



BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Last Sunday after Epiphany (C)
February 27, 2022

RCL: Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a]

Exodus 34:29-35

In this passage, Moses departs from the presence of God after receiving the Ten Commandments. He is not aware that his time with God has changed his appearance. But when he gets back to the Israelites' encampment, they are astonished to see that his face is shining. The Hebrew word suggests that his face is beaming out "rays" of light like the sun; in other words, he is reflecting the light of God. Moses' brief but powerful encounter with God transformed him in body and mind, and his own people aren't sure what to do with him.

When we encounter the presence of God – in our daily lives and in our religious communities – we can expect to be transformed. Yet, sometimes our changed hearts and minds confuse those around us, and even make *us* uncomfortable. Even in this discomfort, God's promises are being worked out. So, let us turn our faces toward the light of God.

- Have you ever had an encounter that was so dazzling that you felt like a different person afterward?
- Do you know someone who seems to shine with the presence of God? What are they like?
- Do you talk to your friends, family, or coworkers about your religious beliefs or practices? Do you ever feel the urge to "veil" yourself like Moses did in order to avoid uncomfortable conversations?

Psalm 99

In both the Old and New Testaments, God is often depicted as a king. To our modern ears, kingship can feel like tyranny. But the Psalm reminds us that God isn't like other kings. We worship a God who establishes equity and enacts justice, one who keeps promises. Within God's kingdom, we can feel secure in God's righteousness as we work to enact justice and live in harmony with one another.

- How have you seen God at work in your life?
- What metaphors for God resonate most with you and why (king, father, potter, etc.)?

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

This passage serves as a decisive critique of the Israelites in our Old Testament passage. The Apostle Paul agrees that Moses' shining face revealed the light of God, but he argues that the People of God should

have been bold enough to leave his face unveiled. While the critique is likely a product of Paul's antagonism toward those who spurned Christian conversion, we can still glean something powerful from this passage. Paul's words inspire us to live boldly in spite of our fears. The Spirit of God working in our lives gives us the courage to proclaim God's glory and tell the truth about ourselves and our transformed lives.

- In what areas of your life do you need to be more truthful?
- How is God asking you to show up?

Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a]

In this passage, we bear witness to the Transfiguration of Jesus. Echoing the Exodus narrative, Jesus' identity as the Messiah is affirmed in his remarkable physical transformation on a mountaintop. When confronted with this astounding experience, Peter falls back on religious tradition in order to honor Jesus and the patriarchs who appear alongside him. But God's booming voice disrupts and reorients his understanding of what to do. While our traditions and liturgies are useful, even sacred, practices, God announces that Jesus' ministry is anything but the status quo. He is about to disrupt and reorient everything we thought we knew. It is time to listen to him.

- In what ways does the comfort of tradition hinder us from responding to the voice of God?
- What is Jesus calling you to?

This Bible study was written by Leah Wise, a seminarian at Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University.