**Hidden Glory**

Based on [Matthew 17:1-9](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt17.1-9)

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The Transfiguration of Our Lord

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Mankind is full of impatient sinners. This is most evident today in how almost everyone views the role of Government. It is taken for granted by almost everyone today that if the government can do something to address a problem, it must do something. **If there is a problem with man made environmental pollution, the government must pass legislation.** If there are poor people in our streets, the government must tax the “haves” to give to the “have-nots.” If there are underrepresented women in certain areas of the workforce, the government must provide incentives and disincentives for businesses to alter their hiring practices. Perhaps everyone sees these as problems. What people don’t even consider is that there might be some problems that the government shouldn’t address.

It is a powerful rhetoric that makes people assume that if someone has the means to solve a problem, they must. All political views aside, when it comes to the true religion, this is a sinful premise, and it is the idea behind much atheistic thinking. The fool says, “**If God is all powerful and he’s loving and good, why doesn’t he do something about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”** Of course, Jesus solved all problems with the cross, and all will be set straight on the last day, but that’s not what they mean. They mean that if God has the power to solve a problem now, he must solve it now. Since He lets children die of starvation, and lets corruption succeed, and lets Job suffer, and allows businesses to pollute with carbon emissions…he must not really care. God has the power to stop any problem in your life or in the world at any moment, but he doesn’t.

If that scandalizes you, then you need to seriously reevaluate your understanding of the Christian religion. If allowing or embracing suffering is evil, then you do not know Christ and you must learn him aright. Impatience with suffering, evil, inefficiency, it is what turns the state over to Hitler to make the trains run on time and get the economy back on track…and also to exterminate the less desirables. It is the idea of expediency; we must do *all we can* with the *means available to us* to address *whatever problem* we are worried about at the moment.

Several arguments against this false doctrine of expediency:

First, **it exposes a faithless heart.** Do you believe that God is watching over and ordering all things? Then why do you fear anything? Dedicate yourself to honesty, integrity, self-control, kindness, and mercy. These things don’t efficiently address the problems around you, but they are good attitudes and come from a right spirit. Your job is not to fix problems but to be good.

On the contrary, it is the faithless who justify their lying, cheating, stealing, murder, slander and all other false ways because it is expedient, because the problem is so great that we must break God’s commandments to address it do not believe in God or trust him. Their heart is as far from their Lord as heaven is from earth. They not only ignore God by breaking his rules, they would ascend to his throne in order to solve problems that he has decided should persist for a while longer.

Second argument against expediency…**Jesus forbade it**. When the mob came to arrest Jesus, Peter saw the expedient solution, to fight them. And so he did and cut off the soldiers’ ear. Resorting to violence is the ultimate expression of expediency. But, Jesus heals the soldiers ear and says to Peter, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

When faced with a problem, and injustice, Peter says “we must do all we can to stop it, before it’s too late.” Jesus says, “Don’t you think that I could stop it, or that my Father could stop it? Do you, Peter, think we need you to save us? No, Peter, it is I who have come to save you. And in taking matters into your own hands, you have blasphemed against the scriptures that have already spoken about these things and how they will come about.”

The third argument is the backdrop of Transfiguration Sunday…Jesus came in humility, and he is our example.

Transfiguration is about the humiliation of Jesus Christ. If someone is humiliated, we think that they are embarrassed or feel shame. But with reference to Jesus humiliation it means that as a man ***He did not always or fully use his divine powers***. Jesus’ humiliation is his self restraint, and this self-restraint of Jesus is a remarkable feature of the true religion.

Satan tempted Jesus in the desert, If you are the son of God, use your power to make bread from stones, to flirt with death, to rule the world without a cross. He went to the cross anyway, and when there he was taunted “If you are the son of God, use your power to come down from the cross”. He didn’t. By all accounts he looked like a helpless victim. But really he showed the humility and restraint by which he would pay for our sins…and the humility and restraint he calls us to live by.

This would be too much for us to bear, except he did show his glory on earth. He took three of his disciples up on a mountain with him and there, let loose the glory he was concealing, and they have bore witness so that we can believe their testimony by faith. On the contrary, Imagine that on Palm Sunday, Jesus had pranced into Jerusalem? Do you think he would have ended up on the cross that Friday? No, the most expedient way for him to become King of the Jews was to come in glory. Instead, he did a very inexpedient thing. He hid his glory, and restrained his power, so that haters would feel free to hate, and those who love him would love not just his glory, but his servant heart.

We too will be transfigured on the last day, when the final trumpet sounds in the twinkling of an eye we shall be changed. This mortal body will put on immortality and we shall be seen as we truly are. **Until then we are Christ’s body and example on earth. He did not show his glory to his enemies, but instead spoke the truth in love.** So to, when we hold our tongue and do not insult, when we offer the other cheek to the one who strikes us; when we go two miles with he who demands one, when we feed and water our enemies in their hunger we show not the power of Christ, but his heart. It is a **heart that desires mercy, not sacrifice; repentance not condemnation; healing not destruction.** Those who hurt you may deserve these and more, but vengeance is the lords he will repay. It is for you, in your humility to repay evil with good, and conceal the power and glory that is yours through Christ Jesus who has conquered the death, and rules all things from on high.

To him be the glory forever and ever amen.