

Ps 50:1-6; 2 Ki 2:1-12; 2 Cor 4:3-6; Mk 9:2-9
Transfiguration Sunday 02-11-18

It's hard to see the glory of God when we are standing in the spotlight. The journey of a Jesus-follower requires stepping out of that overwhelming sense of who we are – what we are doing – the spotlight. Then we are no longer blinded. We begin to understand the central place of our Lord on earth and in heaven – indeed, in the whole universe. This moment in Mark's Gospel on the mountain top when Peter, James and John saw Jesus as He really is, is a turning point in Christ's earthly ministry. From this time on, Jesus makes His way to Jerusalem and the fulfillment of His purpose here.

Cue video

Peter, James and John – and all the other disciples – including you and me – are part of the ongoing purposes of God in Christ. We don't see it until the Good News penetrates our tough outer armor – our pride, ego and self-centered habits. I speak first of all of myself.

Casey was a mid-high student when he began to hear whispers out of the darkness. He lived in a

single-parent home where there was abuse and neglect. At school he was rejected by girls and boys alike. He had spent time, effort and money on a special valentine for a girl he liked. He was really nervous giving it to her in the hallway between first and second period. Later that day, in home-room, he found his valentine in the waste basket. He was crushed. He had real evidence that nobody cared about him. He was teased and bullied by the kids and overlooked by the teachers. He stopped trying, especially in areas where he was gifted – in writing and in running (he was fast but didn't go out for track).

“Church was no better. Casey learned that if you are rich that's because God loves you and is blessing you, if you're poor, well... you're like Casey. The pastor refused to let his own son play with Casey and his brother Kyle. The message was clear: They were trash.” (cru.org)

Casey began to have dark fantasies – and the writing in his journal became scary and twisted. One night, he heard a voice say, “If it isn't working for you in the light, come into the darkness.” He did. He began having conver-

sations with demons. Bullied at school, ignored at home, one dark night Casey found himself in the kitchen at 3:00 a.m. Taking a butcher knife from the drawer, he locked himself in the bathroom. *"I have nothing to look forward to, no one cares for me, no one loves me,"* thought Casey. *'No matter how hard I try, all I know is pain, hurt, misery and loneliness. Give me one reason I shouldn't kill myself.'*" (ibid)

The glory of God is something most of us can only imagine. A few have seen this shining glory up close. Isaiah says:

The year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord! He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the Temple was filled with his glory. Hovering about him were mighty, six-winged angels of fire. With two of their wings they covered their faces, with two others they covered their feet, and with two they flew. In a great anti phon'al chorus, they sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is filled with his glory." (Is 6:1-3 TLB)

Daniel writes:

I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient of Days—the Almighty God—sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, his hair

like whitest wool. He sat upon a fiery throne brought in on flaming wheels, and a river of fire flowed from before him. (Dan 7:9 TLB)

Both prophets, Isaiah and Daniel, were shaken to their core by this revealing (or revelation) – this vision given by God.

And the disciples on the mountain with Jesus that day were also shaken. Peter was so amazed, he decided he had to do something about this great event. But, what can a mere human do when Christ's divine nature is revealed? Not a thing. We can bow down and worship our Lord. We can tell others what we have experienced.

By Jesus' glorious appearance, we learn that He will rule in His coming kingdom in His glorified body, just as His disciples were allowed to see. Moses, in his glorified body, represents the saved that will enter God's kingdom through death. Jesus has fulfilled God's Law that Moses gave us. Elijah never died. He represents those believers who enter the kingdom of God at the sounding of the trumpet at the end of time. Jesus has fulfilled

the prophecies brought from God by Elijah and others. (Don Stewart, blueletter bible.org)

Through this wonderful Book of ours, we can see and hear and experience what Peter, James and John were given. Whatever the world brings our way, we know that our Divine Savior is in the midst of it, with us through it all.

Back to Casey holding onto a butcher knife in the bathroom: “He heard, ‘Casey, don’t do it!’ He listened, and he held onto those words through the dark until the sun rose again. He told his brother Kyle what happened.

It took weeks of pleading and urging by Kyle to drag Casey to a Campus Crusade for Christ meeting. His friend Brannon called to tell him they were watching Braveheart and that he should come.

Casey says, “At the meeting, I noticed something different about the students. They had something I didn't. I thought to myself, These people are real. I like it.

After the movie, a pastor gave an analogy about a septic tank filled with years of waste. He said

our hearts can become like that over time until we're standing in years of garbage, but Jesus loves us and will wade through the muck to reach us.

The pastor said that Casey could pray and surrender his life to Christ and He would forever change him. Casey says, "I remember saying to God, 'If this is real, I want You to come into my life and change me.'" (cru.org)

Change did not happen suddenly for Casey, but he did continue to attend the meetings. As time passed, he had friends who cared, he had prayer, Bible study, fun times and he learned that he had Jesus – and Jesus had him. God's glory began to shine in Casey's heart and mind. He found freedom and peace. He now works with high schoolers, sharing his witness of what the glory of God has done.

My prayer for us this coming Season of Lent and Easter is that we will grow closer to Jesus and allow His glory to fill and transform us. Amen.