

## **Worship at Home – 2nd March 2025 (Transfiguration)**

A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Marilyn Britt.

### **Introduction**

Good morning and welcome to Worship at Home for Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Hasn't it been cold this winter? We have been lucky enough not to see any snow and ice here in West Berkshire. Snowdrops are out – we haven't as many as usual. We have seen a muntjac in our garden eating them. He was obviously enjoying them! However, I miss them when I look out of the windows and dream of the warmer weather that spring brings. Our daffodils are slowly coming into bud. I love the cheerful yellow flowers.

### **Call to worship (Psalm 91:1-2)**

<sup>1</sup> You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, <sup>2</sup> will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.'

### **Hymn – STF 18 – Be still and know that I am God**

1 Be still and know that I am God.  
Be still and know that I am God.  
Be still and know that I am God.

2 I am the Lord who saves and heals.  
I am the Lord who saves and heals.  
I am the Lord who saves and heals.

3 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.  
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.  
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

### **Prayers of adoration and praise**

Praise you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Father God, we praise you, for sending your beloved Son.  
Jesus, we praise you, for granting us freedom and joy in everyday life.  
Holy Spirit, we praise you, for mountaintop experiences, and for helping us become more Christ-like, day-by-day.

Great and awesome God, you spoke to Moses face-to-face, radiating your glory until his face shone. Such glory! So bright!

Great and awesome God, you surrounded Jesus, Moses and Elijah on the mountain. Majestic, dazzling splendour!

Wonderful and awesome God, your cloud surrounded the disciples and your voice was heard. Glorious one! God's Son! The chosen one, the beloved!

Jesus, you are all these things and more. We adore you. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shine in and around us. **Amen**

### **A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness**

Father God, forgive us our mistakes and for all the times we fail to listen, yield and obey. We're sorry for all our bad habits.

Forgive us if we have behaved in ways that go against your Word and for seeking the opinions of others before you. We're sorry for not looking to you first.

Forgive us for the times we have asked but not liked what we heard, preferring our own way. We're sorry for not following you.

Forgive us for the times we hide behind proud and selfish masks. We're sorry for our stubbornness and neglect of others.

Forgive us for not spending more time face-to-face with you. We're sorry for getting distracted. Help us to turn back to you. **Amen**

Through Jesus' death on the cross, our sins are paid for in full. We are free from the bondage of sin. **Thank you, Father God, for your loving mercy. Amen.**

### **Bible reading – Exodus 34:29-35**

#### *The Face of Moses Shines*

<sup>29</sup> Moses came down from Mount Sinai. He had the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. His face was shining because he had spoken with the Lord. But he didn't realize it. <sup>30</sup> Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses. His face was shining. So, they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup> But Moses called out to them. So, Aaron and all the leaders of the community came to him. And Moses spoke to them. <sup>32</sup> After that, all the Israelites came near him. And he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

<sup>33</sup> Moses finished speaking to them. Then he covered his face with a veil. <sup>34</sup> But when he would go to speak with the Lord, he would remove the veil. He would keep it off until he came out. Then he would tell the people what the Lord had commanded. <sup>35</sup> They would see that his face was shining. So, Moses would cover his face with the veil again. He would keep it on until he went in again to speak with the Lord.

### **Reflecting Radiance**

The moon is dark grey in colour and, like the earth, has no light of its own. Its light comes from the sun, meaning that, at any one time, part of the moon is experiencing 'daylight' and part 'night'. In addition, when the moon is at the far side of the earth in its rotation, it is in the earth's shadow and so the sun's light is hidden from it. What we see when we look at the moon is, in fact, its reflection of the sun's light, bouncing off it as if it were shining. Similarly, in this passage, Moses' face-to-face encounters with God result in his face shining – a reflection of God's glory.

### **Bible reading – Luke 9:28-36**

#### *Jesus' Appearance Is Changed*

<sup>28</sup> About eight days after Jesus said this, he went up on a mountain to pray. He took Peter, John and James with him. <sup>29</sup> As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed. His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. <sup>30</sup> Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in shining glory. Jesus and the two of them talked together. <sup>31</sup> They talked about how he would be leaving them soon. This was going to happen in Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> Peter and his companions had been very sleepy. But then they became completely awake. They saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him. <sup>33</sup> As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter spoke up. "Master," he said to him, "it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Peter didn't really know what he was saying.

<sup>34</sup> While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them. The disciples were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> A voice came from the cloud. It said, "This is my Son, and I have chosen him.

Listen to him.”<sup>36</sup> When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept quiet about this. They didn’t tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

### **The Mountaintop experience**

Meeting God face-to-face outwardly changed both Moses and Jesus. The glow of God’s glory shining from Moses and Jesus was evidence of their meeting with God. Those who saw Moses were afraid – the glory of God was too much for them. The disciples up the mountain with Jesus had been impacted by God’s glory and wanted to preserve the experience, to stay on the mountain. The Israelites and the disciples experienced God’s glory, something they would not forget. Some people have faces that seem to radiate the presence of God. As we deepen our relationship with God, we enable the glow of God’s glory to shine from us and through us. The sight of Jesus becoming dazzling white and glowing with the glory of God was witnessed by the disciples Jesus took with him. Their experience of the glory of God made them want to stay in that place. The phrase ‘a mountaintop experience’ is quite literally describing their experience, a phrase we might use today as we experience God. The disciples were in no hurry to go back to the others, the crowds, their everyday life. What about us? Would we rather look for and stay on our ‘mountaintop’? Perhaps, like the disciples, we are encouraged to carry this experience with us as we return to everyday life, strengthened and affirmed as we meet daily joys and challenges.

The mountaintop experience of the disciples in our Gospel passage was one they wanted to prolong. The closeness of God, the amazing things they saw, the depth of spiritual awareness were all things they wanted to hold onto. They had been taken up the mountain by Jesus away from the crowds and the distractions of everyday life. Their experience must have filled them with awe and a new awareness of the power and glory of God; they wanted to stay in that place, in that moment, with that experience. No troubles, no problems, no woes. But Jesus leads them back down the mountain, back to the other disciples, back to the crowds, back to the struggles and mess of everyday life. Their secret mountaintop experience was over, but the effect of it on their lives was not. It was something to carry around and remember when things got tough, an encouragement to trust Jesus even when they didn’t know what was happening.

When we experience the closeness of God, his power, his glory, or have a heightened awareness of his presence (as Moses did too, in our reading from Exodus), we often want to stay in that place. Our faith is strengthened in these special moments, and we can be reluctant to leave. We, like the disciples, want to prolong this experience.

Seeking mountaintop experiences may become a priority in our spiritual lives. We can continually look for such experiences and be disappointed when we are unable to find them. We may feel disappointed that we cannot always experience the closeness of God and the glory of his presence. The problems and distractions of life and the people around us can weigh us down and we long to be back up the mountain, face-to-face with God. But this kind of encounter is not meant to be a permanent state of being or a place where we can stay. We are called by Christ to be his people in the world, and to walk and work in the messiness of everyday life.

Our deep spiritual experiences are given to strengthen us and prepare us to live our lives as Christ’s people. We are affirmed and aware in a deeper way of our relationship with the God who loves us. Our connection with the world in which we live means that we will have doubts and anxiety. Having spent time in God’s presence prepares us for this and encourages us to take opportunities as they are given to meet with him again and again.

## Hymn – STF 134 – Christ, whose glory fills the skies Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,  
Christ, the true, the only light,  
Sun of righteousness, arise,  
Triumph o'er the shades of night;  
Day-spring from on high, be near;  
Day-star, in my heart appear.
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn  
Unaccompanied by thee:  
Joyless is the day's return,  
Till thy mercy's beams I see,  
Till they inward light impart,  
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
- 3 Visit then this soul of mine;  
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;  
Fill me, radiance divine;  
Scatter all my unbelief;  
More and more thyself display,  
Shining to the perfect day.

### Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Gracious God, you can transform our lives and those of others in this imperfect world. We pray for open hearts and minds so that we hear your voice, open our eyes to see what is happening around us and give voice to others of your word and love bring them to faith in you.

We pray for world leaders as they talk together with the aim of transforming this world to a place of peace, hope and joy. There is so much horror and conflict, decay and despair for many whose homes and countries have been destroyed, where there is no safe place and there is great fear about what is going to happen next. Gracious God be with them and use us with your transforming power to help them, feed them, shelter them and make it a safe place to live.

We pray for those who have left their homelands and are journeying to find a safe, welcoming place to live. We pray that with open hearts and minds, we can radiate your love to those looking to live with hope, peace and love.

Gracious God, wherever we look there are signs of poverty and deprivation. People all over the world are homeless, hungry, cold and can't find the joy that they believe others have. We look to ourselves and wonder how we can help them. You can change us to help change the circumstances for others to make them be loved.

We pray for those who are sad, poorly or grieving for family or friends who have died. We pray for all medical and caring staff that they can find the energy to reach out and use their gifts to help others. With the power of the Holy Spirit, with love in our hearts show us how we can talk to those unwilling to listen, how indifferent they are to the challenges they face as we share your love with others who do not know you yet. With the power of the Holy Spirit let our hands and feet reach out as our faces shine and radiate that special love that comes from you.

We pray for ourselves, that we may know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you always. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

## Hymn – STF 59 – Lord, the light of Your love is shining Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

- 1 Lord, the light of Your love is shining,  
in the midst of the darkness, shining:  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;  
set us free by the truth You now bring us —  
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!*
- 2 Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into Your radiance;  
by the blood I may enter Your brightness:  
search me, try me, consume all my darkness —  
shine on me, shine on me.  
*Chorus*
- 3 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.  
*Chorus*

### Blessing

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you today and always. **Amen**

Bible readings from [New International Reader's Version \(NIRV\)](#)

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