

Sermon for February 10, 2013 - Transfiguration

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

**Theme: See the revealed Glory of God**

- 1) *In Christ.*
- 2) *In the Gospel.*

<sup>3</sup> *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.* <sup>4</sup> *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* <sup>5</sup> *For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.* <sup>6</sup> *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

(Hold up a large half geode showing the ugly outside)

How many of you would consider this rock beautiful and put it on display in a prominent place in your home? Maybe some of us would, who know what it is; but otherwise it looks just like a rock. Yes, it is a big rock, but there doesn't seem to be anything else special about it. What if I told you that the inside of this rock is very beautiful? Some of you might believe me, others might not, and still others just not care.

On the outside this geode just looks like an ordinary rock . . .

(Show the beautiful inside of the geode)

But on the inside it is very special. Do you see how beautiful it is?

Both Jesus and his Word are very much like this rock. To his contemporaries, Jesus just looked like an ordinary man. To many people in our day the Bible just looks like an ordinary collection of stories. But by God's grace we know differently. Inspired by our sermon text for this morning, let us meditate on the fact that *in Christ, we see the full glory of God revealed, and in the Bible, we see the full glory of Christ revealed.*

Celebrities and famous people seem to have a way about them that attracts us to them. Was this also true of Jesus? The way many artists portray Jesus, you would be inclined to think so. But let us look at how the Bible describes him. Isaiah prophesied about the coming Christ: *"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him (Isaiah 53:2)."* Yes, just as a person would walk by this rock, thinking that it is nothing special, so also people in Jesus' day, were tempted to view Jesus as just an ordinary guy.

But Jesus is more than just an ordinary guy. He is the Word of God - God himself, who took on human flesh to save mankind from sin (John 1:1,14; 3:16). To see Jesus is to see God; to believe in Jesus is to believe in God, as Jesus himself said: *"When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me (John 12:44-45)."*

Just like this rock, Jesus' physical looks were deceiving. Knowing this, Jesus decided to do something very special for three of his disciples. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus revealed his glory to Peter, James and John. He did this because he knew that his disciples needed some extra encouragement - especially considering the fact that He would soon be handed over to be tortured and crucified. When this would happen, Jesus would look like anything but the glorious Messiah. The disciples would be tempted to see him as another helpless human who had fallen into the hands of the Romans. They would be tempted to consider him a fraud. This could very well

be the reason why Jesus revealed his hidden glory to his three closest disciples - that they might know and not fall away on account of what He was about to suffer for our sake.

It is unfortunate that so many of the Jews didn't believe that Jesus was the Savior of the world. All of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus as the Savior. All of Jesus' miracles cried out his divinity. John the Baptist proclaimed him as the Messiah. But many of the Jews, in their unbelief, did not accept it. Many of them let their sinful pride veil their hearts from seeing the glory of God revealed in Christ. The god of this world used their desire for earthly things and an earthly Messiah to blind them to the truth - to their own pitiful destruction.

Today there are also many people who do not know Jesus as their Savior. Like the Jews in Jesus' day, they consider him to be just another ordinary guy. Why do they do this? Well, let me explain it with an illustration.

(Lift up two books.)

What do I have in my hand? Two books. One is a Bible and the other is a book of Irish fairy tales. Many people think that these books are the same. When they look at the Bible, they only see another book of stories, written by a variety of different authors from different times. Some even go so far as to say that the Bible is a book of fairy tales. Unbelief prevents them from seeing what the Bible truly is. They allow the devil to blind them, so that they cannot see the radiant light of Christ.

But the Bible, just like this rock, is very special on the inside. This Bible reveals Jesus Christ, and in revealing Jesus Christ, it reveals God. To read the Bible is to look for Christ, as Jesus himself said: *These are the Scriptures that testify about me (John 5:39).*

Why is it that so many cannot see Jesus in the Bible? Why is it that so many do not believe in him? It's because the sinful heart does not want to accept the things of God. And we were no different. We also were blinded as to who Jesus was. We also had the veil of unbelief covering our faces. But God the Father, in his gracious love, sent the Holy Spirit to reveal his Son Jesus to us. Just as glorious light flooded the universe at God's command, so also the light of knowledge and faith flooded our darkened hearts when Jesus said to us, "Believe." For some of us this happened very early in life, at our baptisms. For others it happened later in life, when someone used the Bible to tell us about Jesus. The Holy Spirit used that message in order to illumine our hearts to see Jesus as our God and Savior.

Wouldn't it have been neat to walk with Jesus and listen to him teach? Wouldn't it have been neat to see him face-to-face? Well, you can see Jesus face-to-face, walk with him and listen to him teach! You can do this by reading the Bible. As we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts. Our minds are taken back in time, and with our eyes of faith we see Jesus perform his miracles. With our ears of faith we hear Jesus teach the way of salvation. When we read the Bible, it is like looking at the face of God himself in all his glory.

This is an important point to keep in mind. The voices of the world tell us that the Bible is just another book and we are not immune to the temptation to view the Bible as a collection of stories, or fairy tales. We are tempted to pick and choose what we want to believe and leave the rest. We are tempted to ignore the Bible. The devil is doing his best to try to veil our eyes from seeing Christ.

Dear Christian, realize the treasure that you have in God's Word. Realize that when you read or hear the Gospel you see the face of Christ himself. The more we come face-to-face with Christ through his Word, the more his gracious light of love shines in our hearts.

The disciples got to see God's greatest glory at a certain place in Judea. No, it was not at the Mount of Transfiguration, it was at a place called Golgotha. It was there, on the cross, that Jesus' greatest glory was revealed. To many the crucifixion was a shameful thing to look at: a man was dying on the cross as a criminal; whether justly or unjustly it didn't matter. But we, who view the crucifixion of Christ with the eyes of faith, see

the greatest love story imaginable. We see God himself, who took on human flesh and blood, suffering the hell fire that my sins and your sins deserved. This is Christ's greatest glory. This is God's greatest glory. And this is what we, during the coming weeks in Lent, will focus our attention on.

Never judge a book by its cover, or a rock by its outer layer! Praise God that he has opened your hearts to know what is inside the Bible. And so we pray: "Dear Lord, let us always treasure your word. Keep us always gladly hearing it and reading it. As we use your word, may the face of Christ Jesus ever shine in our hearts. Thank you for revealing to us his true glory. Thank you for revealing yourself to us through him. In Jesus name we pray, Amen"