

Showing your face (w/c 4 November 2018)

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" (Martin Luther King)

What does it mean to show our face? Today it's often used as a way of describing a token, even unwelcome appearance, yet in the Old Testament there are many places where God is implored not to hide his face from Israel. God showing his face to Israel was blessing; showing our face to Taunton should be blessing for them. Reflect for while on how you, as a follower of Jesus, are visible to those around you. How visible is the church in Taunton?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1–12

In verse 1, the ministry (as most versions translate it) which Paul mentions refers back to 3:9 where he writes about bringing righteousness. The Contemporary English Version (CEV) translates Paul's description of his calling in verse 1 as being that, *"God has been kind enough to trust us with this work."* To what extent is that trust passed on to us?

Paul writes – verse 11 – of Jesus' life being *"revealed in our mortal body"*? Is this meant to be something we do or more an illustration of who we are? How do the words of John 20:21 or 1 Corinthians 12:27 help you understand this idea?

"...life is at work in you." (v12) – As well as being salt and light as we considered last week, what do exhortations of the Old Testament prophets such as that in Micah 6:8; add to our understanding of what is required of a Godly life?

Read Luke 9:28–36

To be 'transfigured' is about more than just a changed appearance – in Matthew and Mark, the Greek (metamorphosis) implies an actual change of nature. How does that prefigure what happens to Christians when they enter a relationship with Jesus? Does Colossians 1:12–13 help your understanding?

How does our 'valley life' depend on 'hilltop experience'? In 2 Corinthians 3:13–18 Paul contrasts our experience with that of Moses – how does his image of our unveiled faces reflecting God's glory help your understanding of our life in Christ?

Luke uses the somewhat unusual Greek term *exodos* for departure in verse 11 – though now in terms of deliverance from bondage for the whole world as opposed to that just for Jewish people in Exodus. How does this parallel help us both understand and explain the salvation Jesus now offers to all?

How can we share these thoughts of Jesus' 'otherness' in a society that by and large does not associate Christianity with spirituality – just think of the section headings in a typical bookshop?

In Matthew's account Jesus tells the three disciples not to say anything (presumably not even to the other disciples) until *"the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."* Just before this (v21) he had warned all the disciples to say nothing about his identity. Why the need for secrecy?

"we must ...recognise that they (the churches) exist for the sake of those who are not members, as signs, instrument and foretaste of God's redeeming grace for the whole life of society." (Lesslie Newbigin)