

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Transfiguration

Quincy, IL

Saturday, February 13, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Rev. Martin Eden

Sunday, February 14, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

“We Bask in the Righteousness of the Light of Christ”

Mark 9:2-9

Today is the last Sunday of the Epiphany Season. On this day, we celebrate the transfiguration of our Lord. When Christ entered into the world as the child of Mary, He suppressed His divine glory for a while. From the time that Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, He demonstrated only a small fraction of His glory and power. In the Catechism, we refer to this as Christ’s “humiliation” which began when He was conceived and ended when He was crucified, died, and was buried. Christ’s “exaltation” begins when He descended into hell and proclaimed His victory over Satan.

During His life and ministry, Jesus did perform many fabulous miracles and show His power. What we saw last week with the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law and the whole town bringing the sick and demon possessed and Jesus healing them and casting out demons was an awesome display. Because Epiphany is short this year, we skip over the sixth through the eighth weeks of Epiphany.

In the sixth and seventh weeks of Epiphany, the Gospel readings also deal with Jesus bringing healing. First, Jesus reaches out and touches this “unclean” leper. No other person could do what He did. If a “clean” person touches

something that is unclean, what happens? If you take a shower, wash your hands, pour the hand sanitizer on, and rub it in, you would say, "I am clean."

Then you touch something dirty. Does your cleanness transfer over to that which was dirty? It never works that way for us. But for Jesus, He has accomplished that which we could never do. He reverses that which sin brought into this world: He touches the leper and makes him clean; He dies on the cross to take away the guilt of your sin, and finally He rises from the dead. He brings life out of death. Eternal life; life to the full.

If our season were longer, in the seventh week, we would hear of Jesus healing the paralytic when He says, "Rise, take up your bed and walk. Your sins are forgiven."

This is the almighty Son of God. He is the King of all creation. He is the Lord of all the universe. He rules over heaven and earth. The full greatness of Christ was not outwardly visible during His time of humiliation. But He has the power to heal the body, and He brings the more important healing of the forgiveness of sins.

During His life on earth, if you were watching, you could see Him doing that which only could be done by the power of God. But the fullness of His majesty and glory never truly shined forth. The closest you get is this one occasion when Jesus met with Moses and Elijah.

Mark records in his Gospel, "There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them."

Quite often when the glory of God was revealed on earth, God did so with dazzling white light. As we read in the Old Testament and the Epistle reading, as

St. Paul retells the events from Moses' day when the Israelites were afraid to even look at the fading, reflected glory of God that lingered in the face of Moses after he had spoken to the Lord. They asked him to put a veil over his face to hide the shining white radiance of God.

The light of the Mount of Transfiguration is a reality that our world today wants to dismiss. As we enter into the Lenten season, we are going to look at some of the mountains of the Bible. We will use other mountains as a bridge between the Mount of Transfiguration and Mount Calvary. Our world today wants to dismiss the glory or impact of any of the mountains of the Bible. It seems that modern man still wants to veil the radiance and truth of God.

Like the Israelites who hid from the glory of God at Mount Sinai, on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John were also very frightened. Mark records that "They didn't know what to say, for they were terrified." They had never seen such a thing. This dazzling white radiance from Christ is overwhelming. No one can look upon the face of the Lord and live. The fullness of the glory of God is too much for sinners to deal with.

He shines forth with light. He reverses light and darkness. He doesn't cast shadows. He shines light. In John's Revelation, we read that there is no sun in the sky, the Lamb, the Christ, is the source of light and it fills heaven.

There is a reason that the Christian Church has historically used white as the liturgical color of many festivals. White symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity, and innocence.

This is the reason that the traditional baptismal clothing is also white. When Christ was baptized, He exchanged places with us. He reverses that which

we could never reverse.

He took on your sin, so that when you were baptized, your sins were washed away, you are clothed in Christ's white garment of perfect righteousness, and you were given the promise that in faith you will always be righteous and blameless in God's sight; which is the promise that God made to each of you.

He has reversed that which sin brought into this world: Just as He cleansed the leper of his illness and transferred His cleanness onto that which was unclean, He forgives sin – as He forgave the sin of the paralytic. He transfers His righteousness onto those who are unrighteous. And finally He brings life out of death.

You have been washed clean of your sin. When we look at Christ's Church, the Body of Christ which gathers each week to hear God's Word and participate in His broken body and shed blood, we see infants who cannot utter a single intelligible word; we see young children who are learning new things every day; we see junior high and high school kids who already think they know everything; we see adults who are still learning about God at the same time they are preparing the next generation; and we see those who have run the good race and whose bodies tell them that their journey is drawing to a close.

However, as God's people gather around Word and Sacrament, God only sees us as if we were all wearing our Baptismal garments. God sees us in the dazzling white light of Christ's righteousness.

The white garment of Baptism is not just for that one day. For all of God's people, the Good News today is that Christ has borne your sin and put upon you His perfect righteousness. So shall you in faith ever stand before Him. Amen.