

## Don't Let the Glitter Fool You

Transfiguration  
Exodus 34:29-35  
Luke 9:28-36

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Faith Community

Today we look at two events that at first glance seem more than a little strange, mysterious and supernatural.

In the Old Testament, the Children of Israel have been set free from slavery and are traveling through the wilderness in search of the Promised Land. Moses, their leader, came down from Mount Sinai with a second set of the Ten Commandments, his face aglow with a brilliance that was both frightening and intimidating. The passage tells us two things here. First of all, the glow was because he had been with God, which seems obvious enough. The other thing we're told is that Moses was not aware of it. He had no clue. Once it had been pointed out to him he put a veil on his face so as not to upset the people. The apostle Paul, in the New Testament, says that over time the glow would fade until Moses met with God again, and then the pattern would repeat itself.

I love the thought that Moses didn't know about the glow. And once he was told about it, he didn't use it as a way to impress or overpower anyone. Instead, he considered it a natural result of spending time with Almighty God.

Friends, you cannot connect with God and stay the same. Something changes at the deepest level. It was that connecting that nourished Moses and equipped him to fulfill his calling. Yes he had that glow. But don't let the glitter fool you.

In the New Testament we have the Transfiguration, equally mysterious and supernatural. Jesus had taken Peter, James and John to a mountaintop to pray.

***As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.*** (Luke 9:29-31, TNIV)

Peter had a very human response to all this.

***Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.***

Just as with Moses and his veil, here's where we need to be careful. It's so very easy to get caught up in the spectacular. We are easily impressed and intimidated, and here are two stories right out of the Bible in which that could happen. We could miss the point of the whole thing.

In Moses' case, he was being equipped to serve. The glow on his face could've focused attention on himself. Instead, it symbolized his calling to serve.

Transfiguration: the twin towers of the Old Testament are right there, Moses representing the Law and Elijah the Prophets, and here's Jesus, the fulfillment of both, and they're all together, talking, as the text says, about Jesus' coming 'departure.' The Greek word used here is 'exodus,' interestingly enough. They were talking about his coming death.

Left to himself Peter not only would've missed the point of the whole thing, he also would've gotten in the way of what Jesus had come to do.

***Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.*** (v. 8)

There, friends, is the great hope. To be that clear, that focused, that Jesus is all you see.

Whatever it is that drives you, that causes you to worry or push so hard, maybe the best thing for you would be to get yourself surrounded by a cloud that keeps you from seeing anything but Jesus.

You don't see your to-do list  
What others think of you is a non-issue  
The deadline that's coming up all too soon  
The report you have to get in  
The overdue project  
Will I ever lose enough weight?  
Why can't I let go of this memory?  
How will I ever get everything done?

Friends, until you're blessed by seeing nothing but Jesus, nothing will satisfy you. There'll always be something missing. Religious busy work can be as draining and pointless as anything else. No achievement, however impressive, will fill that God shaped vacuum in you.

Friends, don't let the glitter fool you. There are all too many shortcuts, easy answers, detours and roadblocks, many of them appealing and attractive. You and I are called to be disciples.

**Disciples are people who are becoming more like Jesus in their character and emotional and spiritual development.**

**Discipleship is always**

**Personal- becoming more like Christ myself  
Missional- helping others do the same**

Friends, it always comes back to God. All that we're about is to have an excellence about it that points people to the timeless love of God, and in the process, points people to life change. It's part of discipleship.

Look at what surrounded the Transfiguration, what came before and after. Just before this, Jesus fed thousands of hungry people and then was quite clear as to what was ahead for him and what his followers could expect. Immediately after the Transfiguration he and his disciples came upon a family in desperate need. Had Peter gotten his wish and stayed on the mountaintop, nothing would have changed for that family. That's the danger you and I face. Don't let the glitter fool you.

A comfortable religion in which people are not challenged in their own personal growth or not called to look beyond themselves to address a hurting world, even at personal expense, has nothing to do with authentic discipleship. After all, Jesus himself said,

***I am among you as one who serves.*** (Luke 22:27)

But here's the deal, friends. This is what we miss. It's in the actual serving that we ourselves discover the joy of discipleship. The giver always benefits more than the one who receives. The servant is blessed more than those who are served. It's an attitude shift that changes everything. Friends, don't let the glitter fool you.

Friends, there are so many barriers, levels, and layers we use to separate ourselves from others, or try to achieve, thinking we have to earn our way to acceptance, or some of

us feel that no matter how much we tried, we could never measure up.

We look at religious leaders and think we'll never be like them, or we're just ordinary folks, and there are some things better left to the professionals. Things like glowing brilliance and transfigurations only serve to drive the point home. Don't let the glitter fool you.