

February 14, 2010 Transfiguration Sunday *The Stewardship*
Ex. 34:29-35; 2 Cor 3:17-4:2; *of Prayer and Witness 2—*
Lk. 9:28-43a *Shining Faces:*
A Call to Prayer

Have you ever watched a child who looks in a mirror?...especially a child young enough to not really know whose face is reflected back? Children's author and poet C.J. Heck says,

...if you want to keep a small child entertained for more than a few minutes, sit him or her down in front of a full-length mirror. Be sure to have your camera and film on hand and get ready for some real fun. I tried it with my grandson while I was babysitting and it was priceless.

At first glance, it was a little like making a new friend. There was the tentative first look at the 'other child'. Then he gave him a shy smile. When the smile was returned, and I suppose feeling a little bolder, he then went for the basic wave. Next, he turned his back, looked over his shoulder at the child in the mirror, smiled again, and then stuck out his tongue.

Once this obligatory introduction period was over, he made a whole series of "Can you do this?" moves. Each new feat was copied, of course, which brought even more complicated face-pulling and body contortions. It didn't take too long before the two were best friends, whereupon it only got sillier with somersaults, jumping up and down, lifting the shirt and comparing belly buttons, and ... well, you'll just have to try it and see for yourself.

For me, the icing on the cake was his wonderful and infectious laughter...

<http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewarticle.asp?AuthorID=6604&id=22354>

Can't you just picture this scene in your mind's eye? Did you see it? The shining face of a child looking in a mirror for perhaps the first time.

The question this morning did you see them as the Bible was read this morning? They are everywhere in the texts we share today. Did you see them? What I'm talking about is shining faces—they are everywhere this morning. Moses, after he had been talking with God, his face was shining and he didn't even know it. His face shone so brightly that the people were afraid to come near him—it was so difficult for them that after Moses was finished speaking with them the Word of God he had to cover his face with a veil, only uncovering it again when he went in to speak with God. Jesus took Peter, John, and James up the mountain to pray. While he was praying the appearance of his face changed and his clothes, his entire raiment, became dazzling white. Even though Peter, John, and James were half asleep they couldn't miss this. Jesus' face shone as he talked with Moses and Elijah there on the mountain as the three of them discussed together Jesus' impending journey to Jerusalem where he would be crucified and where he will rise from the dead. Moses and Jesus—shining faces! Did you see them? Then the Gospel story shifts to another face at the bottom of the mountain—a face down in the valley contorted, screaming, and foaming at the mouth—this young child of a concerned father whose own face bore the burden of a son in deep pain. When Jesus heals this young boy the text does not further describe the face of this young child but can't you imagine the transformation on his face? All the text really says is that Jesus

Gave him back to his father.

Luke 9:42b

I have to believe that the face of a Dad who finally gets back his son has just got to shine!

Shining faces—sure signs of lives touched by God; sure signs of changed hearts. That's what the Bible is talking about today. Moses talks to God, his life is touched, his heart is changed, and his face shines. A father talks with God in the person of Jesus, God's own Son, whose own shining face smiles down in grace from the top of the mountain to this Dad's son down in the valley. Father and son—their lives are touched by God, their hearts are changed, and their faces shine. Shining faces—sure signs of lives touched by God; sure signs of changed hearts.

Did you notice that shining faces always appear when somebody responds to a call to prayer? Jesus invited Peter, John, and James to go with him up the mountain to do what? To pray. And what was that father doing when he addressed the Son of God, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child.” The moment of his son’s greatest need was this father’s call to prayer. Whenever somebody responds to the call to prayer shining faces appear. That’s what the Bible says this morning. Whenever somebody responds to the call to prayer lives are touched by God and hearts are changed.

With all these shining faces around....where are you? Are you, like the Hebrews, afraid to come near? Are you like Peter, John, and James, not knowing what to say and then terrified in the full presence of God in the shining face of Jesus? Are you like the crowd who witnessed Jesus’ act of mercy for this young boy and just stand there, astounded? Where are you with all these shining faces around?

Where are you with all these shining faces around? Where are you when a call to prayer is issued? In this upcoming season of Lent there are three opportunities for you to pray (bulletin announcement). Every Tuesday at 6:30 pm and every Wednesday at 7 am and 12:15 pm we gather for a Service of Praise and Prayer. Most of you, I believe, look for the church to guide you on your spiritual journey through the season of Lent. The church invites you during the six weeks of Lent to come and pray once a week. Is it a reasonable spiritual discipline for you to take up just for Lent once a week for 20 minutes Tuesday night or Wednesday morning or lunchtime? In this season Warwick Memorial Church issues this call to prayer.

Did you see them as the Bible was read this morning? They are everywhere in the texts we share today. Did you see them? What I am talking about is shining faces. They are everywhere this morning. Did you see them?

But you know I think there's one you missed and I don't want you to leave here this morning or go through the season of Lent until you see this shining face. Paul points it out to you in his letter to the Corinthians:

When one comes to the Lord...all of us... (see) the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror (and) are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. 2 Corinthians 3:17a, 18

When Paul here talks about the image of God reflecting God's glory on an unveiled face, whose face is he talking about? Did you hear it? Don't miss it:

...all of us...seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Who is he talking about? This (hold up a mirror) is who he is talking about. Did you see it? The shining face of one who responds to Jesus' invitation at the top of the mountain and in the valley--the shining face of a child of God who responds to the call to prayer. You see, when the church issues a call to prayer, you are invited to talk with God. In our relationship to God through Jesus Christ the Apostle Paul says we see the glory of the Lord as reflected in a mirror as we are transformed into the image of God. When you talk with God what is reflected back to you in that mirror is the image of God in which you were created. And, maybe like a child who looks in a mirror for the first time, you see yourself as you really are--a child of God.

Where are you with all these shining faces around, the forgiven, reconciled people of God whose lives are touched and hearts are changed? The Gospel says here you are right there among them.

Sisters and brothers, Jesus Christ changes your life and shines brightly through you when you receive his love and respond to his call to prayer. Don't you leave here today and don't you let this season of Lent slip by until you see this shining face.

William G. Davidson