**Luke 9:28-36**

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. **30** And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, **31** who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32** Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. **33** And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”— not knowing what he said. **34** As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. **35** And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” **36** And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

**“Good News Life In A Bad News World”**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Galatians 1:3-5). The transfiguration of Jesus is the highlight concluding the Epiphany season. It helps us prepare to enter into the darker season of Lent. Without a doubt, we are to see and know Jesus is God. He transformed water into wine at Cana. He transformed the will of a raging mob at Nazareth not to touch Him. He transformed sickness to health, the dead to live, and even the demons to leave. Transforming one thing to another is what Jesus does. So when He transfigured Himself before Peter, James and John the whole event you could say was a miracle.

Sadly, if a person rejects the miraculous in life, the transfiguration is going to seem ridiculous. That is just what higher critical scholars and liberal Christians do with such a glorious text. Some hold the transfiguration was actually a misplaced account about the risen Jesus. Some explain it away figuring the disciples had a zealous dream about their Master. Others claim it was a myth made up to make Jesus look good. Whatever the case, the reason of man ruling over Scripture will lead at last to deny that Jesus is God. Yet, this event in our Gospel reading is exactly where it needs to be, since Jesus was now going to go the way of the cross. The transfiguration reveals we have a good news life with Jesus in a bad news world.

There was bad news for the disciples eight days before the transfiguration. Jesus had asked them, “Who do you say that I am?” Of course, Peter’s response boldly confessed Jesus to be the Christ. Only this good news over the promised Messiah came with bad news. Jesus said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Luke 9:22). Maybe there was wonder over what it meant for Jesus to rise, but being killed was cut and dry. And before they even could digest this bad news Jesus added, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24). A dead Messiah and bearing crosses was no picture for life.

Now we already know there is plenty of bad news in the world. This is what attracts the network news programs and makes for good ratings. However, what happens when the bad news comes from God? This is what Moses heard when looking across at the Promised Land after 40 years in the wilderness. God told him, “I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” This bad news comes to us whenever God’s Law points out any judgment over our life. Let alone, St. Paul even with all hopefulness still says things like, “As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’” (Romans 8:36). So bearing-crosses, honoring the Law, and going into to Lent does not give us much confidence to go forward. Almost seems pointless for life!

Yet at the transfiguration, good news shined with Jesus over a bad news world. Like after His baptism, so on this mountain while praying heaven came down to earth. Jesus changed His appearance to show the true glory hidden in human flesh among men. There with Him also stood glorious men of old, Moses and Elijah. Here at the transfiguration no question needed to be asked, “Who do men say that I am?” The event spoke for itself. Jesus is God! The voice from the cloud sealed it for the Father declared, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” The bad news about Jesus’ suffering and death would not be meaningless. His cross was the cure promising what God out of love could carry to completion. Jesus would be the suffering servant securing salvation for a sinful world. It also meant cross bearing turned out to be good news. Moses and Elijah were those kind of disciples who now stood over what they faced in life.

Good news outweighs a bad news world because we still have Jesus. He is far more than a personal preference fashioned by my will or desires for life. He is greater than those secular slogans that everyone admires like, “It is always darkest before the dawn.” No, this Jesus is the light God sent into a sinful world and the darkness did not overcome Him. As 2 Peter proclaims, “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (1:16). This is the glory of Jesus unafraid to face off with sin, death, and the Devil by His Cross. He won forgiveness for our whole life and made it a promise built upon baptism into His Name. By Word and Sacrament, the Father glorifies His Son by saying, “Listen to Him!” Burdens of bearing crosses even turn out to be blessings from Christ’s kingdom that has no end.

The good news life with Jesus is that after the transfiguration He goes to the cross. Of course, when you already go up in anything who wants to go back down? We do not and neither did Peter, but Jesus had no problems with it. Peter hoped to build some makeshift tents to monopolize on that good news they saw upon the mountain. Jesus had bigger plans for good news that He would build in a far better way. Like Moses departing by God burying Him and Elijah being taken by chariots of fire. Jesus had a departure in a far different manner. He went back down with Peter, James, and John only to go up to another mountain where His glory would be all the more glorious. His cross became the good news that wiped out all the bad. Jesus suffered in our place so sin would not silence His love. Jesus died our death so all fear turns to trust in His faithfulness. Jesus rose showing the way He paved for us is good news that has no end.

As good as the transfiguration is. A bad news world finally needs the crucified Savior. None enters into Lent with disappointment because God takes the lead. It is all about what Jesus does with His glory as God that matters. To go down with Him is to face hardship, suffering, and death as it is for us in life. Yet, it is also to receive a most glorious gift. Jesus bears the victory marks of His cross! He has put His glory to good use for us. This is what we now receive as good news from Him to eat and drink. Our Lord knows the depth and hardness of life above all. His love is good news that outlasts whatever grief we bear. The bad news of this world goes on and why I am sure 24hr news will be around. Just as when one cross departs, another one is sure to come. The transfiguration reveals we have a good news life with Jesus in a bad news world. Yet, there is a final Easter that is sure to be the best news of all. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.