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United Methodist Pastor, David Kalas, comments on this poem saying:

"The simple observation of this poem is that this young girl sits down at the table to eat her meals; and whatever it is that she eats—becomes part of her; and so, in a sense, it becomes her...In point of fact,... Miss T. does not merely absorb what she eats into an unchanging self; she is affected by what she eats."

"What is true of our bodies is true of our minds, hearts, and souls, as

well. What we consume, what we take in, what we feed on does not merely submit to becoming part of us. It influences and changes us. And over the long haul, we become what we eat.

“If one person is routinely exposed to language that is crude, while another person is exposed to more refined and articulate ways of expressing oneself, the effects on each will be quite predictable. So, too, we see in our children and teenagers the fruits of a popular culture that is relativistic in its philosophy, superficial in its emphasis, dismissive of authority, and generally oversexed. We become the inevitable products of what we are exposed to and immersed in... We may become trite, crass, conscientious, or erudite through our exposures. We are what we eat.”

“In our Old Testament passage, meanwhile, we are given a positive, alternative picture. It is the marvelous picture of Moses aglow. Here is a man who had been so exposed to God that he himself became radiant. As routinely as the rest of us show by the tan (or the burn) of our skin that we have been out in the sun, so Moses’ skin showed that he had been in the presence of God. It is a remarkable story and a beautiful prospect. And Moses has blazed for us the best trail of all: that we should be so thoroughly exposed to the presence of God that we ourselves would reflect his glory” and become transfigured into what God wants us to be. “Emphasis,” Feb. 18, 2007

Let’s consider how God worked with Moses to transfigure and transform him into what God wanted him to be. Moses’ first meeting with God was a startling event at the burning bush where God told him to go back to Egypt to lead the Hebrews out of their slavery in that land. At this point Moses was a fearful and withdrawn man shepherding sheep in a remote desert. He stuttered and mumbled when he spoke. After all the many experiences

Moses had with God, he was transfigured and transformed into an outspoken man of God and leader of thousands. He had great courage and clearer speech. Moses became the man who united the Hebrew tribes into a nation called Israel. Moses became God's spokes person who passed on to the Hebrews and even to you and me the laws, commandments and ordinances that reveal the will of God on how we are to worship and follow him; how we are to treat others, ourselves and the natural world in which we live. All this experience in the presence of God transfigured and transformed Moses in spirit and mind as well as his body.

I have seen the Moses-like glow on peoples' faces when they have fallen in love, and when they have experienced something that has transformed their lives in other positive ways. It is grand to see this glow when people talk of how God has done wonders in their lives. Yet, as with Moses, a transfiguration is more than just the glow on our faces. It is spending lots of time with God who transforms our spirits, minds, and hearts; the words we say; the thoughts we think; the way we treat others; and yes, maybe even our outward physical appearance. How can we in our busy lives find more time to spend with God and become what God wants us to be? There are unlimited options before us on how to do this.

One option comes from Moses' experience with God that has been an enormous help to me. It is getting into the materials God gave Moses and many other writers. One can simply read through the Bible a chapter a day. There are 1189 chapters. So, in only 1189 days or three and a quarter years, you will have read the whole Bible. You will have gained some of the knowledge God shared with Moses and others that transfigured and transformed them. Add to this option, praying that God helps you

understand what you read.

A more intensive option is something I have shared with you before. Outline the chapters of the Bible as you read, and again, pray for understanding of them. As Presbyterians, we believe the Holy Spirit is our best guide as we study the Bible so praying is vital. You might want to buy a note book and jot down a simple outline of the highlights of what have you read. You may wish to write insights or questions beside the outline. Having done all this in seminary, I must warn you that this could lead to some new adventures in your life. You may want to read Bible commentaries, sermons and Bible dictionaries to find answers to your questions. Some questions may not have answers. Outlining the Bible could also cause you to want to; attend Bible studies, worship services, pester your pastor with questions as I did mine, work with the youth, teach Sunday school, become an elder or deacon, lead Bible studies, go on to seminary to become a pastor, change how you see the world politically, help the poor, improve your behavior toward your parents, siblings, children, spouse, workmates or even cause you to love your enemies as well as your friends.

This Bible, these writings handed down by God to Moses and others, really do need a warning label of some kind. Maybe it could read like this. "Warning: In this book are words from God that most likely will radically transfigure you and transform your life." After outlining the Bible, you can write your own warning. Powerful, wonderful and dangerous are these words from God. No wonder the Bible written in the common language of the people has been outlawed by some churches and governments over the centuries. No wonder Martin Luther's lifting up the Bible in 1517 caused a major reformation to occur.

I must share another warning with you. Knowledge of the Bible in itself may not be enough for a transfiguration that transforms us to living by God's will to occur. If we read carefully about the temptation of Jesus in Matthew, we know that even the devil can quote scripture for his own purposes. Any change in us does not come by knowledge alone. If this were so, education itself would be our salvation. Knowledge is a major player in our transfigurations and transformations, but not the savior. But someone is.

This leads us to the mystical and mysterious transfiguration of Jesus from Luke. In this transfiguration, we meet the one who is the savior. In that scene on the mountain God had two messages for the three disciples who witnessed it and for us today. The first message was that as great as Moses was as the law giver and Elijah was as a prophet, Jesus was and is even greater. He was the one who fulfilled all that God told us in the law and the prophets. The second message comes in God's proclamation on that misty mountain, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" It was revealed at that time to the three disciples that Jesus was the expected messiah; God present with us in the flesh as well as the spirit. He is the one we are to follow. He is the one who came to save us from our sins, and transfigure and transform our lives. God was declaring in the transfiguration that his Son is the one we must confess as Lord and Savior.

This transfiguration scene "is like a composite of the whole Gospel tradition. In one scene we hear echoes of the baptism of Jesus, Jesus' passion predictions, Jesus' fulfillment of the Law and prophets, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his ascension and future coming. The voice from the cloud, moreover, serves only to underscore the importance of what was happening throughout the ministry of Jesus: The divine voice affirms

Jesus' identity as God's Son and instructs the disciples to heed Jesus' teachings. If God were to say nine words to us, what would they be? 'This is my Son, the Chosen One; hear Him!' From his baptism to his death, Jesus' experience summed up the whole of his life, and allowed him and us to see his path clearly." A path to God we are to follow. Reading the Bible and praying for insights from God will also help us discover more about who this Jesus, the Son of God is so that we might confess him as Lord and Savior and listen to his words. [TNIBC](#), Vol. IX, page 207

Yet, even knowledge of Jesus Christ and mouthing the words of confession may not be enough to transfigure and transform us according to God's will. Sometimes there is a spiritual veil that people keep over their hearts and minds so that even knowing the scriptures and mouthing that they believe in Jesus does not change them. This is a problem Paul was speaking to in the early church in Corinth. It can be a problem in the church today. People may want the knowledge of the Bible and Jesus, and may want to be considered part of the assembly called the church, but they do not want God in Jesus Christ changing them one bit. Their lives, words and actions often reflect this lack of a true relationship to Jesus Christ. They do not want God in Jesus Christ entering into the core of their lives to truly save them and lead them to live according to God's will. They place a veil over their hearts and minds to try to close out God's power over them. They fear God and the change he will make in their lives. There is no salvation, transfiguration or transformation under such a veil.

So Paul told that church in Corinth and us today as well, there is one more step on the transfiguration/transformation process that must happen to us. When we gain the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, and confess him

as Lord and Savior, we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit of God and allow it to lift the veil of fear and self-control we so tightly hold over us. We must pray to God for his Spirit to dwell in us. Once the flimsy barrier we put up is taken off by the Holy Spirit—then the Holy Spirit, the will of God, the knowledge and salvation of God in Jesus Christ can live in the core of whom we are. Then we are free as Paul wrote to truly experience the grace of God flowing through our lives. The Holy Spirit frees us to be God's grace to others; to be kind, compassionate, humble, loving, forgiving, generous and pleasant to be around. This relationship to God in Jesus Christ made possible by the Holy Spirit is what saves and frees us.

In this freedom with God, our words and actions can begin to glow with the presence of God. God becomes a part of us and is then reflected outward to others in our lives. This transfiguring and transforming process takes our whole lifetime to even come close to maturing. We will never be perfect, that is why we are saved by grace alone in Jesus Christ, not our works. Even with all we know about God and his Spirit living in us, we will make mistakes, but in the grace filled process there is forgiveness and new beginnings.

So what will the diet or menu of life that affects us and determines who we are be? Will it be the transfiguring and transforming presence and knowledge of God; the saving relationship to God in Jesus Christ, and the veil lifting power of the Holy Spirit? I hope so. I also hope that others who become aware of our spiritual diet will listen to our words, see how we behave, and call out to the God who serves us, saying. "Lord, Lord, I'll have whatever they are having."

Please turn in your Bibles to the Old Testament Lesson from Exodus 34: 29-35. In this passage, Moses descends from Mt Sinai. His face glows because he has been transfigured by all the time he has spent in the presence of God.

29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. 32 Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; 34 but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35 the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him. The Word of the Lord.

Please turn in your Bibles to the Epistle lesson from 2 Corinthians 3: 12-4:2. In this passage Paul speaks about people who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ. It is as if they keep a veil over their faces. He then speaks of the benefits of allowing the Holy Spirit to remove the veil so that our lives are transformed.

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, 13 not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. 14 But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. 15 Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; 16 but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

4: 1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. The Word of the Lord.

Please turn in your Bibles to the Gospel lesson in Luke 9:28-36. This is Luke's version of the transfiguration of Jesus. This event occurred shortly after Jesus told his disciples that he was going to be arrested, and crucified.

28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. 30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. The Word of the Lord.

First Presbyterian Church
Cheyenne, Wyoming
February 14, 2010
Rev. Bob Garrard

Worship Theme: Changed by the Presence of God,
Exodus 34: 29-35, 2 Corinthians 3: 12-4:2, Luke 9:28-36

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