



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

February 27, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

Last Sunday after Epiphany; Transfiguration of our Lord

First Lesson: [Exodus 34:29-35](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 148

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 9:28-36](#)

Jesus is Revealed in Glorious Appearance

1. A glimpse of glory gives hope
2. So we do not lose heart
3. Since we are surrounded by deceit
4. But have the simple, true, and glorious Gospel.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

What in your life is simple? I think there are a lot of things that we buy or we're told that if we buy this, it's going to make our lives simpler. Think of the technology we have. We have the Plug 'N Play and our Smart Phones now when you start them up are so easy to start. You buy a new one and it transfers everything over. There are a lot of things that are simple. Until things go wrong. As things that are supposed to be simple get more and more complicated, if there are problems, they aren't simple at all.

You can maybe think of other things in your life that you thought were going to be simple. Think of marriage—in marriage you just love each other and it's pretty easy, right? It's complicated. It's hard. Raising kids—no problem, simple. Anything but, right? Each child (as you have more) is different. There is nothing simple.

We see that out in our world. Things seem to get more complicated. Schooling and politics—politics keep getting more complicated. Even in world politics. We see what is happening in the world right now and the decisions of what to do and how to help. Nothing is simple. Nothing seems to be very black and white. That causes us to struggle. It might even cause us confusion and difficulty. As things become more difficult, as our lives are filled with more things and more stresses and more decisions about what to do, where to spend our time, how to focus, that causes a lot of stress and trouble and makes our lives anything but simple.

I think when we look at the Bible and look at some of the people, like the prophets of the Old Testament; sometimes they thought it was simple. We know there is Elijah. He had this great showdown with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. He thought, "Victory is won. It's simple. We defeated the prophets and now God is going to take over and the people are going to change their ways." But what happened is he found out that he was still under death threats, so he runs away and is pretty much depressed. He thought something that was going to be simple was anything but. God restored him with some food and sleep but then He let Him see His glory.

Sometimes with things in this world, when we are struggling to see what is right or where to go in this complicated world, we need just a glimpse of glory; a glimpse of glory to give us hope. I think this is what happened for the disciples as well. As they go up on the mountain and Jesus had been talking about His death and soon He was going to go down and as Elijah and Moses were talking about Him, that's what they talked about. They talked about His departure. How confusing and complicated it was for them, but they got to see this glimpse of glory, to see who God was and to help them to have this hope and to know God was with them. It's important that we know this because it's easy for us to struggle. When we have this hope, we can be very bold. That's what it says in Chapter 3:12. ***Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.*** We need to be bold and have this hope because when it's complicated, it's actually easy to lose hope, lose heart.

At the beginning of Chapter 4, Paul says this: ***Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.*** We have to be reminded of this and be shown this glory, either because of the difficulties we face, or knowing that there are going to be difficult things ahead, that it's easy to lose heart. So we get these glimpses of glory to give us hope, to help us to not lose heart.

What are the things in your life, what are the things that cause us to lose heart? I think it's easy to look at the sins that we commit, our deceitful hearts, and the brokenness of the world. I think if you're anything like me, this last week was easy to lose heart. It was easy to look and see the news and say "What is going on and how can this be happening?!" This isn't the first time something like this has happened, right? For us in recent history it is, but look at the history of the world. It's easy to lose heart because we are sinful people in a sinful, broken world. This is what we live in and we are surrounded by this. We are surrounded by deceit.

In Chapter 4, Paul talks about this. He says: ***Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.*** He is saying we don't do this. Why does he have to talk about that? Because there is all this deception out there, there are all these lies and confusion out there and it's complicated. It's anything but simple. So we lose hope. We lose heart because what do we trust?

Where do we go for the truth? What do we cling onto? It's not easy in our world. It wasn't easy then, but we can struggle because we're so confused at the complications of this world and where to go. But when Paul is talking about this, he is also speaking about some confusion that people have about God's Word.

In the end of Chapter 3 he talks about how we have that hope and we are very bold, but he says this. ***We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.*** What is he talking about here? Is he talking about anytime we read the Old Testament, especially those first five books that are confusing, we don't get it so that veil covers our face? No, he is using Moses to represent the Law, to represent that the old covenant that people clung onto to say "I'm a pretty good person. I can hold to the Law and that's good enough. I can measure myself up against the Law of what God expects and you know what? I'm not too bad." Or, "I can measure myself up against other people. That's pretty good because I can really point out the flaws that they have. I haven't done anything as horrible as them." So he is saying whenever we are basing our worth and our salvation on the Law, we are veiled. We don't see the truth of God's Word. It's leading us astray. We need to see the truth.

I think we can struggle with that, that clinging to our worth by our performance; what we do, how I rank myself against others. Maybe as a parent—maybe you are ranking your children against other children and say "My kids don't do that!" Or at work or your success or all these other things that we easily, even though we know Jesus, we still can look at our performance. We can look at our marriages and say "I don't have those struggles." But we know that we all fall short and we need Jesus. That's exactly what it's talking about. ***But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*** We need to see Jesus and the Gospel.

Before we get to that, that one lie we talked about of the Law, there also are so many other lies and deceits that the world has about the Bible. It creeps into what we hear and believe. Maybe it causes us to stray from God. The world is saying these things over and over again. "You can't trust the Bible. It was written so many years ago and they changed it and it's gone through all these changes. You can't trust it." Or just the idea of this little confusion that it talks about Moses. "Well, in the Old Testament God isn't a God of love. That's a different God." You can look in the Old Testament and you can find that God of mercy over and over again and see Jesus. That's exactly what Paul is saying. When you read it and you see Jesus, you see His mercy and His grace. We know we can trust the Bible. It's so blessed in how it has been kept for us and the Holy Spirit, the truth that is found in it. Others may say "It's too old fashioned. How can you

trust these things that were written so long ago?" But these truths remain true even though the world around us is constantly changing.

Since the world is constantly changing, what do we cling onto? We cling onto the Lord. It says: ***But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*** And at the end in Verse 2 of Chapter 4: ***On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.*** What is the truth about the Gospel? It's simple, it's true and it's glorious. We have the simple, true, and glorious Gospel that renews us and refreshes us. It's not about us. It tells us that we are sinful and we need a Savior, but that's the good news. It's simple. We're not trying to deceive you. Are we up here trying to hide anything? The Bible is an open book. You can look and find anything in there. It's so filled with God's mercy and glory.

We don't get to see Jesus on the mountain like the disciples did. But His glory is shown in other ways. We are soon entering into Lent where He marches down into Jerusalem and stretches out His arms and dies for the sins of the world; for YOUR sins and for the sins of those who don't even want anything to do with Him. His glory is seen in that—His love for you. How glorious this message is!

There are other religions out there that have this secret wisdom. You maybe have to pay a little bit more money, or you have to grow and "then we're going to tell you what it's really about." It's not that way with the Gospel. It's simple. What is great about that is anyone can share it and any child can know it.

I was having this conversation with someone new I met. He's a WELS Lutheran guy who struggled with same-sex attraction for a long time. Now he has a ministry that works with families and people who struggle with that. An ex-boyfriend of his wrote him this huge letter talking about all the problems with the Bible, pretty much all those deceits that they say about the Bible, all the lies that the Bible is. "How can you trust it?" But he was a Christian and I was trying to ask him questions, not really about same-sex attractions. I was trying to get to the Gospel and I was saying, "Who is Jesus to you? Can you explain the Gospel in a simple way?" His answer to me was kind of shocking. He said, "It's arrogant to say that you can explain the Bible in a simple way!" What? What about [John 3:16](#)? What about the truth that we are sinful? I'm a sinner. We live in a broken world. God sent Jesus to save us, to die for us, and to redeem us; to restore things and to fix things. It's pretty simple. That's a truth that you can take with you every day. It's a truth that you can share with your friends. It doesn't have to be complicated.

The truth is we do have answers. We live in a not-so simple world that is very complicated, but God has given us His Word and His truth that forgives us for all the times that we think we can do it on our own, or the times that we have been afraid to share. Jesus did it perfectly for us and suffered and died for us, to redeem us. That's a simple truth that we're not hiding from anyone. We can go BOLDLY to others knowing that many people are going to reject that simple truth, but we don't have to be afraid. The Holy Spirit is encouraging us and growing us as we gaze on the Lord, as we read that Word, it takes heart and plants in our hearts. We know that's what works in others as well. We have all that we need.

You have all that you need to share with others that simple, blessed truth. In a messy, complicated world, we have those glimpses of glory, the promises of Jesus that we have peace and forgiveness now but glory in heaven. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7](#).) Amen.