

Sermon 2009 Transfiguration
February 22, 2009
Text: 2 Corinthians 3:12-13; 4:1-6
Theme: "Shining With the Light of Christ"

Dänya loves glow in the dark stuff. For years we had to have a huge glow in the dark moon on our bedroom wall until it magically disappeared during one of our moves. The kids had glow in the dark planets and stars all over their rooms. Neal even had a glow in the dark bedspread and pillow case once. Many were the nights that way past bedtime I would see the light come on for a few seconds and then off and then giggles. When I put the kibosh on the light, the flashlight got smuggled to bed. I gave up and went to bed myself and tried not to notice the giant glow in dark moon shining on the wall.

We are glow in the dark people, right? The Bible tells us that we have no light of our own. Ephes. 4:18:

"They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart." We are just like that giant, hideous moon in my bedroom. It could produce no light of its own.

Without being charged by the electric light on the ceiling, it could not glow.

But we were charged with the light of Christ. Isaiah says:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.” That light is the light of Christ that entered us at our Baptisms or when we first heard the Word. And that light continues being charged by the Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

We prayed in the Collect of the Day that God would make us co-heirs with the King in His Glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven. How does he do that? Remember that God works through people. Moses was exposed to God’s radiance and had to wear a veil so that people could bear to look at him. On the mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John were exposed to the radiant light of Christ and went forth from the mountain to become great witnesses to Christ. Paul says in the Epistle:

“For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” We are already co-heirs with Christ, and like Moses, Peter, James and John, we are now making our way through this valley of the shadow of death to our kingdom that awaits us. But, on our way, we are like those glow-in-the-dark stars and planets. We give off the light of Christ to a darkened world. Our greatest prayer is that everyone who comes near us, sees and feels the light and warmth of Christ. But two things will hamper us as we do our life work.

One is that we can become dim lifeless. When we spend too much time away from Christ, our light begins to fade, because remember, we have no ability within ourselves to generate light or heat. We only reflect that which Christ puts within us. The excuses for drifting away always seem so viable. We are really good at coming up with reasons to drift away from Christ.

Maybe we are irritated with God because our lives are not going very well so we stay away from him. That’s sort of like refusing to eat ever again because we got food poisoning when

we were too cheap to throw out that week old casserole, but nevertheless, it is often a reason people stay away from God.

Or maybe we are just too busy. We have too much to do to deal with God. That's like being stalled out on the Stevenson at 5:00 pm because you were just too busy to stop at the gas station. Many times I have heard the phrase, "Pastor, don't worry about me and God. I'm fine with God." That's Christian code for, "Don't make me think about how lame my excuses are and face the reality of why I am drifting from God."

Whatever the excuse, the reality is the same. We can only shine after we have been exposed to Christ and we are exposed to Christ when we remember our Baptisms, hear his Word and receive his body and blood in the sacrament.

The other thing that can hamper our shining for others is something that obstructs our light. One time I hung my bathrobe on a hook over the moon. It was blissful until Dänya came to bed and quickly moved my robe so that she could see her moon. Likewise, if we live our lives in a contradictory manner, it makes it hard for people to see the light. If we come to worship and

absorb Christ but treat our co-workers poorly, regardless of whether we think they deserve it, they will not see Christ beyond the treatment they receive. If we regularly receive the Lord's Supper but go out and get drunk on Friday night, we make it really hard for our friends and family to see the light because they are so distracted by the inconsistency. If we daily remember our Baptisms and read God's Word but constantly use God's Law as a bludgeon to make everyone aware of how good we are and how far they have to go, they cannot see Christ through the smog of condemnation. We regularly fill up with light but completely veil it during the week with our own self-righteousness and hedonism.

How do we fix that? That one is a bit more difficult and it is one place we actually get to do some work. We can't manufacture the light. We can only reflect the light, but we can strive in our lives to keep the obstructions out of the way and that is our constant challenge. That is really our primary ministry to blast away at the obstructions in our lives and the lives of

others thereby allowing in more light and everyone shines more brightly.

God's light shines on its own. He needs no help from us. But the devil is constantly working to keep us away from that light and trying to keep that light blocked wherever he can. Resist him. Think before you buy into those silly excuses. Work to see through those obstructions and stay focused on the light because in the end, that light is everything to us – it is what empowers us to grasp our inheritance as the princes and princesses of the kingdom of God. Never forget that. AMEN.