

**TITLE:** WHAT DO YOU REFLECT?

**TEXT:** 2 CORINTHIANS 3:12-18

**GOD'S WORD:** EXODUS 34:28-35

## **II - MOON LIGHT:**

One of the benefits of leaving home early or getting home late because of my work schedule is the fact I get to enjoy God's artistry. Not only have I seen some fabulous sunrises, but I have gotten to see the moon in all its glory, especially when it's been full. The light is amazing and sometimes the colors that shine from it are breathtaking.

Last year was a special year for moons. Each year we have what's called a "super moon." This year's we'll have three that will occur on June 14, July 13, and August 12. This occurs when the moon is full and is in an orbit that brings it closer to the earth than at other times and we get a close up picture. In 2021 there was such a moon on in May. You may remember it being called "The Blood Moon." All the false prophets used it as an occasion to proclaim it was a sign of the end times. It was one of the closest, largest, and most colorful moons of our lifetimes. I remember looking at it and being utterly amazed at the beauty of God's creation in this one sphere he placed in the sky to give us light at night.

You can all remember how this light has shown at various times in your life to light up the night. To allow you to walk outdoors without a flashlight. Sometimes so bright you could even read by it's light. But the reality is it's not the moon's light we are seeing. It's the sun's light. Even though you can't see the sun, the moon is high enough it does and the light you see is the light of the sun as it is reflected by the moon. The brightness is affected by various things such as what phase the moon is in or how close to us it is. One half of the moon is always exposed to the sun, but depending on the angle of the earth we see a full, half, or quarter moon. What we see can also be affected by obstacles such as when a storm is brewing and the clouds are between us and the moon.

## **II - OUR LIVES ARE A REFLECTION:**

We are like the moon. Our lives are a reflection of what falls on us. The conditions we allow ourselves to live in are what our lives reflect to others. If we live in the darkness we'll have no light to reflect back to others. Our reflection will be dark. But if we let the light fall on us, then our reflection will be bright.

It's easy to allow the darkness of this world to put a shadow on your life isn't it? You can't pick up the paper or turn on the TV without being exposed to the darkness of violence and evil. You can't drive or enter a store without being exposed to the rudeness and sarcasm of humanity. The world is full of war, murder, greed, and injustice and if we choose to dwell on it we'll be surrounded by darkness and our reflection will be unappealing. But it's also easy to combat the darkness by living in the light. If I choose to dwell on the things that are good, if I choose to live my life surrounded by the peace and joy of Jesus Christ, then the light cuts through the darkness and my reflection is bright and shiny.

That's the lesson we learn from the Scripture you heard read earlier from Exodus. Moses had been called by God to go and deliver his people from slavery in Egypt. After some arguing he went and did what God had asked him to do and he led the people out of Egypt and put them on a path to the Promised Land. O happy day, they're free, God heard their cries and answered their prayers. You'd think they would have been a wonderfully grateful people. But it wasn't so. As soon as they got out they started to surround Moses with darkness. They whined about being chased by the Egyptian army; they whined about the lack of food and water; they whined about the lack of leadership and made an idol. I'm thinking Moses was glad to climb the mountain and get away from them. When Moses came down the people saw a glow on his face. Moses had spent time with God and reflected God's light to them. Their darkness was overcome by the light of God.

### **III - TEXT:**

The Apostle Paul used this same illustration in his letter to the church at Corinth. He used the illustration of Moses as he talks to the people about how they are to reflect the light of God in their lives.

#### **2 Corinthians 3:12-18 (NLT)**

<sup>12</sup>Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. <sup>13</sup>We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away. <sup>14</sup>But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. <sup>15</sup>Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand. <sup>16</sup>But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup>For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup>So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

Paul tells them that Moses wasn't covering his face to save them from being dazzled by the glow of God. He wasn't afraid that they'd be blinded by the light. Paul says that Moses put the veil on to keep the people from seeing the fact that the glow on his face faded over time. When Moses was with God he took the veil off and allowed himself to bask in the light of God and to absorb the light. When he came down from the mountain or out of the tabernacle, his face reflected that glow to the people. But the longer he was away from God, the weaker the reflection, so he covered his face to hide the fading light. He also tells them that some of the people of the day are still hiding behind that veil. They choose to follow the law laid down by Moses instead of the grace and glory of Jesus. They hide their hearts behind the veil so that Christ's light can't shine on them. They purposely live in the dark.

But we don't have to be that way he says. We can be bold, we can have confidence. The old Covenant that Moses mediated between God and the people faded away but the new Covenant between God and us has been mediated through Jesus Christ. It will never fade. The light Jesus brought to humankind is permanent. This covenant will never be replaced or altered.

Anyone can get out from behind the veil by believing in Jesus, by believing he is the Son of God, by believing that he lived and died to take the darkness of sin away from our lives and flood us with the light of God's forgiveness and love. The veil is removed when we believe he was resurrected from the dead so that even the darkness of death has been lifted from us and that we can live in the light of God not only in this life but the next. We have been set free from the darkness. We live in that freedom through the guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

But there's more! To be liberated isn't enough. We have to be transformed too. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior we are agreeing to become mirrors. We are agreeing to reflect the light of our Savior in to the world. We are agreeing to brightly reflect the light of the Glory of the Lord to all those around us. And the more open we are to the Spirit working in our lives, to allowing ourselves to be transformed, to spending time in the light, the brighter we become and the more we reflect that glory to others.

#### **IV - WHAT DO YOU REFLECT?:**

So the question for the day is...WHAT DO YOU REFLECT? When you're outside this building, when the preacher isn't around, when you aren't *playing* Christian...what do you reflect? Are you a mirror for Jesus? When people look at you do they see the glory of God reflected, or the darkness of the world? Do they look at you and say "I want some of that" or do they look at you and say "who needs that." What are you projecting? Do you have a veil over your face so that people don't see the light fading between Sundays, or have you lifted the veil and live in and reflect the light of Jesus each and every day?

How big a moon are you? What phase are you in? Do you reflect a quarter of the light, half of the light, or are you full of the light and are a super moon for Jesus? Maybe you've allowed storm clouds to stand between you and the light. There are always storms in our lives. Financial storms, relationship storms, storms of illness or death of a loved one. Storms are constantly floating around in our lives. But we don't have to let them block the light. If we rise ourselves above the clouds and stay exposed to the light of Jesus we will continue to reflect the light to others instead of our personal darkness.

If we are to build the kingdom of God as we've been talking about, then we have to rise above the darkness and project the light no matter what's going on in and around us. We have to take the veil of humanity away and live solely in the light of Jesus. There is no storm he can't get you through, there is no crisis he can't help you survive, and there is no tragedy too big for him to overcome. Remember the lesson we learned from the Christmas story according to the Gospel of John...the light shines and it can never be extinguished by the darkness. It's when we live that kind of life we become a beacon of hope to the people around us. It's when we live out the joy of our Salvation that we become the mirror that reflects the image of Jesus to the community and beyond.

## **V - BEING MIRRORS:**

I got pretty bold last week proclaiming that the darkness could not overcome the Church of Jesus Christ. One of the keys to this proclamation is to claim and live the promise of Jesus that nothing, no darkness, can overcome the Church. I even gave you some examples of the things trying to do so.

There are a lot of churches around us that have not claimed that promise and have allowed the darkness to overcome them and they are closed. We have others on that same path. I don't ever want to think this church would follow that path. I want to believe that we have chosen to proclaim the Good News to the world through not only our words, but through our actions. That we would reflect the Light into this broken and sinful world with such duration and intensity the darkness has no choice but to recede and disappear.

We have to do this together, as the body of Christ, with each of us using our gifts to fulfill the mission. Together we can shine the light until it blinds the darkness!

AMEN