

"People Will See Jesus in What We Do"

TEXT: II Corinthians 4: 3-12

Mark 9: 2-9

How do we see Jesus? When we look at Jesus, what do we see and how does it transform our lives?

These questions come into sharp focus today as we observe Transfiguration Sunday.

In recent years, Presbyterians have been celebrating the Transfiguration of Jesus on the Sunday before the beginning of Lent. Students of the Bible will recall this glorious event when Jesus and three of the disciples went up to the top of a high mountain. Before their eyes, Jesus was *"transfigured."* His clothes became dazzling white. Then Moses and Elijah appeared alongside Jesus. It was a glorious experience to see, three religious *"superstars"* speaking to each other.

The disciples were dazzled. Peter wanted to build tents to commemorate the event. Before Jesus could respond to this request, a cloud appeared. Out of the cloud, God spoke, saying, ***"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"*** (Mark 9: 7.)

Then, Moses and Elijah had disappeared. Jesus and the three disciples went back down the mountain.

The disciples saw Jesus in all his glory. It was a powerful, transforming experience. And yet, it also raises many questions.

The disciples saw a glorified Jesus, but it's clear this experience could not be prolonged.

It was over quickly and then Jesus and the disciples went down the mountain. The disciples saw Jesus in his glory, but then returned to their everyday routine. To be sure, their life with Jesus was exciting as they traveled with him throughout the Galilee. They were actors in a powerful drama as Jesus performed miracles, preached, and tangled with religious and political authorities.

They saw Jesus day in and day out as they participated in his exciting new ministry. And yet, to see him in his glory was extra special. To see Elijah and Moses speaking with Jesus must have been overwhelming. To hear God proclaim their friend and master as God's Son was icing on the cake. And yet, this experience was over quickly. They saw Jesus glorified only for a brief instant.

How do we see Jesus? Do we see him glorified? Or, do we see him in the ordinary events of daily living? We see Jesus in both ways, Jesus glorified and Jesus living as a human being. However, some Christians emphasize Jesus' glory too much. They revel in his glory, emphasizing his position in the Godhead and his power over nature. This is an important aspect of Jesus.

Nevertheless, as the transfiguration story reminds us, our ability to see the glory of Jesus is limited. Even the disciples could see the glorified Jesus only for an instant before they descended down the

mountain into mundane routine of daily life.

We have religious experiences when we "see" Jesus in all his glory. Just as importantly, we also "see" Jesus living among us in the lives and faces of other Christians.

The real problem is that many people in the world do not see Jesus at all.

In our epistle lesson for today from II Corinthians, Paul was answering his critics who claimed he had not done a good enough job of making the gospel of Jesus Christ visible in the world. In other words, if Jesus is so wonderful, powerful, and glorious, why don't more people see him?

Perhaps Paul was at fault because he wasn't a good enough preacher. Or, maybe, the message itself was faulty. Paul responded: ***"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*** (II Corinthians 4: 3-5.)

First of all, Paul conceded that some people do not see Jesus. And yet, Paul still proclaimed Jesus as light of the world, who shines on us with glory. Paul offered an exclamation for the failure of people to see this light.

Some people are ***"blinded"*** by the ***"god of this world,"*** an obvious reference to evil forces in the world, which blinds people

to Jesus' presence. Sometimes, our vision is distorted by evil forces that fill our minds with false information and our hearts with false hopes. And yet, evil is also an intrinsic part of our lives. For instance, the sin of greed is a great evil which distorts our vision.

All of us struggle with the temptation to overindulge in the material pleasures of life and hold on to our possessions at the expense of others. This distorts the vision of Jesus who calls us to serve others with charity, peace, and justice. Our failure to do this is an evil which blinds us to Jesus' presence in our lives.

And yet, it is possible to see Jesus and live by his demands. Christians know Jesus has been glorified. We know that this same Jesus calls us to live in this world serving God.

At the same time, we know that we are blinded by evil so that the vision of what Jesus calls us to do is distorted by our own greed and other sins.

Nonetheless, we still believe that is possible to let others see Jesus in the world through our lives.

To let the world see Jesus in what we do is a key responsibility of Christians. Paul reminds us that we carry out this task as ***"clay jars."*** God has given us the responsibility to proclaim Jesus as light of the world. This is an awesome undertaking for human beings, who are only ***"clay jars"*** and ***"earthen vessels."***

And yet, by the power of God the **"treasure"** of Jesus can be seen in our frail lives, As God wills, the light of Jesus shines through us in the world. This is Paul's response to his critics. By the power of God, all things are possible. God will overpower our sinful frailties and the blindness of the world so that other people will see the light of Jesus on our lives.

"Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" AMEN

How does light of Jesus shine through our lives? How do we serve others in the name of Jesus?

As we begin Lent later this week, we will remember that Jesus was humiliated and killed as a condemned criminal for crimes against religion and state.

And yet, God glorified him and raised him to new life. His crucifixion was the ultimate act of self-sacrifice for other human beings. We serve others by following his example of sacrifice. By his sacrifice, Jesus saved the human race.

Through this act of service, we see the reality of God's love for us. Now we can nothing less than to serve others through our sacrifices. In our acts of courage and dedication, other people see Jesus. This is the Christian calling, to serve others by sacrifice of our own wealth, time, talents so that others might live...

The world will then see Jesus is what we do.

Let us pray.