

Think about what we hide or cover up. Maybe it is something we aren't ready to share. Maybe it is something we don't like to see. Maybe it is something we are afraid of. Are there things like that in your life? That was what disciples of Jesus were dealing with. They were willing to follow but often weren't certain what they were getting into. They understood some teachings and were confused by others. Some days they clearly saw Jesus' power, and other days they were confused by the anger and plotting they encountered. There were moments in which the pathway to faith was clear and other times fear or uncertainty like a veil kept them from clearly seeing what Jesus could offer.

The world can be a dark and scary place. We often fear what we can't see more than what we know. There is much that causes us to be afraid and like a curtain that can separate us from God and each other. You know what I mean! Little children often worry at night about what's under the bed or in the closet. The comfort of a nightlight, flashlight, or the radiance of knowledge can chase shadows away. And knowing that Mom and Dad are near helps even more. Adult fears are more sophisticated and focus on money, health, or relationships. What is hidden or veiled is scary and we fear what might happen when such issues come to light?

Like animals living in the depths of the sea, our eyes can get so accustomed to the darkness that we forget the light. We forget the warmth of sunshine or the heat that can be generated by a campfire. The darkness of sin is like a veil that blocks the light, and distracts us from the glowing gifts of faith, hope, and love. Too easily the darkness of sin distracts us from the faith that God is always near. If only the veil could be lifted, the shadows chased away, or the darkness could be overcome forever, we would be better off. Deep down we know it is best to face fears rather than worry if they are stronger than we might imagine, but how can we escape the veil that gets in the way?

On a mountain, Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse of Jesus' glory. For a brief moment all shadows and veils were removed, and they encountered a light

greater than they had ever seen. Like finally seeing a glow at the end of a tunnel that offers a way out were excited by what they saw. Like a person who has been blind and suddenly is able to see light, it would take a little time to adjust and the full glory that Jesus would reveal would be more than they could handle right now. But Jesus wanted to give them a glimpse of coming attractions.

This moment was a reminder and announcement that Jesus was more than just a man, and his ministry would lead to the brightest light since creation chased away the darkness of chaos. But they would have to wait until Easter to understand how bright this light would become. And first, they would have to follow Jesus into a darker place than they had ever seen, to understand the true nature of his glory. This vision of glory reminds of our own journey away from angel choirs of Christmas into the passionate cross walk of Lent. Jesus left heavenly glory to immerse himself in the sinful, scary struggles of life. He left heaven to crawl into the darkness of our closets and the terrifying shadows of death. But then, and for that reason, He has come to lift us all up to a victory we don't deserve and can never be taken away. The veil will be lifted!

When God's Son embraced our suffering and death, his light of servant love exploded into every corner of the earth. Today we are emboldened by that same glimpse of glory so that we better understand the power and passion of Jesus' walk to Calvary and the tomb for each of us. Do you remember how the glow of Moses' encounter with God was so great he had to wear a veil? His close encounter scared the Israelites, and so he hid that light. The disciples would have a similar experience on Pentecost, as they were hiding their lights behind locked doors. But once all was ready, they would never have to hide in darkened again.

Discipleship is simply letting Jesus' light shine through me! Easter lifts the veil and what we have seen must be revealed in all we do and say. Think about our stained-glass window as an example of this light. From the outside, the glass looks dark. And at night, even from the inside the window is dark for it takes a bright light to flesh out all the color and majesty of this tremendous gift. Without the light there are subtle shades of

darkness, but when God's great light of the sun shines through the darkness, the colors and joy of the Gospel explode in a prism of glory.

In the same way, our call is to be filled with Jesus' light, so that our witness is brighter than the world's darkness, and we become like these stained-glass windows, sharing the miracle of God's love with all whom we meet. But we must leave the building, or come off the mountain, for that to happen. If we stay hidden it is as if we have covered our faith with burkas. Our call is not to wait for people to come and stare inside to see what is going on, but to remind us to remember that discipleship is about carrying our witness and sharing our love wherever we live our lives of faith. There is beauty and joy in this building on a small mountain top in Kalamazoo. But for our faith to reach its potential it must return to the streets and businesses and homes of daily life!

When a window shade is pulled up, the sunbeams stream in and the glory of the world is revealed. When brides used to wear veils there came a moment in the marriage ceremony after vows were spoken and the marriage was announced. Finally, the veil could finally be lifted! And then, for the first time, bride and groom could see the tear-filled joy and beginning of their new life. When Jesus died, the curtain that hid the holy of holies from the world was torn apart as a proclamation that Jesus' death had destroyed the barriers between heaven and earth forever.

Our call is not to gently invite people out of the darkness into the light, so much as to bring the light into the darkness. It is tempting to seek the safety of buildings and homes and family traditions we know so well, but our call is to reflect the light that has changed us! Our goal is to become night lights and flashlights and beacons of faith, hope and love that daily carry the joy of Easter into every life we touch. Today we celebrate the disciples' glimpse of what their future would be because of the Light of the World. We are not a light at the end of the tunnel, waiting for people lost in the dark to hopefully find us. Rather we are gifted to carry the glory of Christ, boldly into the tunnel and let His Light shine. Too many are shrouded by darkness. The light of God's love is the gift which alone can chase the darkness away! It is our gift to share!