

**2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (The Transfiguration of Our Lord—Series B)**

**“The Glory of Christ Shines”**

**Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield, CT**

**February 14, 2021**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our text from the Epistle lesson recorded in 2 Corinthians 4:

<sup>1</sup>On account of this, having this ministry just as we have received mercy [from God], we do not become discouraged, <sup>2</sup>but we renounced the hidden deeds of shame, not practicing with cunning nor distorting the word of God, but by the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup>And if even our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to the ones who are perishing, <sup>4</sup>among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For we do not proclaim ourselves but Jesus Christ Lord, and ourselves your slaves on account of Jesus. <sup>6</sup>For the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” he has shined in our hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The devil, Satan, is really the chief and arch enemy of Christ and of His kingdom. As we learned together last Sunday, with the Incarnation of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, God’s reign and rule has burst on the scene. The sick were healed. The demons were thrown out. The Good News of the in-breaking of the rule and reign of God was proclaimed in the release from the power of sin and Satan—there is forgiveness and rescue. Since Satan knows that his usurped kingdom is to be weakened and destroyed through this Jesus, he will not, and cannot, in any way tolerate Christ and His reign and rule. “But since he is a prince, yes, a [lower-case “g”] god of this world—as Christ Himself (John 14:30) and St. Paul (2 Cor. 4:4) call him—who holds the hearts of [people] in his bonds, he drives them with all his might and power that they must serve his will. [The devil] blinds and hardens their reason by false doctrine, so that they will neither recognize nor accept this Christ. He thoroughly poisons and embitters their hearts with hate, envy, wrath, and the lust for revenge against the Gospel and Christians. And he makes them so crazy and foolish that they simply will not tolerate this blessed kingdom of grace. Even though the light may clearly and plainly shine into their very

eyes so that they cannot deny it, even though they can see that they cannot overthrow the Gospel, still the devil drives them in such a way that they butt their heads against it in furious rage. Hence these enemies are, and must be, nothing else but the devil's tools, whereby he storms against, and makes war on, this kingdom [of the Lord Christ].<sup>1</sup>

Blindness and sight. Darkness and light. These are well-known Biblical themes. This world and our humanity—shrouded in death, evil, and ignorance while under the power of the devil—is in darkness, opposed to God's plan of salvation through His One-of-a-Kind Son, Jesus. And Satan, the self-proclaimed "god" and ruler of this world, tries to overcome "the light that shines in the darkness." (John 1:5). Satan works to make the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins and salvation from death obscure and dark in the minds and hearts of people. Along with the world and our sinful flesh, these enemies seek to make us blind to the Good News that Jesus has brought God's reign and rule to us in the forgiveness of sins and the new life of faith.

In our session on Job last Wednesday, we talked about some of the dangers of the darkness—what people are more likely to do in the dark than in broad daylight. Why don't you want to go into a dark alley at night? Paul writes in the letter to the Ephesians, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret" (Eph. 5:11–12 ESV). But we don't want our deep, dark sins exposed for others to see! Maybe its because we love these sins and don't want to give them up. We'll keep them under wraps, under the cover of darkness, hidden from the Gospel. Hidden from forgiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 13: Selected Psalms II*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 13 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 251–252.

That does get at the heart of Paul's message this morning. If the Good News of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is veiled, hidden, in the dark, it is so for those who are perishing. For those in the darkness of their sins, Satan the "god of this age," has blinded and darkened their minds so that they do not see the "light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ." They do not see the forgiveness of sins won by the Lord Jesus with His innocent suffering and death. They do not receive that forgiveness because they have hidden their sins from it by not acknowledging their sin. When King David hid his sin in the darkness of his heart, he confessed in Psalm 32 the spiritual pain from the lack of forgiveness, "For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer" (Ps 32:3-4 ESV).

But that is exactly what Satan desires. He does not want your sins forgiven. He doesn't want your release from his power and authority. He desires that you remain trapped in the darkness of sin and unbelief, firmly held as a slave in his kingdom.

But the Good News of God's reign and rule has broken into the kingdom of the devil. God the Father has sent His Son to redeem the world, to save you, from your sins, from death, and from Satan's authority. We read in John 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it*" (John 1:1-5 ESV, emphasis mine).

The "light" is the Son of God made flesh, Jesus Christ. St. John continues, "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his

own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:9–12 ESV). This is what the apostle Paul was referring to in our Epistle, “For the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ He has shined in our hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Martin Luther, lecturing on Genesis: “That Christ is true God, who is with the Father from eternity, before the world was made, and that through Him, who is the wisdom and the Word of the Father, the Father made everything. But in the passage referred to this point should also be noted: that Paul regards the conversion of the wicked—something which is also brought about by the Word—as a new work of creation.”<sup>2</sup>

You are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). The Light of Christ has shown in your hearts through your Baptism. In Holy Baptism, Christ rescued you from the dominion of Satan. He delivered to you the forgiveness of sins, purchased and won by His blood shed for you on the cross. Jesus has brought you from the darkness of Satan and sin into the light of the Gospel by means of Word and Sacrament so that you do behold the glory of God in the person and work of Jesus by faith. By the power of the Spirit, the Lord revives us with the warmth of the light of the Gospel. He brings us back to life from the death of sin and unbelief. He chases away the evil of this dark world with His light and enables us to live safely in the light of His love.

Here in this darkened world of sin, sickness, and death, the Lord Jesus Christ shines His light. Into our once darkened hearts, the light of Christ has shined with God’s grace and

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 1 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 17.

favor because of Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

Because of the light of the glory of God in face of Jesus has shown upon us by means of the Gospel and Sacraments, you and I no longer live in the darkness of sin and under the power of Satan. We bask in the light, in the life, and in the goodness and wisdom of Christ's light.

Our sins are forgiven. We have eternal life as God's beloved sons and daughters. Amen.