

## Shining With Divine Light

By Linda Rex

**February 11, 2024, Transfiguration | 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Epiphany**—As we reach the end of the season of Epiphany, it is time to consider one of the events experienced by the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. The transfiguration of Jesus was such a profoundly dramatic event for Peter, James, and John, but then Jesus told them not to say a word about it to anyone until after his death and resurrection. I cannot imagine how hard it must have been for them to have had such a revelation and then to have to keep it all to themselves for an extended period of time.

In the gospel passage for this Sunday, Mark 9:2–9, we catch a glimpse of the glory hidden within Jesus' human flesh. While on the mountain with his three disciples, Jesus begins to shine with divine light, talks with two dead people (Moses and Elijah), and is crowned with a word of blessing from his heavenly Father (“this is my beloved Son—listen to him”). The disciples' response to this experience was, on the one hand, terror, and on the other, an effort to respond to all this by Peter, who wanted to build shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. It might have made sense to him at the moment, but when looking at it from our viewpoint, it seems he was simply blathering.

During that special occurrence on the mountain, what is revealed to us—giving us an epiphany about Jesus—is who he is. Jesus is revealed to be the Son of God, the predicted Prophet who would supersede Moses and Elijah. God tells us we are to listen to him. We see Jesus revealed as God in human flesh—the divine light radiating out from and through his human flesh. And we catch a glimpse of what it means for us as human beings that one day, as we participate in Jesus' death and resurrection, we too will be glorified human beings, shining with divine light.

The apostle Paul, in the New Testament passage for this Sunday, 2 Corinthians 4:3–6, attempts to help the believers in Corinth to see that Paul was not preaching himself, other than as a servant or messenger to them on Jesus' behalf. No, Paul's unceasing message was the central plank of the early church's testimony that Jesus Christ was Lord. I would like to draw from Robert Utley's commentary, *Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians* (via Logos Software), to enable us to see a little more clearly the significance of Paul's statement that “Jesus Christ is Lord”, a phrase which was used by the early church as their “public confession of faith and baptismal formula.”

- ❖ **Jesus:** The Hebrew word for salvation, *hosea*, attached to Israel's covenant name for God “YHWH”, means “YHWH saves” or “YHWH brings salvation.”
- ❖ **Christ:** The Greek equivalent for the Hebrew “messiah” or “anointed one.” As the fulfillment of the Old Testament roles of prophet, priest, and king, Jesus is “the anointed one,” the “one called and equipped by God for a specific task.”
- ❖ **Lord:** The Greek word *kurios*, which can mean “mister,” “sir,” “master,” “owner,” “husband,” or “the full God-man,” and was used to express the full deity of Jesus Christ, as God in human flesh.

When someone asks, “What's the big deal about Jesus?”, we can draw upon this simple statement to explain the reality of who Jesus is and why his coming was so important. What we see shining forth in Jesus' face is the face of our Father, for when we look at Jesus, we see the Father (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15). And when we look at Jesus, we see ourselves, in that Jesus is the true image-bearer of God in human flesh—what we were created to be as those made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). And Jesus is Lord over all, the One to whom every knee will ultimately bow, in heaven and on earth, for he is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise (Phil. 2:5-

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11). And he has, through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, included us in his life and love, in face-to-face fellowship with his Father in the Spirit. And that is a really big deal!

*Lord Jesus Christ, how beautiful and wonderful you are! Glorious and majestic, the perfect image of the Father; the One in whom and by whom all is made, held and sustained by your word of power. As we look into your face, we see the face of our Father; and are drawn into the midst of your love and life by your heavenly Spirit. Awaken us to this reality! Remove from us the blindness that prevents us from seeing you for who you really are, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:3–6 NASB*