

March 6, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 19

Exodus 19:16-25

Mark 9:2-8



Selected Verses:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. – Psalm 19: 14

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. – Exodus 19: 16-17

Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. – Mark 9: 7-8

Devotional:

Throughout the Old Testament, the glory of the Lord is displayed as a cloud overshadowing. When God called Moses and Aaron onto Mount Sinai, the mountain was wrapped with a thick cloud as smoke and fire. The people trembled as they assembled at the foot of the mountain. They were warned not to set foot on the mountain or they would die. Ordinary people could not behold the glory of God.

In a sermon, John Piper, reminds us that defining the glory of God is near impossible. It is like defining the word *beauty*. We all know what beauty is when we see it, yet it is difficult to define. As an attempt, Piper said, “the glory of God is the infinite beauty and greatness of God’s manifold perfections.” Another image is a bright light, brighter than any other light we could experience on earth.

Whenever Moses went into the presence of God, his face reflected God’s glory. It was so bright, the people asked him to where a veil until the glory of God wore off. As Moses went onto Mount Sinai to spend time with God, the people were not allowed. God covered the mountain with smoke and fire, and a sound like trumpets declared the Lord’s presence. Moses was fully in the presence of God. Later, God had Moses oversee the building of a tabernacle, where God would dwell. When it was completed, a thick cloud covered the tabernacle declaring the glory of the Lord present in the midst of the people.

Ever since Moses, the people hoped that God would once again tabernacle with his people. The image of smoke, cloud and brightness speaks of the glory of God. The day Jesus took three disciples onto Mount Hermon to be apart to pray, the glory of God was displayed.

Jesus was “transfigured.” Mark describes Jesus as wearing clothes that were whiter than no one on earth could bleach them. Jesus was brighter than anything possible. Then, Moses and Elijah (the Law and the Prophet) were speaking with Jesus. Finally, a great cloud covered the mountain and only Jesus was present. Here, the fulfillment of the law and the prophets is found. Jesus is the tabernacle of God, the incarnation of God’s glory. The best definition of the glory of God is Jesus, the dwelling place of God with humanity.

In Exodus, the sound from the mountain to the people was like trumpets. On Mount Hermon the voice said, “This is my Son, the beloved, listen to him.” During Lent, we listen when we do not try to build a new tabernacle to keep him on a mountaintop, but follow him off the mountain to the cross in Jerusalem. We listen to Jesus telling us the Son of Man must suffer and die, and calls us to take up our cross and follow Him.

On the mountain, God displayed the mystery of Jesus’ divine glory as His Son. In the end, Moses and Elijah are no longer speaking. Jesus is alone the focus. Jesus alone is worthy of our praise and worship. Worthy of our solitude and silence. Worthy of the glory of God.

Prayer:

Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God Almighty. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. You alone are worthy of our praise and worship. In Jesus, you came to dwell among us and allow us to see your glory and beauty. Through his faithful journey to the cross, you gave us the grace to be called your children and invited into your presence. May we display your glory in our lives, shining as the face of Moses. May the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our rock and our redeemer. Hear our prayer, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.