

*When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with Him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.*

Text: Exodus 34:29-35    A 2/9/25    2 Corinthians 3:6-18    Luke 9:28-36    Psalm 111  
Hymns: 720, 377 (1-2, 5, 8, 10), 284, 359

### **WE SEE GOD'S GLORY!**

**1. – in the fading glory of His Law**

**2. – in the lasting glory of His Gospel**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

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God gave His Ten Commandments, written on two stone tablets, to Moses on Mount Sinai. Incredibly, at the same time that was happening, the Israelites made a golden calf and were worshipping it. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw what they were doing, in righteous anger he smashed the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments (which, in effect, the Israelites had just done themselves). God told Moses He was going to destroy the people. Moses pleaded for God to have mercy on them and spare them, and God did. Then, written on two different stone tablets, God again gave Moses His Ten Commandments. This is where our text begins.

*“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.”* Having just been in God's presence, some of God's glory was reflecting from Moses' face. *“Aaron and all the Israelites ... were afraid to come near him”* because it was a very unsettling to see rays of light radiate from Moses' face. *“But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.”*

*“When Moses finished speaking to [the people], he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with Him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.”* This process repeated itself throughout God's giving of His Law to His people through Moses.

Notice, it was as Moses was receiving the Law – the commands and Commandments – from God that his face would reflect God’s glory. In our Scripture Lesson from 2 Corinthians 3 we were told, “Moses ... would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away” (v. 13). Moses covered his face with a veil so that the people wouldn’t see the reflection of God’s glory fade from it. 2 Corinthians 3 says that the Law “came with glory, ... fading though it was” (v. 7). 2 Corinthians 3 says that the fading glory on Moses’ face is like the “fading” glory of the Law in contrast to the “much greater ... glory of [the Gospel] which lasts” (v. 11). We’ll talk about that more in a little while.

Not long before the event described in our text God had told the Children of Israel, “If you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. ... The people all responded together, ‘We will do everything the LORD has said’” (Ex. 19:5, 8). God had made a covenant, or agreement, with His people. If they would keep His Law – His commands and Commandments – they would be His people and He would be their God. They promised they would keep their part of the covenant. But they couldn’t do it. Only days later they were worshiping the golden calf. They had broken their part of the covenant. They couldn’t and didn’t deserve to be God’s people. But God, in His grace and mercy, stayed faithful to His part of the covenant and remained their God and kept them as His people. As God told them, “The LORD ... set His love on you [and chose] you because ... the LORD loves you.” (Dt. 7:7-8)

The Israelites couldn’t keep God’s Law because they were sinful. We can’t keep God’s Law because we’re sinful, too. It’s because no one can keep the Law – no one can be righteous by keeping the Law – that the glory on Moses’ face faded. It was God’s glory and the glory of God’s Law that made Moses’ face shine. Since it wasn’t Moses’ own righteousness and glory, it faded away. God’s Law has glory because it’s from God. But the glory of the Law doesn’t belong to us because we constantly break it when we sin. As the glory of the Law faded from Moses’ face, so the glory of the Law ‘fades’ from us, so to speak.

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This brings us back to the words from 2 Corinthians 3, the “much greater ... glory of [the Gospel] which lasts.” Today we commemorate Jesus’ transfiguration, when He appeared on the mountain in His glory as God. The glory of God’s Law that had shone on Moses’ face had faded away. The “much greater” glory of Jesus’ Gospel, the glory that shone on Jesus’ face on the Mount of Transfiguration, “lasts” forever.

We read in Romans 10:4, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” We can’t begin to keep God’s Law as we should. We can’t save ourselves by our own keeping of the Law. But we’re not saved by anything we do! Jesus kept the Law perfectly for us. We’re saved by faith in Jesus who lived a perfect life in our place and earned salvation for us. We’re saved by faith in Jesus who paid for all of our failures to keep God’s Law – all of our sins – with His death on the cross in our place that took all of our sins away.

We read in 2 Corinthians 3, “How much more glorious is the [Gospel] that brings righteousness!” (v. 9). God’s Law is glorious, but it can’t make us sinners glorious (righteous). As shown by the glory that couldn’t last on Moses’ face, we have no righteousness of our own

through God's Law. Through the Gospel God gives us Christ's righteousness and makes Christ's righteousness our own. And Christ's righteousness, which has been given to us, never fades away from us. By faith in Jesus, we're covered with His righteousness. God doesn't look at our sins, but at Jesus' perfect righteousness covering us. For Jesus' sake, God declares us sinners to be righteous in His sight. Like Paul we want to "*be found in [Christ], not having a righteousness of [our] own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith*" – Philippians 3:9.

We weren't there to see Moses' face reflect God's glory and the glory of God's Law, and to see that glory fade from Moses' face. But we know those things happened because the Bible says they did. God's Law is glorious because it comes from Him. But because we're sinful and we can't keep it as we should the Law condemns us to eternal death.

We weren't there to see Jesus appear in His glory as God on the Mount of Transfiguration. But we know He did because the Bible says He did. Although afterward Jesus once again hid His glory for a time, we know that Jesus' glory never fades. Jesus' glory is His own lasting glory. The glory of Jesus' Gospel is a lasting glory. Jesus' Gospel brings us sinners eternal life! And by faith, we will see Jesus in all of His glory as God in heaven forever. Amen.

(With reference to a sermon by Pastor Wayne Eichstadt on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.)