

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; February 11, 2024
Transfiguration Sunday; Singers: “youth” praise team

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 50

PASTOR: The Mighty One, God, the LORD,
speaks and summons the earth

ALL: From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets.

PASTOR: From Zion, perfect in beauty,

ALL: God shines forth.

HYMN #57 “Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”

PASTOR ONLY: *Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,*
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse
the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy
name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

PASTOR & CONGREGATION: *We confess that we are in*
bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned
against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done
and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with
our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your
will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.
Amen

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Becky Kruse

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: 2 Kings 2:1-12 *When the LORD*
was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and
Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha,

"Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As
surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So
they went down to Bethel. 3 The company of the prophets at Bethel
came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is
going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha
replied, "but do not speak of it." 4 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay
here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." And he replied,
"As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."
So they went to Jericho. 5 The company of the prophets at Jericho
went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is
going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he
replied, "but do not speak of it." 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay
here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he replied, "As
surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So
the two of them walked on. 7 Fifty men of the company of the
prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where
Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his
cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided
to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry
ground. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me,
what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit
a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. 10 "You have
asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am
taken from you, it will be yours-otherwise not." 11 As they were
walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and
horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah
went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out,
"My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And
Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and
tore them apart.

EPISTLE LESSON: Mark 9:2-10 *After six days Jesus took*
Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain,
where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.
3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the
world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah
and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Peter said to Jesus,

"Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters-one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) 7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" 8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. 9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by CAROL

SERMON: "TRANS-HUMANISM" 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6
Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

TRANS: Who ever thought that the word TRANS would become such a controversial word. Up until recently it was a boring prefix before ordinary words: transmission, transfer, transition, transcontinental railway, transatlantic treaty, etc. Now with transgender and transhumanism it has become a word tied in with very controversial ethical issues.

TODAY: Surgeons are trying to turn men into women and women into men. Scientists are trying to turn humans into a new race connected to digital technology.

GOD: God is also transforming us. He is turning us into His children of light in a dark world. The Bible says we are being transformed "from glory to glory." The song writer puts it this way, "*changed from glory, into glory, 'till in heaven we take our place.*" So today, on this TRANSFIGURATION Sunday, we look at Jesus transfigured into His divine radiance and we look at the work of the Holy Spirit TRANSFORMING us into the image of God. God is making us TRANS-HUMAN, not in the sense of part man part computer, but in the sense of God's Spirit inside of us changing us into the likeness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 3...

I. OUTWARD TRANSFORMATION BY THE LIGHT OF GOD'S GLORY

2 Corinthians 3:12-18 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. 14 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. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his

likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

EMPTY: One of the most moving songs that describes the sad faces of those who do not know Christ goes like this: *Every day they pass me by. I can see it in their eyes. Empty people filled with care, headed who knows where. On they go through private pain, living fear to fear. Laughter hides their silent cries, only Jesus hears.*”

VEIL: This passage states that our burdened faces are a result of a veil that we have that keeps us from seeing the big picture of our hope in Christ. Paul says that only Christ can take this veil away. Even reading the Word of God won't take it away if that word is not met with faith. But notice how the power of Christ to remove the veil is released, verse 16: ***“But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”***

STEP: There is a well-known song in Norwegian called “Kun et Skrit” which is in our hymnal. It talks about this step that removes the veil of darkness over our eyes: *“Just one step, just one step, you who doubtfully stand, Where you know you will not be led home. It will show you the way, It will open up years, Filled with peace as it leads you along...”*

INVITATION: Jesus invites us to take that step from the darkness of this world into the love, joy and peace of His family. ***Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”***

BELIEVERS: As believers we can return to darkness through anger, unforgiveness, pride, lust, envy and greed. We are invited to return to the light, time and again as Luther says in the catechism: *“...that all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and be put to death; and that the new*

man should daily come forth and rise, to live before God in righteousness...”

WALKING: This is also called “walking in the light.” It is the key to being a positive and dynamic witness in the world today. ***1 John 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.***

QUESTION: Dear friends, do you want to be a beacon of light in our dark world? Take that step today. Step away from sin and let the radiance of Christ reflect from every area of your life. Let people be drawn to the glory on your face. Let them ask you, “What is it about you that gives you such joy and hope and such a positive attitude in our challenging world?”

TRANSFORMED: Willful sin makes our eyes lose their light. Just step out of the darkness of sin and into the glorious light of God. It will transform your face and make you radiant. It will change your appearance so much that people may even think you are younger! We have **OUTWARD TRANSFORMATION BY THE LIGHT OF GOD’S GLORY**. Secondly,

II. INWARD TRANSFORMATION BY THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN OUR HEARTS

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light

of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

FOUNDATION: Did you notice that last statement about how this transformation begins inside of us, in our hearts, and then shines out of our lives in every possible way. *Verse 6 "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."*

PARAPHRASE: Let me paraphrase it: *"When the world was created, God said, "Let there be light." And light shined out of darkness. This same God can speak the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ into our hearts.*

PRAYER: Won't you come to the altar today or go home in the privacy of your bedroom and fall on your knees with this transformational prayer, *"God, shine your light into the darkest corners of my heart. Fill me with your divine radiance. Drive out the darkness of sin that poisons my body and soul. Only you can deal with my inner darkness. Drive out the demons and fill my heart with your Holy Spirit."*

SITUATION: Too many people are filled with the darkness of sin and demonic powers. Only the light of Christ can save our land and our world. It has to be the real deal. Religion cannot take the place of the light of Christ shining in our hearts. When we get filled with the Holy Spirit, we become powerful agents of change that can transform others, even our communities, by the power of the light of God.

HOPE: This is the TRANS generation. Rather than cursing the radical trans movement. Let's proclaim the real TRANS-HUMAN

message of the gospel. Our only hope is the Lord. He will TRANSFORM our homes and our church and our nation, one soul at a time through the light of His glory.

Here is a song that summarizes this passage. As I read it think about Jesus, Moses and Elijah, shining in blinding light on the mountain of transfiguration:

*As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness
Ever-changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story
Shine on me, Shine on me.*

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

Now may the peace of God, that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN #226 "Love Divine, All Love Excelling"

LORD'S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG (Carol's Choice)

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson