**“A New Covenant”**

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Exodus 34:28-35

2 Corinthians 3:12-13; 4:1-6

Mark 9:2-9

 Transfiguration

“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, **Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him**. When Moses had finished speaking with them, **he** put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would **remove the veil until he came out**. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would **see the face of Moses, that** **the skin of Moses’ face was shining**. And Moses would **put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with Him**. … **Jesus was transfigured before the disciples, Peter, James, and John, and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is My Beloved Son; listen to Him.’ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only**.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

I did not read the Old Testament Lesson on our inserts (the Exodus event being an alternate account that I chose instead to read to you). The accounting of **Elijah** was as him who represented all the prophets at Jesus’ Transfiguring. His being taken up into Heaven (not in death, but rather by a whirlwind swooping him up to there, that was the reason for the 2nd Kings’ text’s inclusion. But **Moses** represented **God’s** **Covenant of relating with Him** and thatwas of such “**A Covenant**” and, for today I thought, the more important hearing as he represented **THAT** for the event of Jesus’ unveiling where disciples could witness that for all of us.

That **“Covenant” of God’s desire to relate to mankind favorably**, that’s the focus of our remembrance of “The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus”. Humanity had over and over again **broken the Covenant of relating with God**, and even in what’s just this Exodus event, people who should have been smarter than to do so, did that same breaking of Covenant with God in major ways in just a short expanse of time. God’s Son, Jesus, restored relating to God favorably for anyone with **HIS** perfect life and sacrificial death. Since He “finished” all the Covenantal responsibilities (including death for sin), any receiving the gift of that **known “for themselves”** would have the gift of the **Light of God to know-of and reflect**. It was “**in Him**” (Jesus, the natural Light of God) who shone intensely with light not reflected from Heaven but **WAS AND IS, HIMSELF, IT’S** **SOURCE,** that (after this somewhat full-out display of Himself) He would **CHOOSE** **His Father’s will (re-veiling Himself in the earthly form of one totally human yet obedient)**, then walk back down the Transfiguration Mountain to **continue toward a sufficient** sacrificial punishment for sin by whip and cross and a rejection by His Father, **changing everything for anyone willing** from where’d they’d have only an **appropriate** **fear of God when faced with Him** to a transformed **awe and glorification and love** which yields, in humans, an **ever-increasing comfort and peace and growth and, then ultimately, joy in the “Covenant” of relating**.

**Text**

It’s **into that ever-growing joy (increased as we appreciate it)** that all of God’s transforming of a human leads. A recent quote that’s out and about goes like this (about **only two options of “transformation”**): “**Satan’s** strategy for it is simple … to make sin look normal and righteousness seem strange. And don’t be deceived. Every single human **is being** **transformed** into either the image of Jesus Christ by the ‘Covenanted’ will of God or into the image of this world by Satan’s plans”. And Satan is well-equipped to encourage “veiled sights and impressions”. He does not want anyone to **“appear” demonic or scary**, but rather that damned humans look just **earthy and safe by human appearance**. The “**figuring**” of humans that **Satan** does he wants not alarming … but attractive, yet really a shaping and forming and encouraging for what is Hell and its course. **God’s** “Covenant” has always been to **let shine His Light**, which is not overly noticeable (in our mirrors) to earthly / veiled eyes, yet **transformed by Promise** (which is **Gospel gift** allowed to work and effect one), transforming and (from the principality’s perspective, transfiguring) in the **reflective shine that’s from OF HIS LIGHT**.

Six thousand years ago, God’s **forming of humans** was “**in His own image**” which had its own **reflective “glow”**. Yet humanity (instead of appreciating that, settled in his and her “Covenanted” relating with God) chose to break that and rebel / sin and be formed rather by **Satan’s idea to be then earthy and die, and know evil and CHOOSE THAT whenever we’d want**. Twenty-five hundred years later (after an all-earth destructive flood because it got so bad), here (next to the Exodus Mountain of meeting with God) the same damnation is **what humans CHOOSE (idols of bronze and human desire and want)**. People decided / **CHOSE** to “**look at shiny things**” rather than “**be shiny themselves by God’s Light**”. If you look around today, humanity’s filled eyes with “shiny things to look at” (the “grass greener in different yards”, bigger houses or more attractive wife or faster car or better paying job or a youth program with more kids or spunkier music at church or a more engaging pastor or any **temptation to human CHOICE**, the deception of a “**LIGHT TO LOOK AT RATHER THAN BE**” is an option we all hard-pressed to suppress.

And Satan loves the **masquerade of the offer**. “Making sin **look normal** and righteousness a strange idea”, **CHOICE** seem innocent when it (nearly always) **has repercussions**. At least Satan’s not lying when he dangles the options: they are options available for the **CHOOSING** … and most all of them are designed to **appear “shiny”**, while sin (in selfishness that’s given into) becomes the norm and transforms us, with righteousness feeling so far out-of-this-world strange that we don’t get it, so too often aren’t desirous to submit to it … yet **even the crazy Transfiguration event leading to God’s SELF-SACRIFICE is monumentally-true and revealing**.

Moses (a mere man) got to be in the glowing presence of God such that his face kept the shine **even visually** for a time, and Jesus’ intrinsic light got **“let loose” for a bit sending chills of fear down even disciples**. In both cases, something from Heavens had to be said, so God the Father said something about both.

**Through Moses, “A Covenant” was spelled out** in what got written down as forty chapters of God’s desire to save lost sinners by deliberate and specific action, and then reconstruct relationship with those saved by the rules best for interaction and detailed liturgies of conversation and vestments of garb of representation and washings of cleansing by the physical means of water and places of meetings (tabernacles) and **blood of sacrifice (the only chemical to erase sin when it’s the right blood shed)**. Then there’s, again, human **CHOICE** and apostacy (sin and rebellion), which is how mostly humans **CHOOSE**, but **“Covenant” renewal and reinstatement if we’ll repent and submit to it** with the requirements and desire unchanged, with years (from the Exodus time) until those requirements and God’s desire in them **explained in the Person of Jesus** and passed to also us which forms then either a transformation and formation Good and Godly through it or a refusal of it, distracted and transformed by “shiny things” that are not Christ. …. And **here we are**.

**Application**

I titled this sermon “A New Covenant”. However, there’s nothing “**New**” about it. It’s **as old as before Creation’s commitment**. The **One Naturally** **Shining from inside of Himself** with the glow of Divinity embodied in flesh and blood **let that out one morning or afternoon** (“six days after” some other activity). Peter, James, John (representing us), with those who’d talked about it years before in Moses and Elijah (representing so many others), were gathered for the event that’s recounted in Mark’s reading. God the Father **spoke** as He’d done on stone tablets and then papyrus to **be read** through the book of Exodus and the 38 other Old Testament books and 27 New others: “**Listen to JESUS, His own Beloved Son”. HE is LIGHT … NATURALLY … from which any human can be changed to reflect**. “**LISTEN …** **TO HIM**”.

May **our** **hearing** be always our “**listening**”. And may **our** faces and entire bodies and mouths (speaking of what we’ve heard) be ou**r reflection of what wonderous things we get. In +Jesus’ name**. Amen.