

Sunday Sermon: March 3, 2019

Sermon Text: Luke 9:28-36

Sermon Theme: The Glory of Christ Remains

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.

Many years ago, there was a radio commentator by the name of Paul Harvey. If you don't know that name, maybe you know the phrase he was famous for.**And now you know the rest of the story.** He used to tell these wonderful stories during his broadcasts that had these surprise endings. The stories might be about people, or world events, or even little things that turned into huge things. I remember once, there was a story about an absent minded chemist who was working on some form of dangerous bacteria. He was not a very tidy man. When he left for a vacation, he did not clean up his lab. When he returned he noticed that mold had begun to grow on some of the experiments. While they ruined the experiments, he found that this mold killed some of the dangerous bacteria that he had been working with. This is how penicillin was invented..... and now you know the rest of the story.

When we talk about God's glory, it might seem easy to talk about, but it actually might be more like one of Paul Harvey's stories. There is a whole lot more to the story than we might think.

What do you think of when you hear the phrase, "the glory of God"? Maybe you think of a great miracle. Maybe you think of Christmas or Easter. Maybe you think about the Old Testament stories of God's victory of his enemies.

It is certainly easy to equate God's glory with his power. When we look at our God, he is a God of the very small. He knits the smallest atoms together to create new life. At the same time he is the God of the very biggest things making sure that the earth continues to revolve around the sun, the planets are in their orbits, and the stars in the universe shine their light.

Power is certainly a part of God's glory, but it is not the only part of his glory. A ruler who is powerful can be labeled a tyrant or a dictator. God is certainly not that. God also wants us to realize his glory is also seen in the greatness and majesty of his holiness shown to us in his love for us.

There are many times in the Bible that God makes clear how he wants to be known. In the Old Testament, God could have called himself the mighty one or the God of power, but instead he chose Jahweh, the God of the promises, the God of love. He showed that love with his people.

God showed his glory and love in the way he dealt with the Israelites. While God destroyed the unbelieving nations who were not his chosen people, he was patient with his own people who showed their weak faith often and even fell into unbelief and rejected their God. He continued to provide for them and watch over them even though they were not faithful.

God even gave direct guidance to these rebellious people through God's prophets, priests and leaders. In our first lesson this morning, we see that God provided guidance through. After those conversations, Moses face shone with the light of the glory of God. The people could see that their God was with them, directing them and taking care of them, as they looked at Moses.

The rest of the story is that God wants us to know his true glory does not lie in power, but in love. The disciple Philip once asked Jesus, "**Show us the Father and that will be enough for us.**" Show us Jahweh, the one who loves us and is the God of the promise and we will be sure that you are the one that was sent from him.

Of the many ways that Jesus could have answered this question, he answers quite simply. **“Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?”**

Jesus could’ve showed miracles, signs and wonders to Philip on that day to show the glory of God. But instead, he showed one thing; the love of God shown in sending a Savior to take away our sins.

Our lesson this just a small glimpse of the glory, power and authority that Jesus had as the Son of God, which Jesus did not make full use of while he was here on earth.

There were two bookends where God spoke from heaven about the rescue mission that Jesus was on. There were two times that God put his stamp of approval on that rescue mission.. The first bookend was at Jesus’ baptism. There, by the waters of the Jordan river, heaven opened, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and the voice from heaven made the announcement, **This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well-pleased.** This second bookend is very similar to first and it takes place on the Mount of transfiguration where God said, **This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him.**

The events of this glimpse of God’s glory, take place near the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. It is right around this time that Jesus begins the final stage of the rescue mission. Some call it the march to Jerusalem where he will be arrested, suffer and die.

Yet, before he goes on that last journey, his love shows through. He still spends a lot of time during this final stage in order to teach his disciples and build them up in faith so they would be ready for what would happen.

As Peter, James and John are sitting on the mountain with Jesus, he changes. His face changed, his clothes shone as lightning. Moses and Elijah appear with him also in splendor. That must have been impressive. This was certainly a sign of power and glory, but that was not the important part.

Moses and Elijah did not just appear and disappear, they sat talked with Jesus. What they talked about was very important. They talked about the rescue mission that Jesus was sent to earth to accomplish. They talked about how Jesus would fulfill the Father’s plan. They talked about what would happen to Jesus when he went to Jerusalem and how he would suffer and die. They talked about the love of God. This love is willing to be put into action and suffer and die to take away our sins.

The apostle John talked about this glory and the Savior sent from heaven. **The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Peter, James and John knew what was going on, but they got lost in that moment. This is something that has never happened before. Jesus has never shone like the sun. They have never seen Jesus speak with Moses and Elijah. Peter is so lost that he asks to put up tents and stay awhile because this is amazing and he wants it to continue.

Peter missed what Jesus was trying to teach him. He missed the important things that Jesus was talking about. There are times do get lost in our own thoughts, feelings and emotions and miss the important things that God is trying to teach us too. There are so many times that things are going well that we think that God must be pleased with us. During these times, we miss opportunities to sit at Jesus’ feet and to thank him for his many blessings. God’s hand of blessing extends over us so that we will appreciate what an amazing God we have and thank him.

When times get rough and troubles come, we often don’t see a God who loves us or a God who wants to comfort us and give us hope and peace. We get lost in ourselves and our own thoughts, thinking that God must be absent or angry or want to punish us. Why did you let this happen to me God? Why did you let this trouble come upon me?

When we get lost in ourselves, we might be as shortsighted as Peter was in asking Jesus to set up tents. There is a plan that Jesus has to undertake just as God has a plan for us. Sometimes that plan is not what we have planned for ourselves. Sometimes it has joys or sorrows that we never expected. God wants us to be close to him. He will use anything in order to help us stay on that road that leads to heaven. Just a few weeks ago we heard that God even works through the terrible things of life to bring us to himself. Even in these times of trouble and earthly pain, the glory of God’s love is still with us.

Up on the mountain, things had changed. God had spoken, Jesus is no longer shining. It might have been easy to think that that glory was gone, the rest of the story is that God's glory continued to shine and it continues to shine today.

No, Jesus wasn't shining in glory before the Pharisees or Pilate like he was on the mountain. Just a short time later that glory and love of God was on display for the whole world to see when from the cross Jesus called out, "**It is finished.**" The glory and love of God was shown in the battle that was won. Sinners like you and me are saved from eternal death and hell.

The rest of the story is that the glory of God, remains today. It is just as powerful and glorious as it was on the Mount of Transfiguration and it can be seen as clearly as it was on the mountain. Every time we read in the Bible what Jesus has done to save us that is God's glory shown in all of its glory. Every time we hear, "Your sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake," God's glory is shining brightly. Every time we partake of the sacrament, every time we see or hear the waters of baptism, that is God's glory shining brightly because it is God's love for us.

As we begin our walk through Lent, may we see God's glory shining brightly in the in the love of our Savior, Jesus, and may we know that that same love and glory, still remains with us today. Now you rest of God's glory which he shows to us in his love. Amen.