

# Light from Light!

## The Transfiguration of Our Lord

### February 23, 2020

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#### Matthew 17:1-9

[1] Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.

[2] And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

[3] Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

[4] Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

[5] While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

[6] When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.

[7] But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

[8] And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

[9] As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

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Grace to you, and peace, from God Our Father and Our Lord and Savior Jesus The Christ!

Sven & Ole were working in a factory and were talking on their coffee break.

"I tink I'll take some time off from da vork." says Sven.

"How do you tink you'll do dat?" asks Ole.

Sven proceeds to show Ole...he climbs up to the rafters, and hangs upside down. The boss walks in, sees Sven hanging from the ceiling, and asks him what on earth he is doing? "I'm da light bulb" answers Sven.

"I think you need some time off," says the boss.

So, Sven jumps down and walks out of the factory.

Ole starts walking out too.

The boss asks Ole "where do you think you're going?"

Ole answers, "Home, I can't vork in the dark".

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When we come to church here, or to any Christian church anywhere for that matter, and with the lights on without anyone having to hang upside down from the ceiling and we say The Nicene Creed, what are we saying and confessing, and what difference does it make?

Listen!

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light ....

What is this “Light from Light ...”?

Today, on The Festival of The Transfiguration of Our Lord, we spotlight the phrase, “Light from Light.” What does it mean? What can it mean? And what difference does it make for you and me in the real, often crazy and often dark world in which we live? Like Ole, we know we can’t vork in the dark.

Matthew proclaims in today’s Gospel: [2] And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

A few weeks ago you recall that the same Gospel writer Matthew declared:

[16] the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”<sup>1</sup>

And we know that Jesus declares in The Sermon on The Mount:

[14] "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

[15] Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

[16] Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

We know we need light to see. This is true for physical existence. It is especially true for spiritual faith existence.

We believe, we proclaim, that God is Light and that Jesus is Light from Light. If you want to see God, experience God, know God, look at Jesus. If you want others to see God, experience God, know God, shine Jesus’ light on them through your words and your actions. If you want others to be in the dark, well then, just don’t let Jesus into your heart.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 4:16

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:14-16

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Now such statements are faith statements and the emphasis is always positive. Jesus is Light from Light. We do not judge other religions. We only bear witness to the Light we know. And it is more important to bear this witness in our actions than in words.

Peter, James and John saw Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration as Light from Light. And after the Resurrection, they shared the Light with others. We are to be doing exactly the same thing. Letting Jesus' love and mercy and forgiveness shine through us. So that others may see.

My wonderful daughter-in-law Alex gave me a neat Christmas present one year. It is a space-age type flash light that has no batteries. I simply wind it for a minute and somehow it stores energy and I have light to last for an hour. I used it recently when I got up while it was still dark, so as not to disturb anyone, to make coffee.

Now I suspect you are like me. You don't like to stub your toe stumbling around in the darkness. It is better to shine a light to avoid accidents. And that way no expletives need to be deleted!

We can say a lot of things about physical light and use them to speak of our faith in Jesus as Light from Light. Likewise we can say a lot about the absence of light in our lives and how that can conceal Jesus as Light from Light to those around us.

We've all heard our share of the light bulb jokes.

How many **Unitarians** does it take to change a light bulb? We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey, you have found that a light bulb works for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship to your light bulb and present it next month at our annual light bulb Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-lived, and tinted; all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence through Jesus Christ.

We know we need Light to see in the darkness, whether we're Unitarian or Lutheran.

The old Lutherans Sven, Ole, and Lars, were stumbling home late one night after the "Sons of Norway" meeting and found themselves on the dark road that led past the old graveyard. "Come have a look over here", says Lars, lighting a match. "It's Gunnar Anderson's grave, God bless his soul, he lived to da ripe old age of 87." "Dat's nothin", says Ole, lighting another match, "here's vun named Yon Yohnson. It says here dat he vas 95 ven he died." Just then, Sven yells out, "Vell here's a fella dat died ven he vas 145 years old!" "Vhat vas his name?" asks Ole. Sven lights another match to see what else is written on the stone marker, and exclaims, "Miles, from Minneapolis."

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We are here once again this morning to receive God's Light in Jesus and to charge our batteries so we can shine as Jesus' Light for others.

I wish you could be here at times when I talk with the children about things they see in this sanctuary. Such beautiful, sharp, inquisitive children. You should see their eyes as they look at all the parts of the nave and sanctuary. What is that? What is this? Why is that thing green? Look at that dove! Look at that lamb. The eyes of innocent wonder. And guess what they all wanted to know? That light there - points to the eternal light - what is it there for?

I tell the boys and girls that light stands for the presence of God and it always burns and never goes out. And because we believe Jesus is God, it also tells everyone that Jesus is The Light of The World. The children looked at it in awe and no further explanation was necessary.

Do you remember the old TV commercial Ford Motor Company ran for a long time, "Ford Has A Better Idea", with a light bulb coming on?

Transfiguration - the one in today's Gospel and the one inside a person - occurs when God with the best idea of all turns on Light from Light in Jesus. For you and me, it occurs in our hearts, and then burns in our acts of love and mercy and forgiveness toward others.

You remember that the Epiphany Season began with a light, a star that guided the wise sages to the Infant Jesus. Today the Epiphany Season ends with our Lord shining as Light from Light on the Mountain of Transfiguration with the words, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Light from Light, as Lent begins this Wednesday, plunges into the darkness of our world and shines to the very bottom of the darkest, deepest places of our human existence through Jesus' suffering, crucifixion and death.

And, then, on Easter, as on each Sunday in Lent, even as today, Christians celebrate and tell the rest of the vision. Light from Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness is not overcoming it.

Confess it! Believe it! Proclaim it! Celebrate it! In words and in actions:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light ....

The idea is for you and me is to see God turn on all the Light in Jesus - in your hearts and in your actions. It is the best idea of all!

Amen.

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