteousness and darkness, you become a whole new creation, walking in this world as children of light.

The transfiguration of Jesus, was not so much a new miracle as it was the brief pause of a current miracle, for the veiling of His glory was the real marvel, it was Divine restraint that prohibited his shekinah glory from being noticed continually. The Voice from heaven, declared to them a simple imperative. Listen to Him. Just six days earlier, Jesus told them at another high place that he would soon suffer and die. It is time for the disciples to listen to this profound and mysterious truth. Today, if you hear God's voice, listen to it. Walk in the light God gives you. Unveil the light that God brings your soul.



I John 3:2

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Q: What do you call a seed of corn?

A: Corn

Q: What do you call a field of plants that grew from the corn seed?

A: Corn

Q: What do you call the fruit that comes from a plant that grew from the corn seed?

A: Corn

Q: Did the corn change its identity after it died, was buried, and resurrected to have a new body?

A: No. It's still corn.

Q: Will the person change his/her identity after he/she dies, buries, and is resurrected to have a spiritual body?

A: No. It's still the same person.

I Corinthians 15: 50-54

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is **written**: “*Death is swallowed up in victory.*”

*“As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.”* (2

**Kings 2:11, NIV)**