

Traditional Home service Sunday 27th Feb

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Be Thou my vision*)

READINGS - Exodus 34.29-35
2 Corinthians 3.12 - 4.2
Luke 9.28-36

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*Immortal, invisible*)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

2 Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one

3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and Thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art

4 High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish but naught changeth thee.

4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.

Sermon - Adrian Morton
Exodus 34.29-35; 2 Corinthians 3.12 - 4.2;
Let's not take His presence for granted...

The Gospel reading for this morning is Luke 9 and is the account of the transfiguration.

It's a well known account where Jesus takes Peter, John & James up a mountain to pray.

And whilst there the appearance of his face changes.
His clothes become bright as lightning.

Moses and Elijah turn up..
And a strange conversation ensues...

You may know it is transfiguration Sunday today and normally we'd concentrate on that reading.

But as you will have gathered I want to explore the other two set readings this morning.

In this 2 Corinthians reading Paul is referring to the Exodus reading to essentially say that the new covenant in Christ is so superior.

What we have now, compared to what even Moses had, is so much superior.

The privileges given to those who are 'in Christ' are so exceptionable, remarkable in comparison.

Actually, I think the main purpose of this transfiguration account is to emphasize how superior the ministry of Jesus is.

Anyway, let's look further at our two readings...

Moses had come down from Mount Sinai with two new tablets.
His face radiant after encountering the presence of God.

When the people saw this, they were too afraid to come near him.
Because they knew encountering God's presence might be fatal.

They had good reason to believe that.

When God asked Moses to come up the mountain, he said no one else is to come.

Nor be seen anywhere on the mountain.
Not even the flocks and herds may graze on it.

So they were rightly afraid to come near Moses.

Moses called them over, spoke to them.
After he finished speaking he put a veil over his face.

Whenever he entered the Lord's presence he would remove the veil.

Then he would come out, speak to the people.
The people would see his face radiant again.

And Moses would put the veil back on until he went again to enter the Lord's presence.

Paul interprets this Exodus reading and does a number of things with it.

Firstly, he says the reason Moses put a veil over his face, was because the glory of God was fading.

And he didn't want the Israelites to see that.

Paul then re-interprets the veil.
And says, the veil now is what is covering the heart of his contemporary Jews who are still relying on the old covenant.

Their stubborn, hard heartedness is preventing them seeing that the old covenant is defunct.

It's not a covenant that will ever bring righteousness and life...
Only by turning to Christ will that veil over their hearts be removed.

I think there are modern day equivalents, or examples of this.
When people put their trust in something else, for example, in good works to make themselves righteous..

that classic response, "I don't need Jesus, I'm a good person anyway."

that becomes a veil over their hearts.
It makes their hearts stubborn and hard.

Only by turning to Christ will that veil be removed...

I was talking to someone recently about the Free Masons.

Those who put their trust into that secretive organisation, will have a veil over their hearts.

It will make their hearts stubborn and hard when it comes to Christ and the ministry of the Spirit.

Only by turning to Christ will that veil be removed.

Again Paul is stressing that what we have, those who are in Christ, the ministry of the Spirit, is so, so superior.

Its everlasting, permanent..

We have a freedom, that comes with the removal of the veil, to enter into Gods presence and behold his Glory.

And as v18 says, as we reflect or contemplate His Glory we are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory...

This new superior ministry of the Spirit isn't fading...

In contrast, the transformation is ever increasing...

I want to explore that v18 some more...

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

I sometimes wonder whether we (I) take what we have for granted.

Well, actually I know I do...

When we become Christians, we are indwelt by the living God himself.

In the person of the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit applies the work of Christ to the life of the believer.

And the Spirit will bring us into the presence of the Father...

And we are called to have boldness, confidence to enter His throne room.
To enter His presence.

There is no veil, no barrier now to that...

Yet, when I think about that.
The enormity of what is offered.

I know its something I can take for granted.
Or we don't treat that reality with the importance it deserves.

So, for example, someone might ask me to pray for them.
And I'll shoot off a quick prayer.

And afterwards I might think to myself.

Rather than shoot off, what was a fairly unimpressive prayer.

Why didn't I send a moment to acknowledge the indwelling Spirit.
Why didn't I spend time to come into His presence first.

And its not that praying quick, unimpressive prayers is particularly wrong.

Sometimes we really may not have the time.
And we are called to pray at all times, on all occasions.

I think the Father is happy with all the efforts of His children...

Its also not that I'm wanting, or expecting a 'mountain top' amazing experience all the time either.

That's not sustainable.
Its never going to be reality...

I think its about reminding ourselves as to what really have.

Reminding ourselves of the privilege of what has been won for us.

The position we have...

That access to the presence of God is always open and available.

This verse says, as we reflect, or contemplate His glory, His presence, we are being transformed...

See, I think, when we come into His presence we **will** be transformed.

In other words, it will happen, it has to. His presence has to bring transformation.

Its not like, I've come into your presence Lord, and Ok, I must decide whether that's going to change me.

No, I will be changed.

And my heart has to be able to cope with that.

Which is why a humble heart, a yielding heart, is a good heart to have.

I sometimes think we don't experience His manifest presence as much as we think we would like to.

Because, our hearts couldn't cope with the transformation that would automatically result.

And actually, the Lord is being gracious towards us, and will bring transformation gradually, and maybe with out us knowing too much about it.

Look back at your life, hopefully you can see areas of transformation.

What will transformation look like?

Well, the verse says, we are being transformed into His likeness.

In other words, we are being transformed to live in such a way as to reflect God's character.

So we have more love joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...

It may be difficult to see the increase from last week.

But what about from 5 years ago...

If you've only been a Christian for a week, then don't worry about it at this stage!

But if we are a Spirit filled believer, we should hopefully see evidence of some transformation as we look back over our life.

<Talk about Tuesday Prayer & WhatsApp group>

<Talk about the conference...?>

I also think that we need to recognise, that whenever we hear God speaking to us.

Then we are coming into His presence.

And we know that when God speaks His word is creative.

His word has to bring change, transformation.

We only need to read Genesis to know that...!

But that is one way we know we have come into God's presence.

We discern, we hear his word to us.

I had to go to a family funeral this week. It was in Sheffield, so I whizzed up on Thursday morning..

It was the funeral for an elderly Aunty. There weren't many there, probably 20-odd...

I only have a few Christians in my wider family and this Aunty wasn't one of them.

So it was a Humanist funeral. No mention of God at all.

The person who took the service was very slick, almost too slick!

He spoke very quickly and was being very kind about my Aunty.

We didn't have any songs or hymns to sing. Just one song to help us reflect.

Towards the end, he gave thanks for my Aunty.

And being a vicar, you can't help but analyse these things.

Who are you giving thanks to?

And I had one of those casual prayer thoughts.

It went something like, "Lord, what do you think of this?"

Immediately, I felt Him whisper in my inner ear.

Sometimes, that's when I think I know when God has spoken to me.

I haven't had to 'try' and hear.

You may have experienced one of those listening to God exercises, where the person leading tries to encourage you to hear what the Lord might be saying in some way.

And often I spend time trying to muster something.

Almost try and conjure up a word...

Which is usually less than successful!

But this was an immediate inner voice, impression.

And I felt the Lord simply say, "I'm sad that she didn't know me."

And it brought me up slightly.

There I was being sad that the service wasn't great.

That the minister was being too quick and slick.

That he was giving thanks to no-one.

That he wasn't acknowledging God in any way...

Yet the Father was sad that my Aunty didn't know Him.

Of course, that so reflects His heart..

Because we know, He wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of His Son Jesus (1 Tim 2).

That word will have transformed me into His likeness.

In some way.

Maybe I increased in love, or kindness, or gentleness, or something else.

I'm not sure, but I know transformation took place.

Because I came into His presence.

I "beheld the beauty of the LORD" as Psalm 27 puts it.

Amen!