

February 14, 2021

2 Corinthians 4: 3-6

Rev. Larry Brown - Powell United Methodist Church

“Glory, Glory, Alleluia”

I’m a technology guy. Some of my most prized possessions are my laptop, and my smartphone and watch. The nearly magical way wireless gadgets send and receive information is amazing, don’t you think? It is a marvel that we are not only worshipping in-person in our sanctuary today but also with others via the internet who are at home. The bible says we are one in the Spirit. That is so true, but our technology, when it works and does what it is supposed to, keeps us connected. However, I do miss the way we used to do things. Remember when we used to write letters? I was never great at that but I bet some of you were. Letter writing was a way to keep us up-to-date with what was happening in the lives of our families and close friends. There is something meaningful about finding a letter from a special someone in your mailbox, opening the envelope, and then recognizing the person’s handwriting, as you hold the paper in your hands. The letter brings that person close to you. This doesn’t happen as much with the sterile, electronic, email way we communicate with each other now. I miss that more personal experience. Another thing I miss from the “old school” way is paper calendars. Do you remember the flip calendars with various themed pictures for every month of the year? I did some research and discovered that paper calendars are still doing well, despite my personal choice to go all digital. Some individuals and families prefer having something they can see and touch and look at easily and quickly. The calendar that is hung on the wall or posted on the refrigerator still works for many. You know what they say, “The more things change the more they stay the same.” Well, however you choose to track the time, doing that is an important component to the way we move through life. We want to know what time it is and what’s happening and when it is supposed to happen. This is just as true in the church. We track the time.

If you do not know, there is a formal church calendar? It’s called the Liturgical or Worship Calendar, and it marks the high and holy days that track the seasons of our Christian life. The church calendar tells us that we are just days away from the season of Lent, the 40 days in preparation for the celebration of Easter. Always on this Sunday before the beginning of Lent, we are reminded of the time when Jesus went up the mountain with a group of his disciples and they saw him ablaze with the light of heaven. The church calendar calls this “Transfiguration Sunday.” There is no calendar app that will adequately notify us of the season that is ready to unfold. Transfiguration Sunday does that. Today we are reminded that the light the disciples saw in Jesus did more than just show them who he was. The light in Christ pointed to who they were called to be and that same Christ light shows us who we are. The light in him is the light in us, and the light in us illuminates God’s presence and purpose in the world. If we had an old fashioned calendar to hang on the wall today the image might be what’s behind me on the screen: light bursting forth, light streaming into the world, light flowing from Christ into us and through our lives. Christ is the light of God in our darkness and we’re reminded of that today so that in the season that is about to begin we will grow in our commitment to live in that light.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the early church reminding them of the light God was shining in their hearts. Paul believed that what God has done in Christ makes a difference in us. He also believed our acceptance and awareness of that was not guaranteed. Our eyes can be closed or veiled, as Paul wrote, to where God is and to what God is about. We’ve all seen the pictures of the one rioter who stormed the capital on January 6, who wore a fur vest and horns. He sat in the president’s chair in the Senate chamber and could be heard repeatedly giving thanks to God for the “white light” that he believed was shining that day. We know from his internet postings that his “white” light is an overt reference to the darkness of white supremacy. As the Apostle Paul instructs us, some are veiled to the true light. In the middle of Black History month, I’d rather be reminded of the speech Martin Luther King Jr. delivered on April 3, 1968, the day before he was assassinated. In the beginning of his speech that night he referenced Moses, who would often go to the top of the mountain and find his face glowing because of God’s light. King ended his speech that night saying he, too, had been to the mountaintop, inferring, I believe, that God’s light was shining through every effort to bring about a more free, just and equal world. King’s final words have continued to hold incredible power given what happened the next day. At the close of his speech Martin said, *“Like anybody, I would like to live a long life – longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And so I’m happy tonight; I’m not worried about anything; I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”* There is no guarantee that we see the true light but the Apostle Paul says God is shining in our hearts “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6) King was a part of that and Paul’s letter to us believes we are, too.

Standing on the edge of the season of Lent, as we are, is like being brought to the top of a spiritual mountain so we can look over. In the weeks ahead we will be praying, worshipping, learning, and serving; all for the

purpose of discerning who God is calling us to be. Part of that process is asking for God's forgiveness for the ways we participate in adding darkness to the world through our words, our actions, and our attitudes. Part of the process is also stepping deeper into a commitment to speak and act more compassionately and lovingly. We're looking over from here and we can see that in the distance there is a cross. The cross is the symbol of redeeming love and that cross is the ultimate glory for our lives. We will keep our eyes fixed upon it and the light in him will be the light in us, and that is the light for the world.

### **Affirmation of Faith**

*Pastor Larry: Holy God, in a world where some go after glory as a reward or a prize, focus the eyes of our faith on the light that is in Christ.*

**People: Help us to see the glory of the Lord, Alleluia!**

Pastor Katya: In the way Jesus guided the first disciples to the mountaintop to see the light that is in him, guide us to the place where we respond to Jesus with the commitment to follow him.

**People: Help us to grow stronger as people of faith.**

*Pastor Larry: At a time when we seek a more perfect way,*

Pastor Katya: And at a time when the darkness of anxiety clouds our vision and hope,

**All: Give us the ability to see Christ more clearly, and to love Christ more dearly, and to serve him more joyfully, now and always. Amen.**