

Greetings to you! Our theme for this morning is that, 'The true glory of God is manifested in the humanity of Jesus.' Whenever we talk of Glory particularly in the Christian religious tradition we are talking about the manifestation of God's presence. In the Exodus reading we see that Moses is asked to lead the people of Israel after their great deliverance and Moses is keen to have the physical presence of the Lord accompanying him as he leads the nation. It is in that context that he asks God, 'show me your glory'. He wants to be reassured of the physical presence of God in the midst of the people of Israel which would be the unique difference between them and the other nations. Moses also had an intimate relationship with the Lord and was consistently conscious of God's presence with him. Even as we look at Jesus we see the true presence of God revealed to us through his humanity.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians he compares the glory of the old covenant and the new covenant established through Jesus. Paul is comparing the glory shown in the old covenant when God revealed himself to Moses, and the people of Israel could not look at the face of Moses because of the glory that was reflected on his face. He therefore had to put on a veil whenever he would speak to the people of Israel and when he went to commune with the Lord he would remove the veil. Paul then goes on to say in the previous chapter that the ministry of the old covenant still brought about death because even though the old covenant explained what was right and wrong, the people were not able to keep the conditions of the covenant and therefore brought about death. The old covenant was also written on tablets of stone whereas the new covenant would be written in the hearts and minds of people. The old covenant revealed God's glory through Moses even though it was transitory. The new covenant would be even more glorious. Those who read the old Covenant still cannot understand it because a veil still covers their heart. It is only when people turn to the Lord Jesus that the veil which covers their heart is removed and they are able to see clearly. Paul says, 'And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.' (2Co 3:7-18 NIV)

Paul continues to talk about the gospel as being one which is veiled, and particularly so for those who are perishing. He says that the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ who is the image of God. One of the reasons why people do not respond to the gospel is because their minds are veiled by the god of this age. Satan blinds the minds and hearts of people that they are unable to discern what is right and wrong. The devil is the archenemy of God and the unseen power behind all unbelief and ungodliness. Those who follow him have in fact made him their god. Because of this they have lost the ability to know that what they are doing is wrong. And so we may see people who are continuously persisting in some immoral activity, or walking in the darkness without even batting an eyelid as though everything is OK. The reason is that their hearts and minds have been blinded that they are not able to see the reality of what they are doing. Paul uses the imagery of a veil covering over their hearts and minds that they are not able to see. Therefore what they are not able to comprehend is that Jesus is God in human flesh, God manifested in their midst. Therefore we are called to pray that the scales of the eyes of their hearts and minds will fall off and they will be able to discern right from wrong and turn to the good news of the gospel.

In the light of God's glory which was revealed at the time of Moses, and in the light of God's glory revealed in and through the humanity of Jesus, the glory that was seen in all its splendour in the transfiguration continues to challenge each one of us today. If the true glory of God is revealed in the humanity of Jesus then how does it affect us? As followers of Christ we are called to reflect the glory of God in all that we say, do or think. This glory can only be revealed in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can enable us to make the confession, 'Jesus is Lord'. If Jesus is indeed God in human form then what is our response? Are we like the sceptics? And say 'I cannot believe this'. Or are we happy to say that Jesus was a good man and a good teacher, but nothing more? Or are we happy to say that Jesus is one among the many gods? Or are we willing to confess like Thomas, 'My Lord and My God'. May we in this Lenten season take time to make sure that the veils are removed and the scales are dropped off from our hearts and minds so that we may receive the gospel and reflect the glory of God in our lives.