

Sometimes, you just need some encouragement. Sometimes, you just need some comfort. You need to *sense* it. In fact, you need to *see* it. For example, say you come home late at night to dark house and there is no one home, or at least there isn't supposed to be anyone in your home (!). Just turning on a light and *seeing* that you are safe brings with it a great sense of comfort. Or, say you find yourself walking down a dark street in an unfamiliar town and there are some shady characters standing off to the side, watching you. It's encouraging to see that a police car has begun patrolling the area. For comfort, for encouragement, we like to *see* things.

And that's why sometimes, it's hard to be a Christian. God wants you to be confident in your faith in Him, but He doesn't let you *see* Him, not yet. Our God is a God Who likes to hide Himself, who prefers to remain *invisible*. "I will take care of you," God promises. But as you drive down the road, as you go to work, as you are struggling with a project at home or are sitting at you school desk getting stressed out because you don't have your homework done, you don't see God. "God is all-powerful. He's in control of the world," but then you *see* things on the news: Nations in turmoil, like Ukraine this past year. Natural disasters, like the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria recently that claimed over 44,000 lives. Violent crimes taking place, like in the Twin Cities on any given night, or when we hear of another campus mass-shooting like the one this past week at Michigan State. These and other tragedies can really lead you to ask, "Where in the *world* is God? Where *is* He in all of this?"

The Bible describes God as powerful, wise, loving, and glorious. But here on earth, you can't *see* those things about God, not directly anyway. And when you're struggling with a problem, you might find yourself looking up to heaven and saying, "I wish just for once, Lord, You'd let me see you. Let me see that You're here. Let me see Your glory. Let me see Your power. I want to see that You're really here." When you say those things or think them, do you realize that God *is* right there by your side; all around you? You may not be able to see Him, but God is here, right here, with all of His power, wisdom, grace, and glory. He's right here, but God is not going to turn the lights on so that you can see Him. Instead, if

you want to connect to the invisible God, you're going to have to do it a different way.

Just think of all the powerful things that are out there that you can't see. As we sit here in church, there are radio waves all around you, even though you can't hear the music or the talking. The air is filled with cell phone signals, wireless internet signals, television signals, satellite signals, but you can't perceive any of these things. The only way you can, is by connecting yourself to one of those signals with a special device – a phone, a radio, a television, a computer.

And as we sit here with our five senses, we can't perceive God's presence, either. His glory is here. His wisdom and power are here. But we can't perceive those things. And yet, there is a way that you can connect yourself to the invisible God. And that's here, through the Word. This is how you can connect with God, and to all of His glory. And once you make this connection, and keep that connection going, you become more and more of a confident Christian. You become someone who doesn't need to see God because you have faith that He's here.

The Apostle Peter speaks to us this morning from one of His letters and encourages us to pay close attention to this special book we call the Bible. Instead of God walking next to you in a visible way, God stays invisible, but He walks next to you here, in His Word. Instead of God speaking to you face to face, God remains invisible. But He speaks to you here, through His Word. Here is where God comforts you, encourages you, and gives you confidence to face all the ups and downs that life can bring your way. This is where you can get connected to the invisible God.

Listen to how Peter describes the Bible: "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ... but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." If you want to get connected to the invisible God, then what better place to go than here, where you can read eyewitness accounts of the majesty of God. Peter is referring back to that moment when Jesus at the top of a high mountain, revealed His glory. Most of the time, Jesus hid His glory, and appeared as an ordinary man. But for a moment, Jesus gave His disciples a glimpse of His majesty. And not only did they see the majesty of Christ

with their eyes, but they also heard it with their ears. “For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased.’” It must have been so shocking for Peter to hear the voice of God, booming from the cloud. And what God emphasized was that Jesus, even though He looks lowly most of the time, really is the Almighty and Majestic God. “We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.”

That’s what makes the Bible unique. It was written by people who **witnessed** the glory of God. If you want to connect yourself to the invisible God, if you want to get closer to Him, get to know Him better; if you want God to speak to you, guide you, encourage you, and strengthen you, this is where you go. Do you know why we as Christians have such a hard time getting ourselves to read this book? Even though we are believers in Christ, sometimes we lack interest in God’s Word. Have you ever noticed that about yourself? How is it that you can read the sports section so intently, and memorize all the different stats and trivia about the sports world, but you can’t get yourself to read God’s Word? How is it, that you can spend hours on social media or surfing the internet for the best deals on items, but you won’t put half the energy into studying God’s Word?

We are sinful people. That sinful nature that we’re born with. That’s what makes us shy away from God’s Word. But there is good news in this Book for sinners like you and me. Of all the glorious things that there are about God, the most amazing thing is the fact that this Jesus, who revealed His glory on that mountain, went to a different mountain, and hid His glory there. Instead of being powerful and majestic, Jesus did something for you. He made Himself lowly and humble. And He did that to take away your sins. Of all the majestic things that there are about God – His limitless power, wisdom, and intelligence - the greatest of them, was when God became nothing. When He hung on that cross. When Jesus, instead of bright and shining, hung there in the dark, and took away the sins of the world. The greatest of all the teachings in this book is the fact that because of His sacrifice, you are a forgiven child of God right now,

and that because of our risen Savior, God loves you right now and you have eternal life.

If you want to connect yourself to the invisible God, then first connect yourself to Jesus Christ. Here in His Word. Here is where He reveals Himself to you. As Peter says, “And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place.” Here is where you can connect yourself to the invisible God. Here is where God gives you a glimpse of His glory. Here is where God can make your good days, even better. Here is where God can make your bad days, seem not so bad. Here is where God makes your laughter more enjoyable, your pain more bearable, and your confidence stronger every day.

And then one day, like Peter, James, and John, ***you*** will see God’s glory, when He comes again on the last day. Until then, may God give you faith, comfort, and encouragement as you spend time with Him in His holy Word. Amen.