

(remain seated)

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:2,9,10) Amen.

**Stand Up, Look Around, and Rejoice:
The GLORY of the LORD Dawns upon Us.**

1. His GLORY rises in the shining presence of His Son, Jesus Christ.
2. His GLORY rises in the shining presence of His people

In Jesus name, who is, who was, and who is to come, our Savior in flesh and in glory, dear fellow sinners who have been declared righteous in Him,

Sometimes we speak of glory among human beings. Someone who receives the Medal of Honor receives a certain glory – honor and credit for a great deed. The team that wins the Superbowl and hoists the trophy high receives the glory of being called the champion, the best team in football. In these great feats, glory centers not just in who the person is, but more so in what they have done. GLORY is revealed in the reason a person deserves honor or praise; it is shown in his works or wealth; it demands that credit is given where credit is due. In a sense, it rises and shines so that no one can deny it.

The glory of man is always imperfect – limited and incomplete. The winner of the Superbowl only remains champion until the next season. A king can possess glory his power and wealth yet be totally corrupt in morals and judgment. Such is not the case with God. God has revealed His glory in terms that cannot be compared. ***I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. (Isaiah 42:8)*** The GLORY that belongs God, belongs to Him alone. It won't be stolen away by any god or man. It shines forth in the presence of His Son and remains shining in the presence of His people.

That word “epiphany” means “something made visible.” Here in the Word is an epiphany of God's glory; it is uncovered and made visible. Let us stand up, look around, and rejoice this Day of Epiphany as the GLORY of the LORD dawns before us ... (RISE)

Isaiah 60:1–6 (NKJV) — 1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. 3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side. 5 Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. 6 The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Lord, in Your Word, shine among us, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Amen.

1. His GLORY rises in the shining presence of His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Please, show me Your glory.” This was the request of Moses in Exodus chapter 33. Yet Moses didn’t exactly know what he was asking for. God responded – *“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” (Exodus 33:19)* To visibly see the glory of the LORD in our fallen, sinful state would be something we could not bear.

[He] alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:16)

To see the inapproachable light of God’s dwelling place in our sinful flesh would destroy us eternally. By nature we lie in darkness and cannot bear this light of God’s perfection.

2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people;

The darkness is pictured here as a covering; something which conceals and hides. There is nothing glorious about it; this fallen world generates absolutely no light of its own. It is a deep darkness, a cloud that prevents us from viewing or imagining the fullness of God’s glory. It is under this covering where man hides his sins so that he supposes God’s glory to be something that it is not.

I recently had a conversation with someone who was raised Buddhist. She explained this as the belief in reincarnation. If you live a good life then you will come back as a higher being. If you live a bad life, then you could come back as an animal or worse. When I asked her how good is good enough, she looked puzzled. The most she could come up with was that you need to be kind and compassionate and help others. This belief is not common only to Buddhism. Mormon theology supposes that Jesus was just

another man like you and me. By living a “good enough” life He was able to achieve the glory of God’s glory. He became a god; and you can too, if you are good enough. Christian churches are not immune either. So subtly, it is suggested that by doing the will of God the glory of God is something attainable. Jesus is turned into nothing more than a starter, an example, something to set you on the right path where you can live the glory of God by your Christian life.

As we belittle our sins and diminish the price that it took to remove them, we bring God’s glory down to our own dark level. We suppose that since everyone is sinning, my sins aren’t really that bad – especially when compared with the really “bad” people. However this is not the trophy glory of heaven. This is the darkness where we lie to ourselves, thinking God’s glory will dwell in the midst of our hostile sins *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23).*

Jesus did not come just to set an example or to get you started in the right direction. He came to raise up the glory of God before us. He came to hoist the trophy of salvation through His life, death, and resurrection.

v.2 – But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.

God’s glory rises from our darkness, an epiphany we never expected. Right in the midst of our sinful world dawns the glorious presence of God’s Son.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The GLORY of the LORD dawns in the shining presence of His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the EPIPHANY. It is full of the grace and truth of God – a GRACE which forfeits the glorious of heaven to enter the darkness of our sins... a TRUTH which reveals that there is no other way for man to achieve God’s glory. God’s brightest glory is hidden in His salvation.

The glory of other gods are indeed tarnished trophies when compared to the glory of the LORD. Other god’s, such as Buddah, reveal their glory in a few outward achievements, a little goodness, helping others (at least some of the time). They reveal a glory that arbitrarily ascribes “goodness” to some (as if another life in this fallen world is supposed to be a reward) and punishes “badness” by giving another chance as an animal.

The glory of our God is without compare. The glory of Christ fulfills true “goodness” – a goodness measured by God Himself. In this He rises to last place, not first. His glory is concealed and born in all humility. The glory of the LORD is to give up all glory for the darkness of our sins; it is His work of dying our death; it is His work of carrying our sins. This is why the glory belongs to Jesus. As He rises from death, the glory of

God rises upon us, casting out the darkness that enshrouds you; the shining glory of God's true righteousness accomplished by His Son dawns upon you. No other god can claim such glory. Such glory attracts Gentiles from afar; it guides the wise men to Bethlehem by revealing this to them in the prophecies of the Old Testament; it reaches out to you and me bringing God's saving grace through His Son into our midst today. That glory of the LORD revealed in the presence of His Son has become the glory revealed in the presence of His people.

2. His GLORY rises in the shining presence of His people

The LORD did reveal His glory to Moses. However God revealed His glory not to Moses' eyes, but to his ears. He concealed Moses in the cleft of a rock so that he would not physically be exposed to the brightness of His glory. Then He proclaims His name. For the name of the LORD is His glory among us – what we might call His hidden glory. Merciful, Gracious, Patient, abounding in Goodness and Truth, Forgiving sin – In a nut shell: Jesus Christ our Savior. Where Christ is taught, believed, prayed to and praised, there is God's name and there is His glory. The preaching of the gospel is the shining presence of Christ Jesus our Lord. The glory of God's Son has risen in the presence God's people.

1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

So Arise! Stand up and see! Look around and rejoice in what has risen upon us! It is so easy to take this gospel revelation for granted. It is so easy to be consumed with the darkness of our own sins or the cloudiness of our own earthly ambitions that we no longer look around to see the glory of God that has come to us. Look around and see; it is right here among us; it appears to us in the Word. ***For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)***

See the glory of the LORD revealed in the shining presence of God's people.

3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

When Simeon saw the presence of Jesus dwelling before him, he called this presence both "a light for the revelation of Gentiles." He also calls this Jesus "a light for the glory of Israel." (Luke 2:32).

This presence of God's Son before Simeon becomes the glory of Israel and the light of Gentiles. It shines so brightly and so universally that it attracts unites Jews and Gentiles. This is the mystery of the gospel of which Paul spoke in our epistle reading today. This universal grace has made Gentiles to be "fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6).

God has drawn us, Gentiles, into this spiritual dwelling of God's glory. The gospel sent forth at Pentecost, has drawn in countless souls from far off lands. This gospel glory has come to dwell with us here at Ascension.

4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side. 5 Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy;

This is bigger than just this building or this group of people. You are part of something gloriously brighter. This glory has made you, the Gentiles, to be a part of this heavenly Israel, the spiritual Mount Zion where through His faith you are gathered along with all the company of the saints into the presence of God Himself.

You are part of something that extends beyond time and space. Look around and see the eternal presence of Christ shining through us. Generation upon generation gathers her with us today united in the body of Jesus.

Our liturgy is designed to radiate this presence of God's glory among us. Take a look at your service folder with me. As we gather in the presence of the Father, Son, and Spirit we are drawing near the name spoken to Moses that revealed the glory of God – the GRACE, MERCY, and FORGIVING presence that comes to us through His Son. One of the greatest praises of our Savior's name is to confess our sins. In the confession of our sins each Sunday we proclaim the glory that belongs to Jesus alone; we declare that He alone has achieved true righteousness. The glory of God's salvation then shines. Where your sins are pronounced forgiven in Jesus name there the shining presence of salvation is seen. So we gather around His throne to sing: "Glory be to God on high; and on earth peace, good will toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory ..." As we receive the Word in our Scripture reading, the great glory of heaven comes to us to declare the words and works of the LORD. We literally stand up to see the glory of Christ among us in the Gospel reading, proclaiming: "Glory be to Thee, O Christ." We again shine forth the praises of God in the Creed, words which confess the name of the Triune God that we believe in.

And where does this glory culminate? We soon will draw near to truly eat and drink of the glory of the LORD. With all the holy angels and all the company of heaven we sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory! ... blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD..." The fullest glory of heaven and earth comes to us in the presence of this Blessed One who has come to us in bread and wine today. In such miraculous means God brings the glory of heaven to sinful human. So we sing of the Lamb who brings salvation to us: "O Christ Thou Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace." This glory of God removes our sins and unites us

to Christ our Savior along with all the company of believers in heaven and earth. We are one with His glory in the Lord's Meal.

Arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you! Lift up your eyes and see how big this Epiphany really is. Our test describes it as "the abundance of the sea" being brought to serve you. It is the fullness of all of God's creation brought to serve the good purpose of salvation. From 1 Corinthians 3 – *For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. (1 Corinthians 3:21–22)*

So go forth today shining. Leave here as stars of Bethlehem. Be that shining presence of our Savior which attracts and guides the wise men to the Lord. Have you ever noticed as you walk into the sanctuary that there is a star hanging above the entrance. That is because here is where we come to find Jesus. From afar you drive to see the glory of the LORD each Sunday. Take this with you as you go. Show to the world in the those poorest of times that your treasures abound beyond measure – not Superbowl trophies; not the medals we have won or deserve. You hoist the glory of Christ Jesus who even now stands in the presence of God, at His right hand, shining forth His salvation into eternity. Stand up now, look around, and rejoice for you have seen the glory of the LORD dawn. Amen.