

A Reading of Exodus 34:29-35.....

Over the years I have had the opportunity of meeting a wide variety of people from just about every walk of life. But for the most part, many of them were really no different from the likes of you or me.

However, I must confess that there have been a few who – after having seen the look on their faces – have made me afraid to get any closer than I had to for whatever reason.
(*Cautiously glance at someone and move away from them*)

Yet on the other hand, I also must say that I have never been afraid of anyone whose face I found to be shining. But then again, I cannot really remember having seen anyone with a face shining like that of Moses’! (*Pause*)

But what about you? Can you remember ever having met such a person?

If we had met one such as this, I doubt we would have any trouble remembering such an encounter. Yet if this be true and none of us have ever witnessed the likes of this, is this to say that there is no longer anyone in this time and place who speaks with God? Or is it to say that they keep their faces and their faith veiled as well?

Perhaps the better question for us to ask is when was the last time anyone of us saw the face of another here this morning shining because they had found themselves in the presence of God? How many times have others seen this glow upon our own faces?

Another once wrote: “The bodily change seen in Moses points to the visible marks of faithfulness for all disciples. To live by faith means to embody God’s Word in the world.”

[Ann M. Svennungsen, *New Proclamation*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2006, page 141]

If we have encountered the living Christ, then the lives we live should reflect the presence of God’s Holy Spirit living within us. If our lives do not bear witness to this, then maybe it is time to ask “Why not? What is it about ourselves that needs to change... to become more Christ-like?”

“What veils or masks have we worn that we need to lay aside to allow others to see within us the one who still seeks to speak unto all who will listen, to lead all who will dare to follow, until all might know for themselves the holy one who seeks to live within each and everyone of us... and within this congregation as we profess to be the body of Christ in the world today?”

Even Paul in his second letter unto the church of Corinth was led to proclaim:

A Reading of 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2 (NRSV).....

Perhaps in many ways, the Word of God as it is proclaimed in these words of Paul can be compared to a “like new previously owned automobile” – translation, a half-decent used car. For while it may be anything but new, it is still new to us. And while it may be a gift of God’s grace and love for us, it’s use and upkeep are now our responsibility.

Likewise, it was not given to us to be hid away in a garage or displayed in a showroom, but to be seen and of use to all who have need of it... so that others too may know that the Lord wants to offer them nonetheless as well.

For as Paul reminded us, *“And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.*

“Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ...but by the open statement of truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.”

[2 Cor. 3:18-4:2 NRSV]

Today, I pray, we may rededicate ourselves to the calling that the Lord puts before us all... both individually and as the corporate body of His Church. I pray we may truly allow our Lord to live within us... that through our words and deeds others may come to know the love of Christ for them and for all.

I pray that this will not only be something we do, but we will allow our lives to be touched and transformed by the presence of the living Lord... the one who seeks to save us from ourselves... and to save others through the likes of you and me!

I pray today will be a new beginning for us all... for the sake of ourselves and each other... for the sake of this congregation and that of every church of every denomination... and for the sake of those who have no clue as to what Paul and I are talking about then or now.

Let us pray.....

If you know in your hearts that you need to come to our Lord anew this day, then as we sing our closing song, I would invite you to come to the altar and to rededicate yourself to the Lord’s service.

Our closing song is in the little black *Faith We Sing* songbooks, # 2103 *We Have Come on Christ’s Own Bidding*