

“Mine eyes have seen the Glory!”

18 Moses said, "Please show me your glory." Exodus 33:18

Today we will be turning to the old testament reading. Moses seeks to see the glory of God. He is not disappointed, yet there is greater glory to be revealed. God’s glory is revealed even more so through his son, Jesus Christ as he performs miracles and speaks with authority throughout the epiphany season. So the gospel reading connects with the old testament with the verse: ‘ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Quite early on, a year or two after my ordination, I meet a most fascinating man. He was elderly when I meet him, but his eyes retained an enthusiasm for new things. If I could just have his eyes, and the sights he had seen! Born in 1897, he lived through a span of time when the most change that could ever happen, happened. He grew up, when the community was growing up from horse and buggy to the automobile. He lived through the First World War and although his eyes saw much destruction, those same eyes saw heroism of man at their finest hour to meet the destruction. You could employ a Dickens phrase to his life as he lived through the Great Depression “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”. Eyes that saw extremes of poverty also saw great acts of charity and community solidarity rise up to meet such great poverty. He saw his church do those things and spoke of it often. He could see the Glory of God make even the hard rock of human hearts glow till his glory glinted off them. Those eyes saw the incredible leaps of technology through the Second World War culminating in the detonation of the Atomic Bomb and yet, in his life of extremes, he saw the same science redirected and channelled for peaceful positive purposes of creating nuclear isotopes and some such things to bring the sick to health. His coffee table always had copies of Scientific American or National Geographic which he would pour over with eyes lighting up in excitement over what God’s Creation hath revealed. In everything, he was eager to see the hand of God at work. Like Moses he was forever asking God , “Please show me your glory”. Everyone who would truly listen would leave with a worshipful psalm verse in their heart.

Psalm 105

Tell of All His Wonderful Works

- 1 Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!
- 3 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!
- 4 Seek the LORD and his strength;
seek his presence continually!
- 5 Remember the wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,
- 6 O offspring of Abraham, his servant,

children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

And with a psalm verse, the Holy Spirit working through the Law, would create repentant joy, and rightly so, for having allowed troubles or the stresses of daily life to give tunnel vision obscuring the Glory of God's Creation would rob all from being able to give glory to God in true worship. Oh that we would seek to see measures of God's glory in this life giving thanks, finding contentment in it, yet seeking more, looking forward to the fullness of God's Glory in Heaven.

Oh, that all of us could share such attitudes for it was the attitude of Moses. "Please Lord, please show me your glory".

Moses had already seen so much! Remember to place Exodus 33 within its context. Moses had already had his call. God Himself spoke from the burning bush that would not consume. "Moses, Moses, the place where you are standing is holy ground". Behold the Glory of God. And God revealed himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". Our Lord explained how that revelation demonstrated that He is the God of the Living. He is the God of the Resurrection. Behold the Glory of God!

And in the life of Moses, who having answered the call of God saw wondrous things. He beheld the miraculous power of God work through him as he confronted Pharaoh. Moses' serpent swallowing up the conjured up serpents of Pharaoh's magicians. He beheld the miraculous power of the parting of the Red Sea, Manna from heaven, the finger of God writing the commandments on Sinai...". And yet, all through the whole process the seeking desire for that which is greater when ordinary men would be convinced at each step that there could be no greater glory.

Yet today, Moses, having even spoken to God face to face, asks the unthinkable "Please Lord, show me your glory". Do our eyes have such hunger? Do we hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do we have a passion for the Truth? Do we long to go home?

Moses shows us that there is more. God is pleased with such holy desire. Yet he knows that while in this frail flesh we cannot absorb the fullness of His Glory. For His Glory consists in holiness. It is the "fire of His love". It is too strong for the bodies of sinful men to endure.

Yet, God responds to Moses, as he promises to respond to us if we so truly desire a closer walk with him. "Moses". God said

...I will make all my goodness pass before you...
but you cannot see my face, for no man can see my face
and live.

And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on
The rock.

So shall it be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you
In the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand
While I pass by.

Sin has weakened the constitution of man so that He cannot bear the holiness of God. Remember that there is “the fire of His love”. As in this life, when we desire to be close to fire, we must wear a fire retardant suit or if we desire to look upon the full strength of the sun we must wear protective lenses, the same is true in the spiritual life that if we are to look upon the full “fire of His love” we must have protection. For Moses the protection was the Rock. For Christians, we know that the rock is Christ.

1 For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Just as Moses found the Rock and protection in the cleft of the Rock so must Christians forever find protection within the Rock also. We need be surrounded by it. We must return to it again and again.

And so in the closing hymn today we will be singing Rock of Ages cleft for me. In the bottom right hand corner you’ll find a reference to 1 Cor. 10 quoted above. It’s a passage that makes reference and finds fulfilment in the Rock of Ages that appears repeatedly throughout the Exodus narratives. We find ourselves seeking refuge in the Rock as Moses sought refuge in the Rock. Our hymn writer tells us what gives this Rock strength for our salvation.

Let the water and the blood, From thy riven side which flowed.
Be of sin the double cure; Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

The protective Rock of Moses finds fulfilment in the Christian Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Here the water and the blood of Christ mingles with the waters of baptism to create a strong mortar – a most protective barrier so we may see the Light of Christ in all his glory.

My parishioner from long ago was always looking forward to seeking the Glory of God in all things. He knew the best was yet to come. At his funeral we sang Rock of Ages. We took comfort in the fact that he was baptized, made ready to stand in the presence of the Glory of God where there is no darkness and Christ Himself is our light. We sang confidently thinking of our own entrance into the fullness of Christ’s glory someday

When I soar to worlds unknown, See Thee at Thy Judgment throne. Rock of Ages cleft for me. Let me hide myself in Thee.

Amen.