

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 ESV

Can You See the Good News of Jesus?

Sunday, February 15 at 8:00 & 10:45

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Ash Wednesday is 2/18; Join us at 11 AM or 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today is the final Sunday in the season of Epiphany; God has shown us in many ways that Jesus is the promised Savior, *thus God in human flesh!* We recall the angels who spoke to Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph, the virgin birth, the visit of the wise men, and Jesus' baptism – *when God the Father said, "You are my Son..."* (Mark 1:11) Then, *in today's gospel reading*, Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, *"...and his clothes became radiant, intensely white..."* [Then God the Father spoke from heaven saying,] *"This is my beloved Son; listen to him."* (Mark 9:3, 7 ESV) So now we should be certain, *beyond all doubt*, that Jesus has rescued us from our sins!

Now we move into 2 Corinthians – *a letter of comfort and instruction written by Paul to the Christians living in Corinth*. In chapter 3 Paul compared the old covenant with the new:

- ⇒ The old – the Ten Commandments – *included a fading glory on the face of Moses*. The problem: No one can keep them perfectly, *so they lead to death* 😊!
- ⇒ The new – Jesus' finished work – *which includes His everlasting glory*; a glimpse was seen by Peter, James, and John. All who receive Jesus also receive the benefits of His work, *thus rescue from their sins and the gift of eternal life* 😊!

For Moses, he *covered* or *veiled* his face so the people would not see that the glory of the old covenant was fading away. However, *for Paul and those serving with him*, they served with *uncovered* or *unveiled* faces in a most blessed ministry! We now move into 2 Corinthians, chapter 4:

1. **¹ Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.** // Paul understood that his position, *as a teacher and preacher of the new covenant*, was not something he had earned or deserved; instead, he had it by the mercy of God. Therefore, *knowing that God would give him whatever he needed to do God's will*, Paul did not lose heart. Pastors and all Christians today would do well to remember the same; *we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us* (Phil. 4:13)!
2. **² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.** // So Paul, *as God's servant*, had no reason to tamper with the Word of God. Dr. Kretzmann wrote that Paul **"did not adulterate the Word of God... by preaching so as to obtain favor with the people..."**¹ Instead, Paul understood his task: To *honestly* and *openly* share God's Word with everyone!
3. **³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep**

¹ Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The New Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1923), 2:185.

them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. // Some believe and some do not, *but the problem is not with the gospel nor with Paul*; instead, “the god of this world has blinded” such people!

- a. Dr. Kretzmann wrote that “the opposition of men, their refusal to accept its simple statement of grace, places the veil of willful ignorance before the bright beauty of the Gospel, thus preventing its clear rays from entering into their hearts.”² The Bible says, “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” (2Th 2:10b NIV)
 - b. The Bible is very unusual because it does *two opposite things at the same time*: “...enlighten and honor in the highest degree those that believe and honor it, and blind and disgrace in the highest degree those that do not believe it.
 - i. To the former [the believers] it must be the most certain and best known: to the latter it must be the least known and most hidden.
 - ii. The former laud and praise it in the highest degree; the latter blaspheme and disgrace it in the highest degree...”³
4. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. // So, back then and today, no person should proclaim himself – since every person is a sinner

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

in need of Jesus. Instead, those who serve as ministers, *even all Christians*, are servants for Jesus’ sake. Therefore, we proclaim this truth of God: All have sinned *but Jesus has lived and died for all*, so God is calling all people to repent and believe the good news!

5. ⁶ For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. //
 - a. Physical light on the Earth: When God created, the Bible says that “...darkness was over the face of the deep.... And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Gen 1:2-3 ESV) God’s Word was powerful to bring *physical light* into a *pitch-black world*!
 - b. Spiritual light in our hearts: When we were spiritually dead and dark – *because of our sins* – God (by His Spirit through His Word) shined the light of His truth upon us! When we knew we were eternally doomed, *God showed us His glory in Jesus and gave us the gift of eternal life!*

Conclusion: There is no in between with God’s truth; so let us love it, take great joy in God’s salvation, and shine the light of Jesus to others! And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

Some Ways to Apply Today’s Sermon:

1. Grow in knowing and praising God’s saving truth!
2. Be faithful in sharing God’s saving truth with others!