

Removing the Veil

Exodus 34:29-35; 2Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Transfiguration Sunday

Today is Transfiguration Sunday in the Christian Calendar. In the reading from Exodus we read that Moses came down from Mount Sinai, having talked with God, and his face was shining - shining to the point that Aaron and the Israelites were afraid. Moses did not know that his face was shining - until he witnessed the fear on the faces of those around him. It was their fear – readily apparent to Moses – that caused Moses to wear a veil. Moses wore a veil over his face so the Israelites would not be afraid.

The fear of the Israelites would not allow them to see God clearly. Moses did not choose to wear the veil, the fear of the people made him wear the veil in order that they could listen to him, without being distracted by their fears.

How often has that happened to you? How often has fear prevented you from seeing situations, things....yes, God clearly? More and more frequently I think people are afraid to admit that they have a close, personal encounter with God. When God speaks to them, they often try to explain it in terms that people will find acceptable ... veiling it in earthly terms.

We use scapegoats, negative talk, to veil the reality that God speaks to us, because we fear others may think we are crazy.

OR our fear, like that of the Israelites' fears, causes others to wear veils, to veil the truth. Who do you cause to wear a veil?

Look OUT! I am here to tell you that if you....every last one of us in this place....take our veils off and acknowledge God, giving God the credit, and being honest with one another about our relationships with God, there is no end to what might happen. God can and is doing GREAT THINGS, if we but take the veils away and witness all that God is doing to and through us.

A friend and colleague shared with me that one member of his congregation believes there is a secret "committee" that meets with great regularity in their church. The member is afraid of this committee and the power they seem to hold. The committee, according to the church member is called the "Change Committee"! The member is afraid of this imaginary committee because he is afraid of the change that he sees in the church. As he has persecuted and yelled at this imaginary committee, he has been angry, hurt, offended, and felt betrayed. As a result, many have stopped necessary work because they do not want to hurt his feelings. He holds them hostage as the church suffers.

Do you cause others to keep the veil on because of your fears? OR What is the fear that makes you wear the veil?

The Apostle Paul writes in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, BE BOLD! Paul says they should act with great boldness! Our experience of life's ups and

downs tells us that very often the trip from that mountain top experience is marred by rocks along the path that cause us to stumble. The trip down is often the hardest part. We return from a retreat that energizes and inspires us, but the world is waiting to sap our energy and dim our view.

It's hard for us to follow Paul's directive to speak with boldness when we are afraid that our speaking will offend someone....so we put the veil on, keep silent, and deny the awesome power of God working in our lives.

As we move forward in the process of renewal, we MUST remove the veils, overcome the fears, speak BOLDLY, allowing others to witness the love and grace of God through us. We must hold firm to the glory of God and the freedom that comes in Christ.

In this passage, the veil to which Paul refers is a metaphor for anything that prohibits us from seeing the full truth of God. What keeps you from seeing the full truth of God? Are others able to see the full truth of God through you? Is the veil in the way?

Yes, this world can provide some pretty hard knocks. This church has had some tough times. Paul also had some difficult times. Paul surely understands. Paul assures us that God is present in the difficult times as well as the good. These times, difficult though they are, allow us to experience the freedom and transformation that comes with a life in Christ.

Why would you NOT offer that good news to all you know...to everyone you meet...to those for whom you care? Today I urge you to consider the veils in your life...and consider removing the veils that keep you from seeing and knowing and witnessing to the glory of God. Amen.