

## Pastor Roy's Sermon from March 3, 2019

Moses meets God and his face shines with God's glory. The brightness stunning and the people are terrified. It's hard to imagine such a thing. Or is it? I imagine we have all been with someone who seems to be particularly aware of God's presence--in the way they talk, their influence. Perhaps you feel stronger in their presence--aware of the life, love, and power of God when you are with them.

We might be intimidated, and think that our experience of God is less valuable because it's so different from theirs.

Paul reminds us that to meet God all we need is to be open to the Spirit of God. We don't have to know everything about God and the Spirit of Christ. But if we seek the glory of the Lord, we will be transformed into that Image. The Image of God. No effort required—only willingness to be pliable clay in the hand of God.

So it's not about secret knowledge or having a spiritual personality--it's simply about looking toward God. That inward glance Godward is the direct experience of God's presence. As Paul says, "It comes from the Lord, the Spirit." It's not about us. And we can't goof it up! But we do have to gaze upon God. -- to pause from our busyness, and distraction, and clear some space for God. Willingness. Then, God takes care of the rest. Grace. God forgives, God loves unconditionally, God invites us in prayer to meet face to face. --Of course, this not about whether or not God welcomes us. God's welcome is unconditional. This is why we baptize infants. God does not demand some kind of response from us to be saved—to be welcomed. This is about whether we have peace, whether we have communion with God and one another. To commune in union with God, one must commune. One must make space. This is about blessing, about enjoying and growing in the presence of God.--

So the big question is, How do you directly experience God? How do you pray? We all pray. I wish we had time to sit with this question and listen to the wonderful ways each of us converse with God. The ways we touch God. The ways God touches us. The ways we shine with the glory of God. So Like Moses, like Jesus, how do you shine in the presence of God? You do it is mainly a question of how.

A concern is that we, as did the people of Israel and Jesus' disciples, we compare ourselves to other people whom we think are more spiritual, or more prayerful than we are. When we disregard, disrespect, and fail to value our own prayer

personalities, we deny the power of God and we miss out on the opportunity to enjoy God face to face. If we pray, but we don't think of what we are doing as prayer, we miss out on the joy and gratitude of relating to God face to face, directly as children of God. It is a gift to pray as you have been created to pray.

As we transition from the season of Epiphany to the season of Lent, on this festival of the Transfiguration, may we be free of fear that we don't know how to pray, and let us instead take some time to consider how we pray, and how God is inviting us to meet, to grow in relationship, to experience the delight and wonder of the presence of God.

Thanks be to God. Amen.