

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Second Sunday of Christmas - Year B

44th Sunday of Pandemic

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalms 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

01/03/2021

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. John:

[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.

Prayer

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

In the Beginning!

Good morning! 1Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. *1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. *2He was in the beginning with God.*

3πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν *3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being*

4ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων: *4in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*

5καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. *5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

6Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης: *6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

7οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. *7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.*

8οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. *8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.*

9*)=ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. *9The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

So begins the Gospel of John. I did this a few years ago and I mentioned that in college, where I took a biblical Greek class, the final was translating the first chapter of this very Gospel. When you first start to learn biblical Greek, passages from John are often used, because of all the writings in the New Testament, it is the most simple and basic to understand. It's as if the writer knew that generations after its writing seminary students like me would be struggling to translate the text.

But even more than its beginner's Greek, there is something about the start of the Gospel of John that just grabs you. For many, myself included, it's one of our all-time favorite passages. Even in this basic Greek, the writer manages to communicate in the most simple of ways the theme of the whole book. And in the midst of all of this, it transforms from just simple words into beautiful poetry. I'll be honest, I struggle with poetry. While I have a few favorite poets and poems, I always feel like I'm missing something. I always feel like I'm not smart enough to understand what the writer is putting on paper, but not so with John. It's like poetry for the average person!

Just those first few words! "In the beginning was the Word..." The writer immediately sends our minds to the start of the book of Genesis: "*In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...*"¹ Do you see

¹ Genesis 1:1

the connection? In just three words the writer has tied together the start of all of creation and the beginning of the story about Jesus Christ.

And this human being, Jesus Christ, is more than what we thought. He is the Word, dwelling with God, a part of God, God God's-self, since the beginning of time! And guess what! This word has come to shine a light on all the world. And what's more, a spark of that light was put into all of us. We haven't noticed it, but the Light, the Word, God, has come to show it to us.

I don't know about you, but that's something I need to hear. It's 2021... can you believe it? And while the new church year began with Advent 1, most of the world recognized January 1 as the start of a new year. So it's rather fitting to start a new year, after a horrible one, with a text that reminds us of the wonderful work that God has been doing, is doing, and will continue to do for all of time.

But it's not just about the Word. John the Baptist gets a mention in the text too. He's come to testify to the light, to speak about that light into the darkness. But the astute among you have probably noticed that John the Baptist isn't around anymore. Which means that someone else needs to testify... I wonder who could do that? ... The light of life has come into being. "The light has shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." How will you respond? Amen.