

Last Epiphany

March 3, 2019

Rev Ken Wratten at St. Luke's

Exodus 34:29-35

Moses' skin glowed from seeing God's Shekinah.

Psalms 99

Call to worship God upon his holy hill.

2 Cor 3:12 – 4:2

When one turns to the Lord the veil is removed.

Luke 9:28-36

Jesus' transfiguration

“Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.” Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God. This happened to Moses later, whenever he met with God in the Tent of Meeting, during the years of wandering in the desert.

Moses veiled his face to avoid scaring the people. Even though this was a ‘reflection’ of God’s glory, the people felt fear from being so close to the power and glory of God. Years later, Jewish rabbis gave a name to the manifestations of God’s presence: the Shekinah – God’s visible presence – proof of God ‘dwelling’ among us.

Moses experienced the Shekinah at the burning bush that was not consumed;

when the cloud descended upon Mount Sinai;

when his face glowed;

Peter, James and John experienced the Shekinah in the cloud that descended on the mountaintop that Jesus had invited them to;

and from Jesus’ whole being glowing from the inside out.

Moses’ face shone from being with God; a reflection of the glory of God.

Jesus’ whole being glowed, because he was filled from the core of his being with the glory of God. This was no reflection – but the visible image of the presence of God dwelling among us.

Moses wore a veil to shield the glory of the presence of God from the people.

Jesus revealed his glory only to the ‘inner three’. They kept silent and told no one what they had seen. In a way, we can see that Jesus’ humanity was a ‘veil’ that hid his divinity – at least until the time was right for all to see.

But on the cross, when Jesus had completed his mission, another veil, the veil in the temple that was used to separate the people from the holy of holies - that veil was torn in two. There was to be no more veil; no more separation. You and I have been granted access directly into the Holy of

Holies; into God's inner courts; directly into God's presence. In our Eucharistic prayer we are able to say, "In (Jesus, your Son,) you have made us worthy to stand before you."

Paul explains that all of us who believe in Jesus have had the veil removed, so that we can be mirrors that reflect the glory of God to the world. That is our task in our own faith journey; allowing God to work in and through us, so that we become more and more like Christ, and so that we can reflect his glory even more.

What veil do we wear that keeps us from clearly seeing and reflecting the power of God's glory in ourselves, and in each other? In what ways do we pass up the moments to feel the presence of God in our day? The season of Lent is a time for us to think about what veils we wear...

As we start our Lenten Journey this coming Wednesday, join me in making a commitment to be open to the Shekinah of God; in ourselves, in each other, in the people whose paths we cross, in the events that unfold during our faith walk toward Easter.

I can hear the Israelites as they would see Moses' glowing face, "Oh, oh. He's been talking with God again."

I can hear Peter, James, and John as they saw Jesus' Transfiguration, "I knew Jesus was special; but he is so much more than I could have imagined!"

I can hear people who haven't felt the love of God in their life saying, "Wow! Have you notice? Those St Luke's people seem to have a special glow about them."

May it be so. Amen.