

“The Way Out is Through”

Transfiguration Sunday

Luke 9:28-36

February 14, 2010

Robert Frost once wrote, “The only way out is through.” Sometimes the way through a dilemma, a challenge, perhaps a difficult time in life is go through it and by doing so it will be resolved, truth will be revealed, and confidence, security, and joy known. When it comes to trusting in God, following God’s will, becoming the person who God calls us to be the only way out of a problem is through! This is especially true when it comes to Jesus. His life was focused on one thing, and nothing would deter him from that, even when having to face his own death. In my study of today I discovered some new insights regarding its meaning and how it apply to our daily lives. Allow me to share these with you.

I believe it is natural for us, that when life is filled with challenges and setbacks to try and reclaim the “good ole days.” We tend to remember the past with rose-colored glasses. We forget the hard parts and romanticize the good. Our vision refocuses the events we remember to fit our desires for a better time, easier moments, and less stressful and complicated life.

In the story this same thing occurs. The disciples—Peter, James, and John, are amazed at what they see. They are happy to see Jesus glorified. He had talked previously about his forthcoming suffering and death. But that is horrible, and now for the moment it appears that all that can be bypassed. Jesus is in glory, and they are with him. They want to camp out with him on the mountain building three booths. That is a natural reaction. People seek inner peace. We try all kinds of things to achieve it — anything that will promise much, but demand little. Jesus reminds the three that the only way out is through. They must go down the mountain and Jesus must head to Jerusalem to die. But then I am getting ahead of myself.

Moses and Elijah are present. They talk with Jesus. They know the mind and will of God. They speak of Jesus' forthcoming "exodus" or "departure," his forthcoming death and resurrection, which Jesus had spoken of before going up the mountain. They confirm that this is the will of God for him. The way of God for Jesus cannot bypass the cross. For Jesus the way out is through!

In our reading the word used when Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus is “departure.” The actual word used here is “exodus.” If it brings up images of Israel’s exodus from Egypt, well it is meant to do just that. A connection is being made with the freedom God gave Israel from the bondage and tyranny of Egypt with the freedom God gives us from the bondage and tyranny of sin.

This is at the heart of our Christian faith. Jesus has come to reveal God and redeem humanity. And the way that God has chosen to carry out his redemptive purpose is to send his Son, Jesus, to bear our sins upon himself at the cross. There the new "exodus" takes place, the new event of redemption for world. The way out is through!

Finally, there is the cloud and the voice. God speaks of Jesus as his Chosen One, for Jesus has accepted his role. Moreover, the disciples of Jesus are to listen to him. What he has said about himself and what is to happen is God's will. What he says about discipleship is also to be heeded. All his teachings about love for God and for our fellow human beings are to be observed.

This same voice spoke a similar message at his baptism. Now once again the disciples, and us, are reminded of why Jesus came and what it means to us on a personal level.

Jesus walks down the mountain and heads to Jerusalem to die. His life was to restore us back to God, to remove the barrier and the consequences of sin, that is free us from the bondage it has placed over us. The voice tells all who listen that Jesus is God's son, that he is accomplishing God's will, and the way it will be accomplished is through his death. The way out of the punishment of sin is through death, Jesus' death on the cross. The way out is through!

As Christmas revealed to us God made flesh and took on our mortal nature, so too, the transfiguration of Jesus reveals his divinity, and the glory which will soon be his. All that took place on the mountain-top reveals this truth. And it is through his life, his death, and his resurrection that we are able to receive the blessing of freedom from the consequence of our sin. This moment reveals this truth to all who want to see.

Truly, the way out of our dilemma, the way for us to be free from the separation that sin causes is through the cross of Jesus. For you and for me, for all of humanity, past, present and future, the way out is through!

AMEN