

“Redirected and Refocused”

Message by DD Adams

Providence United Methodist Church

Transfiguration Sunday

February 7, 2016

The Old Testament lesson is taken from the book of Exodus, chapter 34, verses 29 through 35. The gospel lesson comes from Luke’s gospel, chapter 9, verses 28 and 29. Both readings are from the New International Version. I’ll be reading first from the book of Exodus. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was *radiant* because he had spoken with the LORD.

When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was *radiant*, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the LORD’s presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was *radiant*. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

Now from Luke’s gospel, chapter 9, verses 28 and 29. About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. This is God’s word for God’s people. Thanks be to God.

Let's pray. God we pray blessing on this message. We pray for a refocusing and a redirecting of our hearts. Enlighten our hearts and minds with a move from your spirit, and bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen

Peace be with you! Moses spent 80 days speaking with God, and when he came down from the mountain his face was radiating like the sun; it was the communion with God that made his face sparkle and his appearance shine.

Imagine what it would be like to talk to the Lord that long. Our worldly cares would be gone, our burdens would roll off, and our anxieties would slip away. If only for that day, our internal and external being would be changed, but just like Moses, the radiance of our being would diminish.

Surely if we'd stay in the Lord's presence continually we'd be lifted to a higher spiritual elevation. Our appetite for the things of this world would grow less. Scripture states that Moses didn't eat bread or drink water when he was talking with God. In fact, his entire being became re-focused and redirected to become more like God. He forgot the cry of his body and its desire for pleasure or even its natural wants and cravings. Spending that amount of time in prayer we'd go from wanting to satisfy ourselves to satisfying of the needs of others.

In Exodus 32 Moses came down the mountain and found the people singing and dancing around a golden calf—God wanted to consume them. So Moses prayed and asked God to consume *him* rather than the people. Moses forgot *his* needs, *his* desires, and *his* future. Is this what prayer does—instill a desire in us to meet someone else's need? We're less self-absorbed and more focused on others.

The more we're in the presence of God, opening our heart and mind to be changed, we will see differently and others will see us differently. We may not be

aware of the change, as Moses wasn't, but others will see the radiance and be drawn to it.

Of course we can prevent God from working a change in us. We may resist God out of disobedience or ignorance. Giving ourselves and what we have to God is our choice, but God will gently and continually convince us to let go of focusing so much on ourselves. God is persistent and determined to accomplish his will in our lives.

We must enter into a new way of knowing God. To be redirected and to refocus a total dependence on Christ in every area of our lives. To be broken from self and sin. Some people call it the dark night of the soul. In seminary I took more classes on spirituality than any other. I read a poem titled *The Dark Night of the Soul* written by 16th-century Spanish poet and mystic—Saint John of the Cross.

The poem tells the journey of one's life and world as we know it to a place where there's oneness with God. The journey we go through is the dark night. The darkness are the hardships and troubles we have when we begin to detach ourselves from the world. The result is a union with God that's closer than its ever been before.

How is it you respond to being changed as Moses was after being in God's presence for 80 days. He had to put a veil over his face because the people were afraid. Moses prayed for the people because of the golden calf they'd made and that God would *consume him* and not the people.

Another example is Jesus—when he went up the Mt. of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of [Jesus'] face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Christ went through the dark night in the Garden. He was left alone to pray, he was rejected, whipped, and placed on a cross with a thorny crown. He alone paid the price for

our soul, and he prayed “Father forgive them.” Both Moses and Jesus put others before themselves.

Some people will reject the light that changes us into the image of God. Others want to come closer. When we spend time in prayer we see others differently. We see ourselves differently and experience the forgiveness of God. We pray and forgive others, and our focus is redirected—outwardly.

This morning when you participated in communion and ate and drank with Christ his living presence was among us. You alone cannot achieve what you need to give to others unless you have God’s presence in your life. Communion fosters a closer relationship with Christ and strengthens us for the journey. It takes two to be changed, you and God.

Let’s pray. Dear Lord, revive our hearts today to include you in more of our life. Help us to be more faithful in prayer, and restore us to yourself again that we would let our light shine before others. Amen.