**Reflections for 2-8 March 2025**

**Bible study on Exodus 34:29-35**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Ever-present God,
you call us together in this place.
Let the light of your presence
shine on us, inspire us,
challenge us and encourage us
as we encounter you.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

**The Radiant Face of Moses**

**29**When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. **30**When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. **31**But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. **32**Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

**33**When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. **34**But whenever he entered the Lord’s presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, **35**they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

After the story of Joseph (part of which we read last week – Genesis 45:3-11,15), Joseph’s father Jacob (also known as Israel) and brothers settled in Egypt. Over generations, the Israelite tribe grew and, as foreigners in the land, they were seen as a threat by the Egyptians. The Israelites were oppressed and forced to work under increasingly harsh conditions. In response to their cry for help, God tasked Moses with leading the Israelites out of Egypt. After a series of plagues, culminating in the first Passover, and the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, they were free and began a 40-year period of living a nomadic lifestyle in the wilderness, being fed by God with manna from heaven. As they learn to rely on God, God provides instructions for living his way. It is after one of Moses’ encounters with God, collecting these instructions, that we find today’s passage, describing the visible effect on Moses of that encounter.

Encountering God changes people and is not to be taken lightly. When the Israelites first reached Mount Sinai, the entire people had been required to consecrate themselves – to wash their clothes and set themselves apart – ready to witness God speaking to Moses from the mountain (Exodus 19). When Moses went into the ‘tent of meeting’ outside the camp to encounter God, the pillar of cloud by which God had led them through the wilderness would appear outside it and the people would bow down (Exodus 33). Following this encounter, subsequent meetings always resulted in Moses’ face shining as he reflected the glory of God (v.35).

 **Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Meeting God face-to-face outwardly changed both Moses and Jesus. The glow of God’s glory shining from Moses and Jesus was evidence of their meeting with God. Those who saw Moses were afraid – the glory of God was too much for them. The disciples up the mountain with Jesus had been impacted by God’s glory and wanted to preserve the experience, to stay on the mountain. The Israelites and the disciples experienced God’s glory, something they would not forget. Some people have faces that seem to radiate the presence of God. As we deepen our relationship with God, we enable the glow of God’s glory to shine from us and through us.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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* Do you know anyone who ‘glows’ with the love of God?
* Is it obvious to others that we have met with God through prayer/worship? Do we glow?
* In what ways will you seek to encounter God’s presence in the coming week(s)?

 **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Go with us, Lord, and be the light that shines through us.
As we take your light into the world,
help us to reflect your love in all we do.
**Amen.**