

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, IL  
Rev. Martin Eden

Transfiguration of Our Lord  
Saturday, February 10, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, February 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

# “The Great Reversal”

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. We saw this the past few weeks with Jesus healing the sick and casting out demons. This past Monday, when I started working on my sermon, I went to the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany and began working on the text with Jesus healing a man with leprosy. The healing of the leper doesn’t seem as spectacular as casting out demons, but it was an awesome display of power in the true sense of that word. 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.

I was on a role writing my sermon on Monday morning, and then I remembered that we have a very short Epiphany season. There is not a 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany this year. We have come to the Transfiguration of our Lord.

The almighty Son of God; The King of all creation; The Lord of all the universe. He who rules over heaven and earth finally reveals Himself in spectacular fashion. The full greatness of Christ was not outwardly visible during His time of humiliation. Oh sure, there were times, 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 in the world could bleach them."

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

Just like when Christ, who is clean, touches the uncleanness of the man with leprosy – He transfers His cleanness onto the unclean. When Moses meets with God, the radiance and glory of the righteousness of God lingers on Moses' face even though Moses has no innate glory and righteousness of his own.

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. "They didn't know what to say, for they were terrified," Mark tells us. They had never seen such a thing. This dazzling white radiance from Christ is overwhelming. Everyone knows, "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. 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.