

Christmas Day 16

December 25, 2016

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.
Amen.

Today is about many things that go beyond the birth of our Savior, the arrival of Jesus as a baby in a manger. Although the birth story we heard told last night, the one which you have heard many times and could tell yourself if pressed to do so. But this morning I want to take a moment to explore how as the writer of the Gospel of John understands the birth and the entry of Jesus, the Word made flesh makes a difference for us and to us. But most directly with the arrival of Jesus, the light which has come into the world we have as the writer tells us; from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.

First for John it is about new beginnings, which is the reason I changed the first reading for this morning. John begins his gospel very intentionally not wanting to just tell the same story of Jesus' birth, but to offer us an image of a rebirth, for creation, for God, for us. If you would read through the entire Gospel of John you clearly come to understand why he chose to set up the journey of Jesus' life in such a way.

As Genesis began; 'In the beginning when God created...'. We hear the story of the formation of the world of light and all that exists. John was invoking a similar image of a rebirth, of a new beginning where even God himself is being reborn as John reminds us: 'in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.' It is very clear that the birth, the coming of Jesus, the Christ was a new beginning for the whole world. At the same time John is revealing the very nature of God, the origins of Jesus and his relationship and identity as God.

We know God because as he writes; God is life and light. Light for us is everything. Light marks for us the beginning of the days, it gives to the earth

Christmas Day 16

December 25, 2016

warmth and the for plants and nature the ability to grow and mature. It offers us the opportunity to see and to know the world around us. Especially at this time of year, just past the longest night of the year we look forward to the coming of the light, the longer days and the promise of a renewed earth in the spring. In addition in the one we know as Jesus we see the true light, a light which reveals God himself.

Then there is a man whose name is John, who we will come to know as John the Baptist, but here he is just a witness, pointing to and giving witness to the true light which has come into the world. Because we know the world has been and continues to be filled with darkness and with any glimpse of light, there are those who want to draw our attention and claim ownership for themselves. But John is sent by God to give witness to the one true light so that we might receive and come to believe in the Word which has come down to us.

So that in believing we become children of God just as Jesus is. This is where knowing the other birth stories help us. For Jesus was born of Mary, God in human form; Immanuel, God with us. We all know and understand how vulnerable babies are; they are dependent upon their parents for everything to sustain them in life. God as our heavenly father does so for us. God gives to us light and life and all we need to grow and to be sustained on this journey.

We are giving not only what we need to sustain life, but as the Word became flesh and lived among us we are also given a guide. With the Word becoming flesh, in taking on our human form, we have a God who has come to live among us. That which was in the beginning with God, who formed and created all things, who is the true light from heaven, has come to show us the true nature of God. When John wrote; 'and lived among us' is more than just

Christmas Day 16

December 25, 2016

living it is about setting up a permanent dwelling and is here for the long haul. God in doing so is not just some friend whom we see once in a while, God has moved in and taken over the spare room. God in Jesus had come full of grace and truth to show us a new way to offer us a new beginning.

And in the fullness which has been revealed, we have received grace upon grace. Now that the Word has become flesh, grace has also become incarnate for us, revealing what grace is all about, what it looks like and feels like. As we grow and know what it is to be a child of God, we also experience what God's grace is all about. So that we might go forth to live and grow into the fullness of him who claims us as we are sent like John to point and to give witness and to point to the one true light which has come into the world.

So on this Christmas day, as the angels proclaim to us that born on this day in the city of David a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. We celebrate that the Word has become flesh and lives among full of grace and truth, that the God of Love has come down to dwell with us so that we might come to know God and to know the one whom God sent, Jesus the Christ child born this day.

AMEN

T.G.B.T.G.

Pastor Michael

Christmas Day 16

December 25, 2016

John 1:1-18

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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ~~(John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."')~~ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep while a wind from God swept over the face of the water. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light. And God saw that the light was good and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day”