

St Thomas Methodist Church, Exeter

Weekly Worship Resources

02 March 2025 – Face-to-face with God

Moses descends from Mount Sinai, his face shining after his encounter with God, ready to share God's commandments with the people. After speaking with them, Moses puts a veil over his face, which is only removed when he talks again with God.

Shiny, dazzling, white and bright results of encounters with God are outlined today, encounters that change both the one meeting God and the ones who witness the meeting. All are changed and challenged as they come face-to-face with God.

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Transfiguration Year C

Exodus 34.29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2; Luke 9.28-36,(37-43)

Exodus 34:29-35 [CEV]

Moses Comes Down from Mount Sinai

²⁹ Moses came down from Mount Sinai, carrying the Ten Commandments. His face was shining brightly because the Lord had been speaking to him. But Moses did not know at first that his face was shining. ³⁰When Aaron and the others looked at Moses, they saw this, and they were afraid to go near him. ³¹Moses called out for Aaron and the leaders to come to him, and he spoke with them. ³²Then the rest of the people of Israel gathered around Moses, and he gave them the laws that the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

³³The face of Moses kept shining, and after he had spoken with the people, he covered his face with a veil. ³⁴Moses would always remove the veil when he went into the sacred tent to speak with the Lord. And when he came out, he would tell the people everything the Lord had told him to say. ³⁵They could see that his face was still shining. So

after he had spoken with them, he would put the veil back on and leave it on until the next time he went to speak with the Lord.

Luke 9:28-36 [CEV]

The True Glory of Jesus

²⁸ About eight days later Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. ²⁹ While he was praying, his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. ³⁰ Suddenly Moses and Elijah were there speaking with him. ³¹ They appeared in heavenly glory and talked about all that Jesus' death^[a] in Jerusalem would mean.

³² Peter and the other two disciples had been sound asleep. All at once they woke up and saw how glorious Jesus was. They also saw the two men who were with him.

³³ Moses and Elijah were about to leave, when Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But Peter did not know what he was talking about.

³⁴ While Peter was still speaking, a shadow from a cloud passed over, and they were frightened as the cloud covered them. ³⁵ From the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!"

³⁶ After the voice had spoken, Peter, John, and James saw only Jesus. For some time they kept quiet and did not say anything about what they had seen.



Thought for the week

The mountaintop experience of the disciples in our Gospel passage was one they wanted to prolong. The closeness of God, the amazing

things they saw, the depth of spiritual awareness were all things they wanted to hold onto. They had been taken up the mountain by Jesus away from the crowds and the distractions of everyday life. Their experience must have filled them with awe and a new awareness of the power and glory of God; they wanted to stay in that place, in that moment, with that experience. No troubles, no problems, no woes. But Jesus leads them back down the mountain, back to the other disciples, back to the crowds, back to the struggles and mess of everyday life. Their secret mountaintop experience was over, but the effect of it on their lives was not. It was something to carry around and remember when things got tough, an encouragement to trust Jesus even when they didn't know what was happening.

When we experience the closeness of God, his power, his glory, or have a heightened awareness of his presence (as Moses did too, in our reading from Exodus), we often want to stay in that place. Our faith is strengthened in these special moments, and we can be reluctant to leave. We, like the disciples, want to prolong this experience.

Seeking mountaintop experiences may become a priority in our spiritual lives. We can continually look for such experiences and be disappointed when we are unable to find them. We may feel disappointed that we cannot always experience the closeness of God and the glory of his presence. The problems and distractions of life and the people around us can weigh us down and we long to be back up the mountain, face-to-face with God. But this kind of encounter is not meant to be a permanent state of being or a place where we can stay. We are called by Christ to be his people in the world, and to walk and work in the messiness of everyday life.

Our deep spiritual experiences are given to strengthen us and prepare us to live our lives as Christ's people. We are affirmed and aware in a deeper way of our relationship with the God who loves us. Our connection with the world in which we live means that we will have

doubts and anxiety. Having spent time in God's presence prepares us for this, and encourages us to take opportunities as they are given to meet with him again and again.

A prayer of adoration

Great and awesome God, you spoke to Moses face-to-face, radiating your glory until his face shone. Such glory! So bright!

Great and awesome God, you surrounded Jesus, Moses and Elijah on the mountain. Majestic, dazzling splendour!

Wonderful and awesome God, your cloud surrounded the disciples and your voice was heard. Glorious one! God's Son! The chosen one, the beloved!

Jesus, you are all these things and more. We adore you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shine in and around us. Amen.

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