

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

¹Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (NIV84)

Theme: The Gospel Gives Glory

1. A glory that does not fade.
2. A glory that is like Christ's.

No matter who you are there will be a time—it has already come for most of us, that we will reach our prime. There will be a point in your life that you will be at your absolute best. Whether we are talking about athletic skills, learning capacity, looks, memory, or whatever it is. You are at your best, the pinnacle, full of glory, and then you start to lose it. For some it's a rather steep decline, for others it's a rather slow loss over many years. But there will be a point in our lives that our best years are behind us.

Not only is that glory not going to last—you aren't either. After years and years of suffering through a faded glory you will eventually succumb to the results of sin and you will die. And at that point, you will have no more glory.

People seek for glory through many different means. But in the end the glory they seek fades away. Not true with the gospel however.

For the gospel gives glory—a glory that does not fade and a glory that is like Christ's.

Moses and the Israelites were camped at Mount Sinai for about a year. The people were not allowed to go near the mountain at all. But Moses regularly went to the top of the mountain to talk to God. There God gave many instructions to Moses. He gave Moses the 10 commandments. God told him exactly how he wanted his tabernacle built. He commanded Moses to initiate many laws. They were to follow them as a nation, a religion, and simply as human beings. Then Moses would go back down the mountain and tell the people everything God had said to him.

2. Moses says in our first lesson, **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.** As Moses talked to the people his face was bright like lightening. His face was so bright that the people could barely look at him. It was bright simply by talking to God. Simply being in his presence enabled Moses to share a glimpse of God's glory for awhile. When he was done talking to the people, he covered his face. He put a veil over his head so that people would not notice that his face was gradually getting less bright. He showed them the glory of the law, but he covered his face so that they could not see that it was a fading glory.

Paul lived about 1500 years after Moses. But still during Paul's day, people loved the law. They adored Moses. They concerned themselves and dedicated their whole lives to following the laws that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. Some people insisted that the laws of Moses must be followed in order to be saved. Others even added their own man-made laws on top of God's laws. They figured that by going above and beyond what God expects us to do they'd be even more pleasing to God and he'd have to save them. It's no different today. Naturally, we try to impress God. We think that the better people we are the more likely God would save us. We figure that we should do this or do that—whether it agrees with God's Word or if we made the law up ourselves. If you are nice to others, God will save you. If you give a certain amount back to him, if you say the right

prayers, do the right rituals and so on God will be pleased enough with you to save you.

So we build the law up. And we build ourselves up. We love to brag and to boast about what we have done. We point out how good of Christians we are. You are glorious in your own mind—and perhaps even in the minds of others. But eventually that glory is going to fade. You are going to stumble and fall. You will bring disgrace upon your name and that of your family. When you take a look back at your life you will realize just how many times you failed to follow God's Word. You understand that you are sinner. You don't have any glory on your own. Rather you deserve God's wrath and punishment. What you thought brought you glory, actually serves to take it away.

And yet many people cling to the law. But it doesn't really give true glory—for that glory fades away. And so a veil covers their hearts and minds. They do not see true glory. That glory that can only be seen in the gospel of Christ. As Paul says, **to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.** The gospel reveals the law for what it is. A temporary agreement between man and God. One that was meant to lead us to Christ and his gospel. And there is the major difference. The law is temporary. The gospel, however, lasts forever. It doesn't fade away. And neither does the glory it offers. It is what God had in mind all the time. He sent his son to keep the law perfectly for us. He did away with the law. We don't have to keep it perfectly to be saved. We don't have to worry about its curse and condemnation. For Christ has removed the burden of the law. And he gives us the sweet message of the gospel instead.

It is the gospel that tells us about our new glory. A glory that don't earn on our own. A glory that Christ has won for us. For he lived a perfect life for us. The one who gave up his life only to rise from the dead three days later. It is because of Christ that we have glory that will never fade away. And all who believe this gospel message will have a glory that will last forever. And you will last forever. For through faith in Christ you will live with him forever in eternal glory.

Not only does the gospel give a glory that never fades away, it gives a glory that is just like Christ's glory.

Many people in the world go through great lengths just to get the image they desire. Either they like the way they look and they strive to keep it. Or they want to change their image to something better in their minds. So they spend countless hours and energy working out. They eat food they don't really like. Some go the extreme by getting plastic surgery—botox, liposuction, or some other work is done. People buy creams to take away wrinkles. Others take illegal steroids or other performance enhancing drugs. We all, in one way or another, strive to keep our image or glory and make it better.

But no matter what, it won't last. Hundreds of years ago people looked all over for the fountain of youth. But none was ever found. Eventually, no matter how much we work out, how good we eat, the amount of surgeries we have, our image is going to lose its glory. We will become sick and decrepit. We will become old and wrinkly. Our minds will start to fall apart just like the rest of our bodies. Our glorious image we once enjoyed when we were younger will be gone. And then we will die.

Not long before Jesus traveled to Jerusalem so that he could give his life for us on the cross, he took three of his disciples to the top of a mountain. When Jesus was praying Peter, James, and John he suddenly changed in front of them. In today's gospel we read, **As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.** It was on the Mount of Transfiguration that Jesus gave the disciples a small glimpse of his glory. Jesus was so bright and white that the disciples couldn't even look at him. It reminds us of Moses' face when he talked to God on Mount Sinai. This shows us that Jesus is God. For he has the glory and splendor that only God can have.

It was important for Jesus to show his disciples this glimpse of his glory. Soon he was going down to Jerusalem. He was about to be betrayed, arrested, mocked, flogged, beaten, crucified, and murdered. He would look helpless and powerless. He would be like a normal human being under those circumstances. It was during this time—which starts for us on Wednesday, that the disciples needed some

reassurance. They needed to be reminded that Jesus wasn't just a man like one of them. He was also God. And thus he was their Savior.

Jesus and the disciples weren't the only ones on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah were there too. They were talking with Jesus. No doubt they were talking about his coming suffering and death. Remember that Moses had been dead for over 1400 years. Elijah hadn't been on the earth for about 900 years. And yet, here they were talking to Jesus. Here they were in glory—bright, white, and shining, just like Jesus. Living in heaven with God, they were like him. They had his glory and splendor.

We are the same way. As believers in Christ we are already Christ's glory given to us. And when we reach heaven we will fully realize what that glory is. Paul talks about this glory in verse 18, **We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.** Our bodies are weak and frail. And they are only going to get worse. But in heaven we will be like Christ. We will be given his glory and splendor. Paul talks about our bodies in heaven in Philippians three. **[Jesus], by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.**

We will be like that forever. We be glorious and radiant—just like our Savior. It is through the gospel that we learn about this. It is only through the gospel that we hear about our Savior. It is only through the gospel that we are brought to faith. And are kept in that one true faith. So it is through the gospel that we are changed. We were at one time, frail, weak, and perishable. But through the gospel, what was perishable will now be imperishable. What was weak and frail will now live forever.

It is only through the gospel. So we are bold to share the gospel. We keep it in its truth and purity. There is no reason for us to trick people into believing. For the Holy Spirit works through the gospel. So we don't adulterate the Word. We set it for plainly and clearly so that all may know and believe the gospel of our Savior.

The law can make us feel good about ourselves for awhile. We can think we are doing a good job of keeping it. But it only offers a

temporary glory. We soon realize who we are and all the horrible sins we have committed. Our glory fades away and we die. But the glory the gospel gives lasts forever. For though faith in the gospel of Christ we share in the glory of Christ. A glory that never fades. A glory that lasts forever. Amen.