

## **EPIPHANY: CELEBRATING GOD'S GIFT FOR ALL PEOPLE**

### **The Transfiguration of Our Lord**

**Last Sunday after the Epiphany**

**February 14, 2010**

**Exodus 34:29-35**

**Psalm 99**

**2 Corinthians 3:12—4:2**

**Luke 9:28-36 [37-43]**

### **In Your Light We See Light**

We are now completing the church season of Epiphany, which focuses on how Jesus revealed himself as the Son of God. Ushered in by Matthew's account of the Wise Men, the Epiphany season brought us to the riverbank of the Jordan to Jesus' Baptism, and to the Wedding at Cana for the first of Jesus' miracles. We now conclude the season with the account of Jesus' Transfiguration. The word transfiguration is "metamorphosis" in Greek. Luke records what this change was like—the appearance of Jesus' face was changed and his clothes became dazzling white.

Few things can compare to scaling high mountain peaks. The views from atop these mountains are breathtaking in their beauty and magnificence. Through the Transfiguration we enter onto holy ground, ascend to a summit, a place of prayer, a place of silence, a place of presence. To what place have we come? "Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up a hill to pray" (Luke 9:28b, *GNT*). For Luke, the hill becomes a metaphor for the place to encounter God, a place of vision, a place of prayer – holy ground, the place of God's presence.

Christian life is an ascent, an entry into light, an encounter with Jesus Christ. When we encounter Jesus Christ, our failings, mistakes and bad choices are revealed. But the light of Christ signals the dawn of a new beginning, another chance and a fresh start. Our life is changed and transfigured. Our life shines because Jesus shines in us and his mercy encompasses us. Christ expects us to share his light and mercy with the world. We need to be transformed like the disciples. That occurs when we see a glimpse of the real Jesus. When we grasp some of the awesomeness of Jesus, we, too, will be radically changed like the disciples who went from simple fishermen to defenders of the faith.

"Trans" is Latin for "across." Whether we transfigure, transcend or transform, we go across one boundary into another. Christians still live within the boundary of time and space but they have also transited by identification and communion with Christ into the "boundaries" of the realm of God. The presence of God is always there. The glory of God is all around us and available to us. If we look, we can see Jesus' glory; and when we see it, we'll let it impact us the way it impacted the disciples.

May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace. Amen.

This week's Reflection was prepared by Tenny Thomas, a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York City and who serves as a consultant for the American Bible Society in the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship.

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**This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Iceland** – With prayers that further publishing of the new Icelandic Bible will go well and be fruitful and that new programs will increase Bible reading and knowledge of the Scriptures; **Denmark** – With thanks to God for the successful *Good Samaritan* AIDS program in Africa, including the long-term project in Sierra Leone, and with prayers that the Bible will reach more people and new target groups with the new Danish mobile phone Bible and Christian educational material for schools, and with prayers for Bible work in **Greenland** and the **Faroe Islands**; **Norway** – With thanks to God for good progress with translating the full Bible into the two main Norwegian languages, and with prayers for work that is still underway on the Northern Sami and Southern Sami translations and that these texts will renew interest in Bible use; **Finland** – With thanks to God for the new Bible edition with the Deuterocanon, and with prayers for those who received the Sign Language translation of the *Jesus* film, for the follow-up of the program with churches to reach young adults, and with prayers for the translation projects in Northern Sami and other Finno-Ugric languages in partnership with IBT Helsinki; **Sweden** – With thanks to God for providing more opportunities for making the Word heard, and with prayers for God's blessing for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the *Bible 2000* translation with a *Year of the Bible*, and with prayers for increased interest in and knowledge of the Bible in schools, churches, and people's everyday lives.

**Activity Corner:** “Reflections of God's Glory” and “Transfiguration” Word Game  
Supplies needed: Bible; newsprint; marker; writing paper; pens or pencils; basket or bowl.

Read together 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 and discuss what it means to reflect the glory of the Lord (verse 18). What is the role of the Holy Spirit? Encourage members of your household to talk about ways they can reflect God's glory, list their thoughts on newsprint, and then compose a prayer that incorporates these thoughts. Conclude by reading together Psalm 99. After the reading, invite everyone to respond together: HOLY GOD, WE WORSHIP YOU AND REFLECT YOUR GLORY. Sing “Shine Jesus, Shine” or one of your favorite hymns.

Invite members of your household to list as many words as possible (4 letters of more and without forming plurals by adding “s”) that can be made out of the word TRANSFIGURATION. Set a time limit (15 or 20 minutes).