

TWO QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY THE TRANSFIGURATION

Is God pleased with Jesus? -- Is God pleased with me?

Romans 3:19-26

TEXT: *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

This is the second time Scriptures records this awesome declaration from the voice of the Heavenly Father: ***This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*** Mt 17 At Jesus' baptism, the voice of the Heavenly Father announced this publicly before the world. Here was standing the Christ of God, and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove as Old Testament Scripture and the great prophet John the Baptist testified. And God said: ***with him I am well pleased.*** After 30 years of living on this earth, growing up from infant to toddler, to adolescent, to teenager, to young adult, there was NO ONE who could convict Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, of any wrong doing. The Bible says that as a young boy at the age of 12: ***Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*** Lu 2 What did the Heavenly Father now declare at Jesus' ordination into His Holy Ministry? ***This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*** Never has there been the public announcement booming from the heavens concerning a human being!

It was at this event we call The Transfiguration, however, when the voice of the Heavenly Father added a very serious admonition to his awesome declaration regarding his Son, Jesus: ***This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased...*** and this time adds these most important words: ***Listen to him!*** Mt 17

Some people might think that the Heavenly Father is referring only to the words of Jesus, you know, the words that some Bibles have printed in red ink. But Jesus declared concerning the entire Bible and the power to understand it: ***You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me...*** Jn 5 On this day when we traditionally leave the Epiphany season and enter the Lenten Season by remembering the event of Jesus' Transfiguration, we will consider what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans and consider two most important questions that Jesus' Transfiguration sets before us: Is God pleased with Jesus? Is God pleased with me?

It's quite evident that the Heavenly Father was pleased with Jesus, his Son. Who could question what is heard from God's own voice booming from out of the heavens? ***This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*** Mt 17 Obviously Jesus does not fall under the words of the Apostle Paul who writes: ***Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*** Here is one human being who was indeed declared righteous by God as he stood there with his disciples, all glowing with majestic glory as the Son of God. However, for all the rest of humanity this judgment stands: ***every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*** Here is a most important truth for all who would stand before God on Judgment Day. NO ONE will be declared righteous before God by keeping God's commandments. Instead, an honest self-evaluation by God's law reveals that we fall short and have no defense.

No defense before the Divine Judge whose Son, Jesus, has warned us: ***You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ... anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*** Mt 5 Are we listening to Jesus on this? If you've ever called someone a name, you are going to go to hell!

Jesus, our Savior, once said: *You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* Mt 5 Are we listening to Jesus on this? What's God's impression of your adolescent years? What's God's impression of your thoughts even today as we are surrounded by moral corruption and the degrading of the human body? Is He well-pleased with the most secret thoughts of passion that come and go out your hearts even today?

And these are just TWO of the Ten Commandments by which we are judged and by the Son of God himself who declares: *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* Mt 5 Jesus does not say "My heavenly Father..." but *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* We have no defense, but only the hope that God is merciful and gracious.

And he is. The Bible says that at Jesus' Transfiguration Jesus was seen to be discussing something with two men that Scripture says were Moses and Elijah. The Bible also tells us about what they were discussing: *They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.* Lu 9 It was now time for Jesus to fulfill what the Father sent him to accomplish: to suffer God's wrath over the sin of mankind, to die and rise again for God's demonstration of both his grace and justice. Paul sets their conversation before us with these words: *God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.* God was pleased with Jesus' perfect life on earth and with Jesus whose innocent suffering and death satisfied God's demands for justice.

Now stands before us is the second question: Is God well-pleased with me?

The Apostle Paul, however, points to this Jesus being Transfigured before the eyes of His disciples, and says: *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* The Old Testament Prophets testified to a RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD, that is APART FROM KEEPING THE LAW. David wrote concerning this hope of redemption by the Lord: *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* Ps 51 Then, immediately David writes: *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.* Ps 51 Instead of hyssop, God would wash us in the blood of Jesus, the Son of God. This was the conversation going on between Jesus, Elijah and Moses at Jesus' Transfiguration.

Is God pleased with me, a sinner? No! God hates sin and the sinner. That's why God sent Jesus who declared: *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.* Jn 3 How important and essential it is, therefore, that we do what God told everyone to do at Jesus' Transfiguration: *Listen to him!* Yes, listen to Him. So many in this world today think that they no longer have to listen to Jesus. They have drifted away, no longer feel that hunger or thirst for his body and blood in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and often fall into a life of sin and impenitence. We see it all around us! Pray that none of us fall to that dreadful condition of spiritual death! Pray for those who have fallen!

The Bible says that when Jesus' disciples heard the voice of the Heavenly Father: *... they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.* Mt 17 What a blessing for us that God does not come to us to terrify us. His Law does that if we believe God's Law. And that should terrify us for it offers us no hope. But Jesus comes to us with his gentle touch of the water of Holy Baptism, the taste of bread and wine upon our lips, and the pleasant promises of the Gospel. With these the voice of God declares to us that through Jesus, we are given the righteousness of Jesus himself so that we are his sons and daughters with whom God is well pleased.

Jesus' Transfiguration assures each of us who believe in Jesus, that as pleased as God is with Jesus, so he also is pleased with me! Amen