

Order of Worship for 2-11-24

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

The Call to Worship

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The season of Epiphany reaches its climax this day of Transfiguration. We now hear of the first Transfiguration from Mark's Gospel:

Mark 9:2-9 And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him." And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

P: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world.

C: Wise men, guided by light, came to worship You, and we kneel in spirit with them. You calmed the storm, healed the hurting, and freed the captive; You gave us the peace of God, the power of hope, and the liberty of forgiveness.

P: Now, with Your disciples, You ascend the Mount of Transfiguration, there to converse with Lawgiver Moses and Prophet Elijah. Prepare our hearts to hear the Father's words that place His signature on You: "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him."

C: Through You, Lord Jesus, God places His signature on us. By faith we are beloved children of the heavenly Father.

P: The time comes when our Lord must descend the mountain and enter the valley—the valley of rejection, of denial, and of crucifixion. Lent must come soon.

C: Lord, grant that we follow You into the valley, for even in the valley of the shadow of death, life does not end. Easter follows, and life begins again. Teach us to live as Your resurrection people, O Lord,

ALL: and let the joy of Easter victory that always follows the time in the valley transform this service of worship into a celebration on the mountain of faith, that we may all say, "Tis good, Lord, to be here."

Opening Hymn: 'Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here" - Hymn #414

The Confession

P: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.

C: If we walk in the light as God Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.

P: God does not want us to perish, but to come to His life-giving light.

P: Almighty God,

C: You dwell in light unapproachable. Unprotected, we perish in your presence. For our hearts are darkened, our minds be clouded; we call for night to cover our deeds; we have loved darkness rather than the light.

P: Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.

C: For His sake we beg forgiveness.

P: For His sake God hears your prayer. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

C: We have seen the Lord's glory; we have heard the Lord's voice.

P: Hear the Lord's voice forgiving you; In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day:

P: O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: "O Wond'rous Type, O Vision Fair"- Hymn #413

Old Testament Lesson: 2 Kings 2:1-12

R: Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more.

R: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 3:12-13; 4:1-6

R: Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end.

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

R: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Hymn: "*Swiftly Pass the Clouds of Glory*" - **Hymn # 416** (soloist first verse)

Sermon: "*Seeing Through Jesus*" - **2 Corinthians 3:12-13, 4:1-6**

If you look at a color picture and really focus on it, if the image is turned to black and white, you still see the colors. The colors aren't there anymore; the colored light is not going to your eye receptors, but our brains interpret it with the colors that were there. But that only lasts so long.

When Moses visited with God his face would glow for a while as if still reflecting the glory of God. Then the glow would fade. They put a veil across his face so the people would not see the glow fade. It only lasted so long. The glow gave a glimpse of God, but it was only temporary; it was not complete. We need a clearer, more intense view to see God and who we are.

The light we see is a combination of red, green, and blue light. In the old days colored TV had three electronic “guns” that each projected a type of light on the screen to get the colors we see: red, green, and blue. You needed all three to give a complete picture of the colors. But if you only had red, only red light came on to our eyes to see. The same happened with green and blue. This morning we are going to use that as an example to show that the views we have on our own can only give us a partial image. The only complete image we can have of our world comes through seeing through the light of Jesus.

Red is a color associated with energy. We speak of things being “red hot.” We will use that to represent a world view that looks to getting things done. This is a view that solves problems with science and technology.

One hundred years ago 30% of deaths in this country involved children under 5. Today that has dropped to 2%. Words “diphtheria,” “cholera,” “typhoid fever,” “polio,” and “tuberculosis” have gone from feared diseases to names for vaccines. Information that came to us in weeks through the mail is available for us instantly online. In this world view all problems can eventually be solved by how we make and fix things.

But look at what “being productive” does. Our tapping of carbon energy heats our homes and keeps our cars going, but what does it do to the earth as a whole? Technology has replaced human work, but that also lessens jobs that give income to families. What good is it to be “productive,” when you ignore or can’t relate to your spouse or children?

Green is the color of growth. It is associated with being positive. “Green light” doesn’t just mean that our cars can go, but that there is agreement about what we should do. We will use this light to represent a worldview that sees good in everything.

The prevailing view in our academic world after World War 2 was the “red light” view that we just mentioned using science and technology to solve all problems. It was the United States’ ability to be productive that brought about victory in the war. We looked to that to beat communism and poverty.

But that view failed. We hear about “asymmetrical war” where the enemy hides among the population and turns your seeming victory into defeat by causing the deaths on so many people. Science can enable us to bring the world to our fingertips, but it has made it hard for us to know how to talk to the person standing next to us. The academic world turned to the “postmodern” view that says that all views have something to contribute. People in older cultures may not have indoor plumbing, but they don’t have to lock their doors out of fear of theft or can trust their neighbors to help watch their children. In this worldview every culture and view has something to contribute. Everyone is basically good. We just need to learn to be tolerant and accepting.

When people are sad, they feel “blue.” A whole genre of music is called “blues” and usually reflects bad times in peoples’ lives. We use this blue light to represent a worldview that sees the bad in everything.

This worldview may not be very popular, but so often it seems much closer to the truth than the other worldviews. It is certainly easier and more precise to criticize things than to come up with real solutions. Our “red light” technology says we can find alternate forms of energy besides fossil fuels. But they involve inconsistent energy like wind turbines, toxic chemicals like what is used in batteries for solar power, or the danger of nuclear accidents. Our “green light” acceptance can affirm many different ideas, but so often they contradict each other and fly in the face of truth. So often for every seemingly “good” thing we can find something selfish and exploitive. Did the US give aid to their defeated enemies of Germany and Japan out of a sense of pure generosity, or because they feared that communism would take over in those countries? Do people give to charity because they really care or help them feel less guilty?

The “blue light” may seem honest, but what are we left with? We see it reflected in the words of Ecclesiastes, “Vanity or vanities, everything is vanity.” Or as another translation reads, “Meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless.”

None of these lights are enough. They all fall short. But if we bring them together, we get white light. In that light we don’t just see some things and not others. We can see clearly.

That is the light that God shone into this world in Jesus. He called Himself “the light of the world. Light and darkness are used so often in Scriptures to describe good and evil. To understand this we have to realize what darkness meant in a time of no electronics. Every now and then, our power goes out at night and it gets really dark in our neighborhoods. But we can still get in our cars and travel with our headlights. But in Jesus’ time you didn’t travel at night. It was too dark. You put your life into danger by walking in a land of rocks and gullies. Darkness was frightening. That is why St. Paul could say, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.” (Ephesians 5:8-9). Think of how we feel when after groping with our hand in the dark we reach a light switch and the dark turns to light. God has come in Jesus to bring light into our dark world.

Only in Christ can we see clearly. In Him we are not hiding the bad things, nor pretending we can solve all our problems, nor saying “it’s hopeless.” No, in Him we have a clear view of God’s love, both how extensive (as we see His death for us on the cross) and eternal (as we see in the Transfiguration as it gives us a preview of Easter). Because in Jesus, we can see.

Creed: 2nd article of Creed, page 322

Prayer of the Church

(Pastor says “Lord in your mercy,” Response, “Hear our prayer.”)

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering & Voluntary

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

C: It is good and proper so to do.

Prayer of Thanksgiving :

P: We give thanks to You almighty God heavenly Father for showing Yourself more clearly to us in Your Son, Christ Jesus, who revealed His glory on the mountain of the Transfiguration, but even more by His death on the cross. Through that we see how much You love us and can truly learn to love You. Send Your Holy Spirit on us now as we come forward to receive the true body and blood of Jesus in the Lord's Supper, so that we can see You most clearly. All this we pray as Jesus taught us to pray . . .

Lord's Prayer:

The Words of our Lord:

P: When we eat this bread we share the body of Christ. When we drink from this cup we share the blood of Christ.

C: Reveal Yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of bread, as You once revealed Yourself on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Distribution of Holy Communion

Hymns: *"Shine, Jesus, Shine"* (on screen),
"Jesus on the Mountain Peak" - **Hymn # 415**

Dismissal:

Prayer after Communion:

P: Almighty God, on the mountain You showed Your glory in the transfiguration of Your Son. Give us the vision to look beyond the turmoil of our world and to behold the King in His glory; through Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

Blessing:

(Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: "Alleluia, Song of Gladness"- Hymn # 417

(We sing this hymn to remind ourselves that we will not sing "Alleluia" again until Easter as we journey through Lent.)

Postlude