

Christmas Day

John 1:1-14

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

Merry Christmas! Christ is born, that is the good news that we celebrate this day!

Many times when a baby is going to be born people celebrate. Especially when it is the first baby being born. The family will prepare the room getting a new crib, painting the room, hanging nic-nacs, mobiles and getting all the supplies they are going to need. Families, Friends and co-workers throw baby showers indenting the mother to be with diapers, baby clothes, wipes, and other basic necessities of a new born baby. It is an exciting time. Then the baby comes and everyone wants to see the pictures, hold the baby, see how tiny the fingers and toes are. Then the baby grows older, it cries a lot and stays up all night, and is constantly needing changed and fed and people lose interest – the excitement is over.

Both my sister and brother have three kids and I have seen them go through this process of new excitement to when are those kids moving out. I mean they love their children, but it is amazing how fast that excitement of the birth of the child becomes old. They went from excited parents planning the best for the child, to do we have enough to get by, to wow these kids are expensive. You know what I mean. The are the kind of parents that went from the first child sterilizing everything to the next – washing things in soap and water, to the next just wiping it down and sticking the sucker back in the babies mouth. It is truly amazing really how fast excitement over a babies birth ends. Pretty soon the kids are older and making noise, and running all about, and the house is never the same again.

I wonder if the Christ Child was like this? Will the news of the birth of Jesus that we have awaited for so long affect us just this same way a week or month later? For what seemed like from September we have been building up to this day; to Christmas. And now as soon as it gets here the lectionary has us spin back over to the Gospel of John, which flies right past the birth stories and the childhood stories and goes right to the symbolism of the being of Christ.

The Gospel of John describes the coming of Jesus in an unusual way, and maybe if babies and all that other mess that come with them, bothers and scares you, you might actually feel more comfortable with John's description of Jesus. But it seems so quick being this is still Christmas Day to jump away from remembering Jesus as the infant in the Manger.

That baby in the manger that was born into that stable in Bethlehem, according to John came into this word as the Word as the Light as the Grace and Truth. To John that baby born to

Mary that Angels sang about, and shepherds and wise men came to see, is really all about these very four things – WORD, LIGHT, GRACE and TRUTH!

The Word of God, is the very Word that was there at Creation. The word was the very being that communicated, gave voice to the creation. In this Word is power. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things came into being through him. That is a powerful Word.

What words do you know have power? Many words provoke in us feelings, good and bad. Things that divide and unite. Words can move a people to rise up and fight against injustice or give in and suffer. Words have the extreme ability to influence and motivate, to inspire and tear down. What words have power to you? Love! Children! Parents! Wife, Husband, Boss! God! Gifts! It is very fitting that John uses the term Word to describe Jesus, because Words do have power. They influence our entire life. And God as the Very WORD made flesh is of course in and through our entire life. From the Words of Isaiah and the prophecies of the coming king to rise out of the Stump of Jesse, Jesus is that very Word made real, made flesh, made to be with us and grow with us and offer us a connection with God that can never be destroyed. He is God the Word that speaks to us and moves us to receive God into our lives.

John also then goes on to remind us that Jesus is also the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone... He explains that John the Baptist is not the light. No rather he came to point us to the light, that is the one who is the light of the World, Jesus Christ, the Chosen Messiah. Again this is a far different image than the baby in the manger, the cute little baby, with the angels and the songs. But it is John way of saying that Jesus shines into the world that is full of darkness and despair. Even in that manger Jesus shone over the humbleness of his birth, he shown over the treachery that was destined to challenge him, to try to do away with him, to betray him and kill him. He would shine the glory of God even as he died on the cross, so that all may know the love of the Father who shines into our lives through his Son, Jesus. Whenever we feel the darkness of the world surrounding us we know the light of God is there and can not be overcome. Whenever we feel we don't know which way to go, the light of God is there shining the way. Whenever we seem alone or things seem helpless, the light of God is there. Whenever we feel the darkness of death that swallows all of us into the grave, even then we know that the light, Jesus Christ is there shining into that death and giving us his light to follow into the kingdom of God. That is the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

But John still has more to tell us, about this incarnation of Christ at Christmas. Jesus is the who brings Grace. To all who receives him and believes in his name, he gives the power to

become children of God. who were born, not of blood or of the will of flesh or of the will of man, but of God. Through his coming into this world we are given the love of God that lifts us up out of our sinfulness, our own despair and guilt. This one who we celebrate the birth of this day, comes to grant us redemption and adoption as God's people. We were physically born into sin, being born of humanity, sins from our parents, sins from their parents, sins all the way back to Adam and Eve. The Human race is born into sin. We can not achieve a way out of that sin. But for all those who believe in Jesus and receive his grace we are made children of God. No longer slaves to our sin, no longer slaves to this human guilt of all time, instead we are offered a way out, made citizens of heaven as God's people through the grace of Jesus Christ. Through this baby born into the manger, we are given a hope that surpasses our time and limits and grants us a place forever in the family of God.

And finally we receive word from John that Jesus is the Truth. We have seen his glory, the glory of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. A few chapters later Jesus, the man, now stands before Pilate, the governor and by all human understandings the power in the region of Palestine in that time, is struggling with what is Truth. As Jesus stands before Pilate, beaten and bleeding, about to offer up his life in a horrible sacrificial way, he is still teaching us what the truth is. He is Truth. Everything else will pass away, but God is eternal. Everything in this world, every object, every gift we give, every relationship will have, every scientific hypothesis or universal certainty of the space and time of our understanding will end, and the one Truth will remain, Jesus Christ, God almighty. God is truth, that lasts, that has power, that can be held on to.

John's Gospel is not so much about the baby born in Bethlehem as it is about what that important event meant to us. He brings us right past all that mess of children, of stories, and gets right to the heart of the matter so that we may know, so that the excitement may never fail or disappear. John's message on Christmas and every day is the same, Jesus is the Word, The Light, Grace and All Truth. May we rejoice today and always, celebrating in that Good news that is eternal. Give thanks this day for the babe in the manger, but also rejoice in all ways, in Word, Light, Grace and Truth. Amen. May the peace and grace of God be with you today and always. Amen.