

XMAS2.C1
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2ND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
January 3, 2010

Jeremiah 31:7-14
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:1-18

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And 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.

¹⁵(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.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

This is the *second* Sunday of Christmas. We do like to celebrate Christmas. Christmas is when we rejoice that God became a human being. That is central to Christianity. God himself, was born as a man and lived a completely human life. That's why we have the Trinity and why we have been saying the creeds for two thousand years. And it happened – God was born as a human baby – at Christmas.

It would be unseemly to ask, “So what?” – still, on the tenth day of Christmas, we may have been celebrating for long enough to go further into the matter. The Gospel of John certainly gives us some things to think about this morning on the subject.

God became a human. As wonderful and mysterious as the incarnation is, I do not believe that God loved us one bit more *after* he was born as Jesus than he did before. That is significant because we believe that God’s love is the source of our salvation. If being born as Jesus did not cause God to love us more, then why was it so important?

Communication. God needed to tell us that he loves us. We live with God when we *know* he loves us. So, John tells us about a Word. Not only the Word *of* God, but the Word who *is* God. This Word creates everything; it brings life itself. And the most and best that can be said, the highest title and best description, is the *Word*.

The miracle is that God is talking to us.

John writes, “From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” This gift that gives us a life with God is – a Word. “It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.” Our salvation is that God has taken the trouble to talk to us.

By saying that the meaning of the incarnation is “communication”, it may seem that I am disparaging the incarnation. Actually, I am trying to call attention to the importance of communication. Communication is so important that it gives meaning to the incarnation of God. Communication is how people live with each other.

Anyone who has ever been part of a family has first hand experience with the need for communication. Parents do not say they do not love their teenagers as much as they did back when the kids were six; they say they can’t *talk* to them anymore. A lack of communication is the frustration. Young couples in love place their confidence in the future because they have chosen the right person to marry – yet they will both change so much in the coming five years that they really won’t even be the same people. It is not choosing the right person; the couple’s

hope is in communication – sharing their challenges, calling on their values together, encouraging each other. When they communicate the couple grows and changes together. That is a living relationship.

God wanted us to have a living relationship with him. So “the Word became flesh and lived among us.”

If you asked a parent about his relationship with his high school age child, and the parent answered by describing the circumstances of the child’s birth – you would know you were not getting the whole story. The relationship has changed since then.

If you asked a woman about her relationship with her husband of twenty years and she answered by describing their wedding – again, you would hope there was more to the story than that.

If you asked someone about his relationship with God and the Christian told you the Christmas story. If the Christian told you that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and God spoke his Word to us two thousand years ago – you might well wonder if that is worth celebrating. But if the Christian tells you what God says to him today, if he gives you the good news that the Word made flesh encourages him and reminds him that his life is part of a loving creation, that is a Word that is living among us.

John tells us how it works. “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (vs.12). He inspires us with the power to become children of God. We are called to speak the Word, the grace and truth of God.

What word do you speak? This morning’s gospel lesson tells us that you have been given power to become a child of God. You are called to bear the Word of God in human form. What is your word? I know people who bring the word “compassion” to life. I have seen people who speak the word “faithfulness” in what they do. I know of people who speak words like “talent” and “friendship” and “determination”. Those words would be nothing more than a good

idea, but I've seen people speak those words. They speak them by what they do. When a person lives according to those words, the words become flesh. They live among us and we see their glory.

Together, we speak the Word of God as the people of this congregation. I'm sure that every person here would describe Peace Lutheran in a different way; we all have our own perspective. When I think of this church, I think of the word "hospitality" becoming flesh and living in this community. I think of the word "curiosity" taking on human form in the lives of people I know. Many of you have seen words like prayer, and generosity, and vision. We can invite others to join us and, by the grace of God, volunteer their own flesh to bring those words to life, too.

Of course, other words can also come alive in congregations: apathy, busyness, petulance. Just because God did not say some words, does not mean those words do not take on flesh and live among us.

When a person comes to worship here, what words do you want them to hear? Which of God's life-giving words do you want to speak?

It is a great celebration to rejoice that God comes alive among his people. The Word of God is a call to you. God has things to say to this world and to this community. God needs to talk to this congregation and he has things to say in your home. God's Word is looking for flesh to live in.

He gives power to become children of God and he promises grace upon grace. The love of God is in endless supply. He calls us to be living words to tell the world he loves it.