

20th June 2021

Ever changing God, who breaks into our comfortable routines, greet us and disturb us with your invitation to new beginnings.

Ever changing God, who challenges all our presuppositions, meet us and confront us in the encounter with the stranger.



Ever changing God, who calls us to broaden our horizons, surprise us and stretch our imagination beyond our dreams.

Ever changing God, who invites us to a journey of discovery, transform our lives with the promise of possibilities. **Amen.**

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Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;
set us free by the truth you now bring us —
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light!*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance;
by your blood I may enter your
brightness:
search me, try me, consume all my
darkness —
shine on me, shine on me.

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory:
mirrored here, may our lives tell your
story —
shine on me, shine on me.

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[Lord, the light of Your love \(Shine, Jesus, shine\) - YouTube](#)

Loving God, we come to you with all that draws us together: our shared stories and experiences, our visions and our hopes, our common desire to follow you. Help us to meet you in one another.

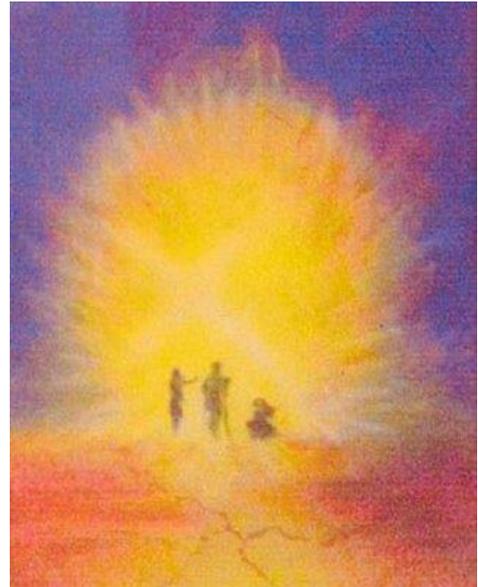
Lord God, we come to you with all that keeps us apart: our prejudices and assumptions, our fears and insecurities, our different understandings of the truth. Help us to meet you in one another. In the name of Christ our unity and our hope. **Amen.**
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Mark 8:22-10:52 focusing on **Mark 9:2-13**

Who do you look like? Probably your Mum or your Dad? I look much more like my Dad than my Mum but occasionally I see my Mum looking back at me in the mirror. It's scary!

Some of you will remember a strange phenomenon that often happened when Moses had spent time with God on the mountain top. When he came down his face was radiant and shining. If they had invented sunglasses then the Israelites would all have had to put them on so as not to be dazzled by the light that shone from his face.

Today we heard another story about how, many hundreds of years later, Jesus went up a mountain along with the three followers he was closest to and he too shone with light. Even his clothes looked like an advert for a leading soap powder! What was happening? Was it simply that on both occasions the person had come face to face with God and that the light of God was reflected in their faces so that other people could see it clearly? I don't know, but wouldn't that be a special thing to have happen?



Sometimes we describe people as being radiant. It might be a bride on her wedding day, or someone else on a really special occasion. But there are people who just seem to radiate a special light even at ordinary times, even on a dull day, and when things aren't going too well for them. Do you know some people like that? Would you like to be like that? I would.

I once had a French teacher who, the first time we met, decided I was no good at French, She terrified me and when she asked me a question every French word I ever knew flew out of my head. So, whilst she taught me, I was indeed, no good at French. She expected the worst from me and she got what she expected. She would no doubt have been astonished that I studied French for A level and then went on to study it as a subsidiary subject at university.

But there are people who bring out the best in us, aren't there? People who really appreciate, even the little achievements that we have and who always seem to love us and care for us, even when we think we've been pretty stupid or we're at our worst. There should be more of those kind of people in the world. Would you like to be one of those people who look for the best and bring out the best in people too? I would. And if we seek and expect the best, we often find it.

Peter, James and John didn't see what they expected at all. First of all they saw their beloved Jesus glowing with the light of God. And then they saw two men talking with him, whom they realised were Moses, the lawgiver and Elijah the prophet. Both of these men had been dead for many years. What was happening? It was as if time meant nothing or could be fluid, travelling both backwards and forwards.

For many years the people had been waiting for a special person to come to show them exactly what God was like. They called this person the Messiah. They read and studied their scriptures for clues about who the Messiah would be, what he would be like, when he would come, what he would do. Our Bible contains some of the books

that were their scriptures. They called them the Law and the Prophets. And they believed that the Messiah would be someone who not only knew and understood the law, like Moses did, but someone who was able to obey it perfectly and completely. They also believed that this Messiah would fulfil all the prophecies that had been made about this special person.

And here in a very special way God was showing Jesus' three closest friends that he, Jesus was this very special person. So, they were able to see that he could talk on equal terms with Moses, the lawgiver, and with Elijah, the prophet. The disciples thought that was pretty good and offered to build each one a tent. In a way that was a nice thing to offer to do, but their offer wasn't accepted. So why was that? I think it was because in a way it implied that they wanted to put these three people in boxes. They knew exactly what they thought each one represented and what they could expect from them. If they were to build each one a box, they could just go inside and it would all be very cosy and neat and tidy.

Sometimes even ordinary people take us by surprise. We shouldn't think that we can categorise them or we've got them all sussed. And Peter and James and John weren't allowed to confine Jesus, Moses and Elijah into three boxes. Indeed, by then it is as if Moses and Elijah have disappeared. Instead, they heard the voice of God telling them that Jesus was God's Son, God's chosen one. Jesus stands in the tradition of Moses and Elijah, but is superior to both of them. And God said that they should not just assume that they knew all about Jesus the Messiah, but that they should really listen to him and that then they might learn something, not just about Jesus, but about God. We can't contain God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit in a box. We may not even find them in a building, even a special building like a temple, cathedral or church. God is all around us and within us and will work freely with or without our co-operation.

But if we ourselves are willing to co-operate with God, what potential we have. The Bible says that we are made in God's image. That means that although we may look like our Mum or our Dad, we are also intended to be like God. We can be people who reflect God's likeness, people who are radiant with the love of God. And the way we do that is simply by choosing to do it. By deciding that we want to love and follow Jesus and by doing everything in our power to be like him in all that we do and are.

Firstly: Will you look for God's image in the people around you, not assuming that you know or understand everything about them, but expecting the unexpected and also expecting the best?

Secondly: Will you allow Jesus Christ to be reflected in you?



These are the days of Elijah,
Declaring the word of the Lord:
And these are the days of Your servant
Moses,
Righteousness being restored.
And though these are days of great trial,
Of famine and darkness and sword,
Still, we are a voice in the desert crying
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'

*Behold He comes riding on the clouds,
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee,
Out of Zion's hill salvation comes.*

These are the days of Ezekiel,
The dry bones becoming as flesh;
And these are the days of Your servant
David,
Rebuilding the temple of praise.
These are the days of the harvest,
The fields are as white in the world,
And we are the labourers in the
vineyard,
Declaring the word of the Lord.

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[Robin Mark - Days of Elijah \(Official Lyric Video\)
- YouTube](#)

Where relationships are damaged and trust is betrayed,
be there in the broken places to mend our shattered lives.

Where violence and war are presented as the only
solution, be there in the clamour to speak words of peace.

Where propaganda and fact are inextricably tangled, be
there in the confusion to weave a web of truth.

Where pain and death seem to have the last word, be
there in the despair to bring the promise of healing and
hope. **Amen**

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When we struggle with our inmost thoughts, seeking to discern meaning in your hidden
messages, praying and reflecting to reach your truth: **Lord, meet us and call us
'Beloved'**.

When we see ourselves through others' eyes, trapped in responsibilities and roles,
feeling the weight of expectation and demands: **Lord, meet us and call us 'Beloved'**.

When we walk city streets with open eyes or gaze at distant views from high above,
looking for your presence in places and people around: **Lord, meet us and call us
'Beloved'**.

When we share together in food, drink and talk, struggling to voice our hopes fears
and dreams, sparking off ideas in word and song and image: **Lord, meet us and call
us 'Beloved'**.

As we walk to the inmost centre, following the twists and turns of our path, then turn
out to face the world again: **Lord, meet us and call us 'Beloved'. Amen.**

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