

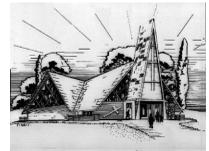


Free Evangelical Lutheran  
Synod in South Africa

## Sermon for Christmas Day (Proper C)

The living and Life-giving Word of God  
dwells among us in the Flesh!

St. John's Lutheran Parish



Shelly Beach

### The Word of God for this Sermon is written in John 1, 1-18:

ESV **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- **2** He was in the beginning with God.
- **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not ~~overcome~~ (*comprehended*) it.
- **6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- **7** He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.
- **8** He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.
- **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
- **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.
- **11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.
- **12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
- **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- **15** ( John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")
- **16** And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
- **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- **18** No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

• *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears, and let your light shine into our hearts that we will receive grace upon grace! Amen.*

• **Dear Citizens of Zion!**

- Today we are gathered here to continue with the celebrations of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are so many aspects of Jesus' Birth which are important for us. We can look at each of these aspects as presents from our heavenly Father. It is a fullness which God provides for us, grace upon grace!
- This sermon word is a hymn, the so-called Logos-hymn, the Word-hymn if you like. This Word-Hymn puts the birth of Jesus in the context of the beginning of things. In verse 14 we hear about the birth of Christ: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."*
- Today we want to focus on the glory aspect of Jesus' birth. What did the Holy Spirit have in mind when He let the Gospel-writer write, *"we have seen His glory"*? Does that include us? Can we also see His glory?
- To answer this question, we need to know what glory we need to look for. What does this glory look like? This is a crucial question, because we are informed in verse 5 already, that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it! And that is why John the Baptist was necessary to bear witness about the light! We have a light here which was shining, but nobody recognised it!
- Now, from the first verses in this Gospel we know that the light is the person Jesus Christ, God's embodied Word, who has always been with God. This eternal Life, brought from eternity into this world, by Jesus, is the light of men.
- All people, whether they hate Him or love Him, live by the Life of Jesus. Every thing and every one was created by Jesus! He literally came in His own and His own did not receive Him! This is a truly remarkable verse and every atheist or whoever denies Jesus Christ even, almost 2000 years later,

proves the truth of this word. This word reveals a lot about how far natural humankind is removed from God. By nature we look for God in all the wrong places. That is, all religions are pitch dark. There is absolutely no light in them.

- Some argue that the religions also have a tiny bit of light because some religions have the knowledge of some of the laws of God. And this seems to make some sense. But, this still stands against the word in our passage! Why? Because the Life of Jesus is the Light, not the Law of God.
- Paul can say many tremendous things about the Law of God. The Law is holy, good and even spiritual, but, it is not the Light. It does not give Light because it does not have Life in itself! Jesus is the only One who came into our world to give us of His Life. And His Life is the Light which enlightens us, which switches us on, so to speak, that we hear Him and recognise Him for who He is.
- John writes [17]: “*...the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*” This summarises what we have said thus far and it takes us to how exactly Jesus came to hand out His Life, which is the Light. What this says is, that the Grace and Truth of God became tangible in the person Jesus. There was Grace and Truth lying in the manger. That is, Grace and Truth are not some virtual realities, some games God plays with us, some philosophical ideas. No. Grace and Truth of God became ... Grace and Truth became flesh.
- Grace and Truth speaks to you from person to person and you can speak to Grace and Truth, to the person who is God’s Grace and Truth. And as Grace and Truth speaks to you, the Grace of God becomes true for you! The Word become flesh, is full of Grace and Truth. He came to share Grace and Truth with you and me. He does this by speaking to you from person to

person, through the servants He has called and ordained.

- He came to us today to make known to us God the Father. God is a Father. And He wants to be known amongst the people He has made. That is why He sent His Son, to make Him known. God is a person, of course He has to be super intelligent and enormously powerful beyond our comprehension. But that is not God's essence. That does not explain God's nature.
- God is a person who cares for each and everyone of His people. He cares for you. He knows you, better than you know yourself. And Christmas is His work. The joy of Christmas is His idea. The Hymns of Christmas in Scripture and all Hymns who proclaim His Grace and Truth in Jesus are His work. He wants you to have joy. He does not want you to be afraid of His Grace and Truth. He wants to be known by you as being your Father in heaven, who really means it so good with you.
- And that is why He is here to give you presents, gifts, genuine gifts, grace upon grace. Not grace upon works. No. He wants you to listen to the Grace and Truth Jesus proclaims. As you receive from this fullness, you are filled with faith. And upon faith, which you have received, He gives you eternal Life and Salvation. And thus, your light is switched on, and He gives you the right to become a true child of God. A child who trusts in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- Do you now realise and see His glory? Jesus is God's Glory and it consists of Him fulfilling God's Grace and Truth and sharing it with us, in our hearing and in our eating and drinking, in our receiving the very Glory of God!
- Praise and honour be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
- *"Grace be with all of you!" Amen.* *[<sup>ESV</sup> Heb 13,25]*