

Exodus 34: When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face^v shone because he had been talking with God. **30** Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. **31** But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. **32** Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. **33** And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

34 Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, **35** the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

HOW'S YOUR SHINE?

This week, I have an extra glow – a shine that put a bit of a smile on my face, added a swagger to my step, and created an electric energy inside that feels fantastic. You know why? You got it: the SUPER BOWL!!

As a kid it was always a dream – your team might go all the way – they might win on the biggest stage in America. But it was always just a dream, and no Philly football team – ever – had done it. And now, not only did they win the big game, but they won it against the greatest dynasty in the history of the game – arguably the greatest quarterback, the greatest coach, maybe one of the greatest receivers the game has produced in the last 52 years.

And you know what, as the week has progressed, its only gotten better. I've watched replay after replay of that tremendous trick play the Eagles called "Philly Special" – where the quarterback tricks the opponent into believing that he's about to grab and throw the ball to a receiver, when, in reality, he is going to become a receiver himself and have another player heave the ball to him. A gutsy, but brilliant play to be introduced at fourth and one. A first half stunner.

Now I doubt most of you have the same kind of electricity – except maybe Lois Lake who's from New Jersey. While many of you probably enjoyed seeing Brady and company be defeated, you probably hearkened back to the glow you had in 1997 when the Packers beat the then unknown New England Patriots under coach (Bill Parcells) and with a different quarterback named (Drew Bledsoe).

Remember how it felt?? You've gotten to experience it numerous times – and as a Packer fan I have also when we beat the Steelers a few years ago. But there's nothing quite like your childhood team climbing to the top.

Will I come down off the mountain? Sure. Probably by next week the glow will be gone. But for the moment – well, to echo the text I used last weekend, "I am flying on wings like Eagles!!"

In our text for today we get to see a different one who has a glow. His name is Moses, and his glow comes from being in the presence of God Himself. The text says: “Moses did not know that the skin of his face^v shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.”

Unbelievable, it was, to see how facing God in such a personal way affected this ordinary man. Just the reflection of God, as seen in Moses’ face, was so stunning and striking to the people of God, that it caused them to actually be afraid – because they knew that they were unworthy to confront the largeness of God and His Holiness and Purity. After all, they were sinners, fallen ones, corrupted by the selfish nature that first infected Adam and Eve.

In similar fashion, we see another shining in our Gospel Lesson. This time it is the Lord Jesus who climbs up the mountain and is revealed before Peter, James, and John as God, in the flesh. Greater than Moses, more fervent than Elijah. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And the reaction of the disciples to His glory is similar to that of the Israelites to Moses. The text says, “Peter said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’⁶ (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)”

Fear is the natural reaction to the glow of God. After all, who are we to step on His turf, to call upon His name, to be in His presence? Who are we to hear His Word, to pray to Him, to approach His table?

But the shocking message of both these lessons is summed up by the voice that thunders from the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration: “This is my beloved Son, Listen to Him.”

The perfect God who is so Holy and Righteous and Pure that we have no business being in His world wants us to know above all else that He came into this world for us! FOR US! SINNERS! He came to fulfill that law that Moses brought down the mountain – and, as our substitute, as our Savior, as our BELOVED ONE, to set us free from the bondage we know cause of our guilt, and to declare us His own, forever and ever and ever.

And He doesn't long for us to be afraid of Him, to shy back from Him, to cower in a corner as trembling losers. No.

He wants us to shine with the glow of Jesus. He wants us glorify Him with the joy that emanates from hearing His voice and believing His promises. He wants us to beam and glow with such enthusiasm that the world shrinks back and says, "What have you got? What's bringing that smile to your face, that swagger to your step, that electric energy inside that seems to feel so fantastic? We want, what you got. Please, tell us more."

St. Paul puts it this way in our Epistle Lesson: "12Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ... 15Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers the hearts (of those Israelites who don't know Jesus.) 16But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

So let me ask you, "How's your glow today?" When the world looks at you can they see just a little bit that you are not one without hope? Can they see, just a little bit, at least, that You know the God who came to this earth, FOR YOU, who died His death on the cross, FOR YOU, and who rose from the grave to offer eternity, FOR YOU?

Can they?

Or do you try to hide that glow with an invisible veil that says you're just like everyone else – that God hasn't transformed you away from darkness and into His marvelous light – that you are caught in a world of sin, of death, of hopelessness?

Some years ago I remember seeing a sign that read like this, "NO JESUS, NO PEACE. KNOW JESUS, KNOW PEACE."

Don't you kinda love that play on words. Because we do know peace. God came to save US – and God is filled with love for US.

The silly Super Bowl brought a glow to me for a week – but it's not gonna change anything. But the God who sent Jesus has changed EVERYTHING. He has called us His own and has bought us back with the lifeblood that flowed from His own veins.

Let it shine, folks. As the kids sang today,

“I have the joy....down in my heart.”

“I have the love of Jesus.... down in my heart.”

“I have the peace that passes understanding down in my heart...”

“I have the wonderful love of my blessed redeemer way down in the depths of my heart!”

Seriously brothers and sisters, you do.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.