

Imagery: Blues Brothers scene when Jake and Elwood see the light at the Little Rock Baptist church.

Two brothers, struggling through life orphaned, w/ alcohol, released from jail, etc..., make their way to a little Baptist church in the inner city of Chicago. As they search for meaning and direction, in the midst of worship, Jake has an epiphany moment- a sun beam shines through the stain glass window, the harmonies of an angelic choir rise, and he begins to shake and glow. The preacher presses on with the repetitive question "Do you see the light?" The glowing brilliance catches his brother, Elwood's attention. The experience changed them both.

All of our lessons this morning, in some way, travel along a similar plot line.

In Exodus we hear of Moses' contact with God on Mt. Sinai- Moses had a troubled path- separated from his family, struggled with his identity, fled after he committed murder, full of self doubt yet he finds himself in conversation with God and he comes down the mountain his face brightly shining so much so it instills fear in the Israelites. **The experience changed him.**

Paul the author of this letter to the Corinthians, too has a troubled path in life- as Saul he successfully persecuted early Christians and traveled down that wrong path until one day he is called upon by Christ in a blinding light from heaven that leaves him blind. ***The experience changed him dramatically.***

In our Gospel today, Jesus climbs the mountain to pray with his closest friends getting away from the crowds and the everyday stresses. And in the presence of God, Jesus' face changes and his clothes become dazzling white. And the voice from the cloud spoke saying "this is my Son, my chosen, listen to him." The experience changed those disciples.

The connection- the awesome presence of God changes a person's life.

So the question I pose to you this morning is simply this: Do you see the light? Do you see the light?

Think about when, where, and how you have experienced the glorious brilliance of God- the awesome, fear and awe-filled, transforming presence of God? At a child's birth, the death of a loved one, the setting of the sun, the climbing of a mountain, the stillness of morning prayer, the realization of prayer answered, in the loving kindness of a stranger, or the unfailing support of a spouse? Maybe it was in a church like Jake and Elwood.

And once you have thought about that experience, think on this question: How did that experience change you? What did you do from that point on?

- Moses had to put a veil on but he gathered Aaron and the leaders first to share with them God's message and then on to the larger group of Israelites.
- Paul changed his life completely and set out on a ministry across the region preaching, teaching, and proclaiming God's love and Christ's sacrifice for us that puts us in a right relationship to approach God.
- In that moment, Peter may have wanted to freeze time and stay in the euphoria of that experience. While Peter, James, and John didn't fully understand their experience on the mountain, they eventually shared what they had seen and learned as they expanded their ministry to the world.
- Even Elwood and Jake, the blues brothers, went from their experience with God doing cartwheels, dancing, and declaring that "they were on a mission from God."
- All of them experienced God in a very real way, everyone was changed.

Change- a dangerous word to use in a sermon in a Lutheran church filled with people with a Scandinavian background. But the fact of the matter is that change is inevitable with God. There is no way around it- our plans, our goals, our desires, our faces, our lives- change when God enters and re-enters our lives. This was true for Moses, Paul, the fisherman Peter, James, and John, and it is true for each of us. I wanted to be a farmer- thankfully God stepped in because I still can't seem to get my carrots to grow. Change comes from what we learn and re-learn when we experience God. Just like Peter, James, and John, we are reminded that Jesus, the Son of God, was chosen for us and for our sins, destined to die on the cross, and has risen from the grave. And like the disciples, we heed the command to listen to Jesus and learn from his teachings and ministry- to love God and one another.

As we transition from the season of Epiphany to Lent, let us focus on seeing the light of God and entering into God's presence fully, allowing the experience to change us and to move us into the direction we are called to. Just like Jake and Elwood, let us go each and everyday proclaiming that we are on a mission from God. Do you see the Light? Amen.