

“The Face of Glory”  
Exodus 34:28-35  
(Preached at Trinity, July 19, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Moses had been on the mountain with God for forty days. During this time Moses ate no food nor drank any water. A man can fast for 40 days. This is sometimes referred to as a complete fast. But no one can go without water for more than a few days. This means that Moses was supernaturally sustained by God.
2. While Moses was upon Mount Sinai he had been busy writing. In **Verse 27** we read that he was writing God’s commands concerning the covenant and in **Verse 28** we read that Moses wrote the replacement tablets containing the Ten Commandments. Moses destroyed the first tablets when he found Israel in idolatry.
  - A. There is sometimes dispute as to what was written on each tablet. Traditionally, it has been held that since the Ten Commandments are divided into two sections, the first through fourth pertaining to our duty to God in His worship and the fifth through tenth pertaining to our relationship with our fellow men, that these tablets were divided accordingly.
  - B. It could be, however, that these two tablets were two exact copies of the Ten Commandments. It was customary to make two copies of a covenant so that each party would have a copy. Since God was coming to dwell with Israel both copies were kept in the Ark of the Covenant.
3. When Moses brought the Ten Commandment to Israel the first time he found them rebelling against God in gross idolatry. This time, however, Israel is ready to receive God’s Law.

**Exodus 34:31** – “And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.”
4. What Moses was unaware of is that his face had the appearance of brightness.

**Exodus 34:30** – “And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone . . .”

  - A. The NIV describes it as a radiance. His skin was shining. Perhaps it was similar in appearance with our Lord’s transfiguration – similar but of a lesser sort.

**Matthew 17:2** – “And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”
  - B. It was stunning enough that it brought fear to all who saw him.

**Exodus 34:30** – “And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.”
5. We can see several things in this light that beamed from the face of Moses

- I. The first is most obvious. Moses' face was shining with the glory of God
- A. Light describes God. Light is the fullness of the Divine essence.
1. God shines with infinite radiance so intense that Moses' face shone from being near God. Light describes God.
  2. God created light before He created anything to reflect it.
  3. The Bible continually describes God in terms of light  
**Psalm 27:1** – “The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”  
**1 John 1:5** – “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”  
**John 3:19** – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”  
**1 Peter 2:9** – “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”  
**1 Timothy 6:15-16** – “Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; <sup>16</sup> Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.”
  4. We sing hymns that describe it  
Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.
- B. What was the effect of this radiance upon sinful men? – they ran away in terror  
**Exodus 34:30** – “they were afraid to come nigh him.”
1. When Paul saw it he fell to the earth in fear  
**Acts 9:3-4** – “And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: <sup>4</sup> And he fell to the earth”
  2. This was the Apostle John's reaction  
**Revelation 1:14-17** – “His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup> And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.”
  3. Why is it that all men do not fall to the earth trembling?
    - a. Because they don't see the infinite holiness of God and they don't see their sinfulness.

- b. Because in their blindness they cannot even comprehend the light. Instead they are in love with their darkness  
**John 3:19** – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
- c. Israel understood God’s holiness and their wickedness – they knew that they couldn’t stand before Him and they trembled.

II. We can see in Moses the glory of God’s people  
This is the reflected glory that shines from all of God’s people who live in the presence of Christ.

- A. The radiance of Moses’ face was not a onetime occurrence
  - 1. Moses put a veil over his face when he spoke with the people but in God’s presence he took it off. Every time he entered into the presence of God he reflected God’s glory
  - 2. Moses had no light of his own – this was a reflected light. It can be compared with the ways the moon reflects the light of the sun.
  - 3. Moses was charged as a mediator to go between God and Israel.
- B. As God’s people we shine with the radiance of Christ
  - 1. It stands to reason if we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us, if we are the Temple of God, there would be some outward shining forth of the brightness of His glory.
  - 2. Indeed, this is the teaching of Scripture  
**Ephesians 5:8** – “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are* ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”  
**Matthew 5:14-16** – “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”  
**Philippians 2:15** – “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;”
  - 3. Does your life reflect the radiance of Christ?
    - a. We are to serve like mediators before this world. I’m not insinuating we are usurping the work of Christ. We are reflecting the work of Christ!
    - b. We shine forth His holiness.  
**1 Peter 2:12** – “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”  
**1 Peter 2:9** – “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth (lit. proclaim) the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”

- C. How do you acquire such radiance?
1. First, it demands that you know Christ. Those who are born again have God's transforming power upon them.
  2. Reflecting God's glory demands that you spend time in the presence of God – Moses spent time before God. His glory came from looking at God. **Exodus 34:34** – “But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out.”
    - a. How do we look at God?
    - b. We look at God by first looking away from ourselves  
**James 4:6** – “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”
    - c. We look at God by looking at God's revelation of Himself – His Word.
  3. Reflecting God's glory demands that you walk in holiness  
**1 John 1:6-7** – “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”  
**Matthew 5:16** – “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
  4. Reflecting God's glory demands that we spend time before Him in worship
  5. Reflecting God's glory demands that we spend time before Him in prayer  
**J.C. Ryle** - "What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe that those who are not eminently holy pray little, and those who are eminently holy pray much."

III. We also see here the light of the Gospel – for this we need to turn to the NT  
NAS **2 Corinthians 3:7-11** – “But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, <sup>8</sup> how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? <sup>9</sup> For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. <sup>10</sup> For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses *it*. <sup>11</sup> For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.”

- A. Paul is giving a comparison between the Law of Moses and the Gospel
1. They Israelites could see glory in the Old Covenant as Moses brought them the Law – but the Law under the Old Covenant could only bring death.  
**Galatians 3:10** – “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”
  2. The Law is glorious because it reflects the glory of God. But the Law cannot bring life
  3. The Law is holy, but no man can obtain righteousness by it.  
**Romans 3:20** – "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin."

- B. Only the Gospel can bring life – only the Gospel can shine forth with true radiance.
- 2 Corinthians 3:11** – “For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.”
1. Under the Old Covenant the Law demanded perfection. No one had the power to obey it perfectly.
  2. Under the New Covenant God’s demand for perfection is met by Christ.
  3. The glory of the Old Covenant was the glory of God in it. This was only a temporary glory, however. The glory shining in the face of Moses would find permanence in Christ, the true Light
  4. Have you seen the light of the Gospel shining with the radiance of Christ. There are multitudes who are still seeking God under the Old Covenant. They are trying to be righteous by their own works. Christ is the only way of redemption.

### Conclusion:

1. Have you seen the light of the Gospel? It is plain, yet it is hidden.
2. Moses veiled his face to hide the glory of God that shined from his face
  1. It was too glorious for the people to look upon
  2. Moses’ veiling of his face was so that the children of Israel would not look intently upon that which Paul says in **Verses 13-14** is passing away.
 

**2 Corinthians 3:13-14** – “And not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: <sup>14</sup> But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; *which vail* is done away in Christ.”
  3. But their minds were blinded to this reality – they continued to hold to the Old Covenant – Why? Because their minds were blinded.
3. The New Covenant is gloriously plain, yet utterly concealed. It demands the Holy Spirit to break away the blinders.
 

**1 Corinthians 1:18** – “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”
4. People hear but the veil is over their eyes.
5. If you see your sin rejoice and flee to Christ.
 

Only then can you behold His glory, the radiance that will captivate your life.  
Only then can you begin to reflect His glory in the world.