

2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:2

**Stand In The Glory Of The LORD.** That's what Peter, James, and John did on the day when Jesus was **transfigured** before them. His **glory** was seen in His **face**, shining as bright as **lightning** - and even in His **clothes** which were dazzling **white**. As Peter stood there in the glory of Jesus, he said, "*Rabbi, it is **good** for us to be here. Let us make three **tents**: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*" Three **tents** - three **temporary** shelters. The disciples were not going to be permanently **isolating** themselves there on the mountain. But, **Standing In The Glory Of The LORD** did **change** these men. They became **more certain** of their faith in Jesus as the Son of **God**, and they also became **stronger** in living their **lives** for Him.

Today, you and I also **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**. Jesus says, "*Where two or three have gathered together in my name, **there I am among them.***" Jesus is **among** us today, even though He remains **unseen**. The same Jesus who stood in the presence of His inner circle of **disciples**, **speaks** to **us** in His **Word**, and also regularly **comes** to us with **forgiveness** in the **Lord's Supper**. With the eyes of **faith** we also **see** Jesus, and gaze in **wonder** at His **glory**. Jesus showed His **glory** most **vividly** when He graciously **died** on the cross to pay for our sins, and He will show His glory **again** when He takes us to be with Him in His heavenly home - a **permanent** home. Because we **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**, our lives are changed for the **better**, just as the lives of His **disciples** were changed for the better.

We can **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD** because the **veil** has been lifted from our hearts. A **veil** is a **cloth** which covers a person's **face**. In many ways our current government-imposed **masks** are very **similar** to a veil. They **hide** our **joys** and our **sorrows**. They make our outward **emotions** disappear. They **shield** others from whatever is on the other side. After God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, Moses came **down** from the mountain in order to **speak** to the people of Israel, and his face was **radiant** from standing in the presence of the almighty **God**. Moses didn't want the people of Israel to see that radiance **fade away**, because God still had much **more** to share with them. As **awesome** as the commandments of God **are**, they were never meant to be the **greatest** expression of His glory. **That** would come when God showed His **grace** to **all people** through the gift of His Son, **Jesus**.

Paul told the Corinthians, "*In spite of this, their minds were **hardened**. Yes, up to the present day, the same **veil** remains when the **Old Testament** is read. It has*

not been **removed** because it is taken away only in **Christ**. Instead, to this day, whenever **Moses** is read, a **veil** lies over their hearts. But whenever someone turns to the **Lord**, the veil is **taken away**." Paul stated the sad truth that the majority of the **Jews** had become fixated on **Moses** and the **Law**. They didn't open their eyes to the precious **Gospel** of God - the **Good News** that we have a **Savior** in the person of **Jesus**. They were **blind** to the **full** story of the Scriptures. They **focused** on God's **commandments**, and tried to find salvation by **keeping** them. What they didn't **understand** is that no one can **measure up** to the holy standard of God's Law and **earn** His favor. Rather, the Law **condemns** us to eternal death. It **can't** save us.

Even today, many people still see the Bible merely as a book on **morality** - a book full of **rules to keep** in order to be **saved**. These people are all wearing a **veil** - they are **blind** to their **inability** to keep God's Law, and their need for God's **mercy** to **save** them. But Jesus **removes** the veil. Jesus came into this world to **perfectly** obey the Law for us, and to set us **free** from the guilt of our sins. His transfiguration **opens our eyes** to this wonderful truth. As we hear the Heavenly Father say, "*This is my **Son**, whom I love,*" the truth is **clear**. Jesus was **sent** to us by the Father. He lived a **perfect** life to **earn** our salvation. And then through His **death** on the cross, He made the ultimate **sacrifice** to pay for the sins of the world. What **grace** - what **glory**. May we always **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**, and gaze on all the wonderful things He has **done** for us. Focusing on **Jesus** will **remove** the veil of self-righteousness from our hearts, and will lead us to **trust** in Him **alone** as our Savior from sin.

And as we **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**, we will also experience true **freedom**. Our text continues, "*Now the Lord is the **Spirit**, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **freedom**.*" This **freedom** refers to freedom from the burden of **sin** and the sting of **death**. Because Jesus **paid** for all of our sins, and **rose victoriously** from the dead, "*There is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" We have been set **free** from the burden of **guilt** and **fear**. Even **death itself** has lost its sting. Our graves have been changed from a hole in the **earth** into a stairway to **heaven**, because Jesus has **promised** us, "*I will come again and take you to be **with me**, so that you may also be **where I am**.*" That glory is still **waiting** for us in the **future**.

But even **now**, as we **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**, we are able to **reflect** His glory in the **world**. Again we read, "*All of us who **reflect** the Lord's glory with an **unveiled face** are being **transformed** into his own image, from one degree of glory to another. This too is from the **Lord**, who is the **Spirit**.*" How good it is to know that as we **reflect** God's glory in life, the Holy Spirit **transforms us**.

He **changes us**, and helps us to become more and more **like Jesus**. So often as we look at our lives, we see ourselves **changing**, but we're focused on how we are **aging** and **losing** abilities that we used to have. **Those** changes come about as a result of **sin**. It would be far **better** for us to focus on what we are **gaining**, because **those** are changes which are brought about by the **Holy Spirit** working in us through God's **Word** and **Sacrament**. As we become more and more **like Jesus**, we become more **trusting**, more **forgiving**, and more **caring**. And Jesus **also** promises us that when He **returns**, He will transform the **bodies** we have now into **glorified** bodies. I don't know **exactly** what that will mean, but at the very **least**, our bodies won't **deteriorate** and **wear out** the way they do now. That will more than **make up** for the things which we **temporarily** aren't able to **do**.

And finally, as we **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**, we'll be able to boldly **share** Jesus. Our text concludes, *"Therefore, since we have this **ministry** as a result of the **mercy** shown us, we are not **discouraged**. On the contrary, we have **renounced** shameful, underhanded methods. We do not operate in a **deceitful** way, and we do not **distort** the word of God. Instead, by **proclaiming the truth clearly**, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."*

The Apostle Paul had nothing to **hide** as a person who **shared** God's Word, and neither do **we**. We just need to tell others what **we know** about our Savior - and we know **a lot**. We don't need to **water down** God's Word in order to make it easier for others to understand. We don't need to use **gimmicks** to get their attention. We can just **openly** and **plainly** talk about our **own** faith in Jesus. By being **open** and **honest** about **our faith** we don't have to worry about offending people's consciences, because even if they **disagree** with us, we're just telling them about the Savior **we** believe in, and we're letting them know that the **same** Savior is there for **them** too. That **boldness** comes as we **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**.

When the inner circle of disciples was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration Peter said, *"Rabbi, it is **good** for us to **be here**."* It was good for **them**, and it is equally as good for **us**, to be **here**, and to **Stand In The Glory Of The LORD**. May we always **rejoice** to hear that **our lives** are being **transformed** by the Holy Spirit, so we can continue to become more like our **Savior** here on the earth, and **eventually** to share in His **heavenly** glory too. Amen.