



Call to worship: (Light a candle if you are able)

The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus, who is the image of God. We see the light of the gospel, in the glory of Christ. God shines into our hearts, as a light shines in darkness. We proclaim Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as slaves for Jesus' sake. Come let us worship our God.

Hymn: STF 175 Light of the world you stepped down into darkness Watch on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xpgjnxY2RU>

Light of the world,
You stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see
beauty that made this heart adore You,
hope of a life spent with You.
*So here I am to worship,
here I am to bow down,
here I am to say that You're my God;
and You're altogether lovely,
altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.*

King of all days,
oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly You came
to the earth You created,
all for love's sake became poor.

Refrain

And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross.

(Repeat)

Refrain

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Prayers of Praise: Glorious beyond our sense of majesty, we come in awe, in wonder, in reverence and humility; holy beyond our sense of purity, we come with praise, with thanksgiving, joy and celebration; merciful beyond our sense of compassion, we come to share fellowship, to say sorry to you and to one another. You are God and we praise you. You reign supreme beyond time and space, in beauty and splendour and light. We adore, our God; we praise your great name and we come, gathered together to worship and adore You. We come gladly, obediently, hungrily and confidently. We come seeking your guidance, your strength and your mercy. Loving God, receive our worship, receive our praise, receive ourselves, and help us receive all you would give us, through Jesus Christ our everlasting Lord.

Amen

Prayer of Confession: Almighty God, as we remember your faithfulness so we are made more aware of our own faithlessness. We are sorry, forgive us merciful Father. We are sorry that we do not see beyond ourselves, that we live in darkness and hide away from your light. We are sorry that we fail to learn from past mistakes, that we keep on doing the wrong things. Forgive us merciful Father. We are sorry that we have ignored opportunities, or that we have preferred to go our own way. Forgive us merciful Father. We come to say sorry in the confidence that you are a gracious and loving God, full of mercy and compassion, Assure us, now, of your continued love and forgiveness, and help us live lives fit to serve you. Through your Son Jesus Christ, **Amen**

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: STF 15 The splendour of the king, clothed in majesty. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmG9nJil9XI>

The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty;
let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice.
He wraps himself in light, and darkness tries to hide,
and trembles at his voice, and trembles at his voice.

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

And age to age he stands, and time is in his hands;
beginning and the end, beginning and the end.
The Godhead, Three in One, Father, Spirit, Son,
the Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb.

Chorus

Name above all names, worthy of all praise;
my heart will sing: how great is our God.
(Repeat)

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Reading: Mark 9: 2-9

Message. "Dazzling and confusing?"

What are your mountaintop experiences?

Something that makes you go WOW! Or perhaps to just stand in amazement.

You may not have ever been to the top of a mountain, but I'm sure there have been times in your life when you wanted to exclaim, wow!

The miracle of new life when a baby is born, gazing at the night sky, or hearing a virtuoso musical performance.

Our bible reading today was a WOW moment.

Jesus had taken 3 of his disciples, Peter, James and John and they had climbed up a high mountain together, and then suddenly quite unexpectedly Jesus was dazzlingly white. WOW!

But this was more than a WOW moment. We are told that Jesus' clothes were "dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them." This reminds me of an advert for a well-known brand of washing powder back in the 1980's "New Daz, even tougher on dirt for even whiter whites!"

Jesus, was even whiter than Daz, even stronger on dirt than the strongest washing powder! Jesus, was whiter, purer, cleaner than anyone could ever imagine. This was so much more than a WOW moment.

The three, chosen by Jesus, were able momentarily to glimpse the glory of God. Bishop Tom Wright speaks of the "veil of ordinariness momentarily, and unexpectedly, drawn back."

At the moment of reaching the mountain top and taking a look at the vista, there is that sudden WOW moment. At the moment a baby takes its first breath, there is a WOW moment. On ending a virtuoso performance, the audience leaps to its feet in rapturous applause.

I wonder how many of you here have experienced that WOW moment in faith? Quite possibly none of us. There are of course those who can pinpoint the very moment they met with Jesus, and would quite rightly claim that as their WOW moment. However, there are probably quite a lot of us who cannot remember one specific moment, let alone claim to have glimpsed even fleetingly the glory of God dazzling whiter than white.

Notice it was only Peter, James and John who went with Jesus up the mountain. They were the only ones privileged enough to be witnesses to this miraculous event, and then Jesus tells them not to tell anyone about it, until he has died and been raised from the dead. So not only were they seeing something "out of this world", they were also being told about Jesus coming back to life.

I wonder how they might have felt at this point?

If we think about what has gone before – Jesus has already said to them that he must die and then rise again after 3 days, something Peter found hard to comprehend.

I think they came to this mountain feeling confused and distraught, and then this revelation of God's glory was a confirmation and assurance of all that Jesus had told them. Their lives would never be the same after this event. They were changed forever. When we think about other WOW moments in history, other mountain top experiences, lives were

changed forever. When Alexander Fleming discovered Penicillin in a mouldy petri dish, he recognised this as a WOW moment, and the lives of millions were changed forever.

When, on December 24th 1968, the astronauts of Apollo 8 looked back at the earth and felt moved to record themselves reading the story of Creation from Genesis 1, that was their WOW moment, and I'm sure they and millions of others lives were changed forever as we saw a glimpse of the vastness of Creation.

Alexander Fleming was one man, those astronauts were just 3 men, yet millions if not billions of people were affected by these events.

Alexander Fleming, didn't expect to discover penicillin. It was supposedly an accident, having returned from holiday, he noticed that the areas of mould on a petri dish were preventing the growth of staphylococcus bacteria that had accidentally been spread on the dish.

So, our WOW moments might come at unexpected times in unexpected places.

However, they may not last very long.

When you gaze at a beautiful sunset it is soon gone. It is at the moment of reaching the summit of a mountain that the surprise and wonder is at its climax, you may continue to wonder and gasp in awe as the vista unfolds, but it is that very first moment that the feeling of wonder is at its best.

We cannot hold onto it. Not even the most skilful photographer can capture that wonder of the sunset or the mountain top that is experienced live. However, they can help those of us not able to climb to the top of that mountain to have some appreciation of the beauty that surrounds us. In Corinthians, Paul talks about the gospel being veiled to unbelievers.

As any of you who are keen hillwalkers will know, not every mountain top experience is a clear view. Many times, I have climbed to the top of a mountain, and the route up has been veiled in mist and cloud, and often wind and rain. When at the top, it is often cold, wet and windy and not a time to be hanging around waiting for the view. Inevitably as I've made my way down the hillside the cloud lifts and I can see the top of the mountain, and the veil of cloud is lifted.

Sometimes our faith is veiled in cloud, we walk around in a fog, blinded by the distractions of this world – power, money, status, self. We may wish we could always have a clear view from the top of a mountain, but sadly that cannot be guaranteed. However, when we are privileged to have a clear view, however briefly, we can be forever changed, and we have the opportunity to change the lives of others, without even perhaps knowing it.

Questions to consider

When have you experienced mountain top experiences in your life? How did it make you feel? Whatever they are, then these experiences may be a time when God has momentarily shown you, His glory.

How has your life changed as a result? Remember not only Alexander Fleming's life was changed, but also billions of others. Does your experience help you in your journey of faith, and in your sharing of the gospel with others?

Video: "Facedown" Matt Redman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FTYmgnRyDA>

Hymn: STF 346 Christ is the world's light <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tkmod9AW99s>

Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other;
born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high.

Christ is the world's life, Christ and none other;
sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother;
he, who redeems us, reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high.

Christ is the world's peace, Christ and none other;
no one can serve him and despise another;
who else unites us, one in God the Father?
Glory to God on high.

Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son and Father;
give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
Glory to God on high.

Intercessions:

(2 Corinthians 4:6) *For God, who said, "let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."*

RESPONSE: Heavenly Father, glorious Son – **shine your light in our hearts**

The heavens and earth witness the transforming power of God. We bring into God's presence those places and situations that we long to see changed, transformed for the glory of God.

We pray for areas of the world torn apart by war, families displaced through desperation, refugees searching for safety, or peoples dying for food or medical care.

Lord help us shine a light on those areas for all the world to see, so that help can reach those in need, food can be given to those who are hungry and healing can begin for those who are injured.

Heavenly Father, glorious Son – **shine your light in our hearts**

We pray for our nation, for those in government nationally or locally, for those who lead our major organisations. May they lead with hearts of compassion, may they know your wisdom, and may they strive towards peace and justice for all.

Heavenly Father, glorious Son – **shine your light in our hearts**

We pray for our local area, for all that goes on in our church reaching out to the local community. We pray for those who are lonely, those who are yet to learn of your great love, those who we meet in our everyday encounters. May we be channels of your love and your peace.

Heavenly Father, glorious Son – **shine your light in our hearts**

We pray for any who are known to us who are need particular need of your love, those who are ill, or in pain; those who are waiting for test results, having to live with uncertainty. We pray for those who care, in hospitals, in homes, in schools, and in families. We spend a moment bringing those who we love and those who are in need before you now..... bring healing to the sick, comfort to the bereaved, peace to the anxious and love to the lonely.

Heavenly Father, glorious Son – **shine your light in our hearts**

We pray for ourselves, that we can be a light in the darkness, that we can live out our faith in service to you.

For God, who said, "let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." AMEN

Hymn: STF 94 To God be the glory Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-15v9iworAU>

To God be the glory, great things he has done!

So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,

Who yielded his life in atonement for sin,

Who opened the life-gate that all may go in:

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;

And give him the glory-great things he has done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,

To every believer the promise of God!

And every offender who truly believes,

That moment from Jesus a pardon receives:

Chorus

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,

And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;

But purer, and higher, and greater will be

Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:

Chorus

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915) Used By Permission. CCL Licence No. 1085607

Blessing: Lord of light, we go out in your name to bring your glory into our world. May we shine with the joy, peace and hope of your Holy Spirit, so that people see in us the face and glory of Jesus Christ. Amen