

**Weekly Devotions
South Holburn Church
29th December 2020**

READINGS

I enjoy poetry, and I love that in John's gospel poetry is featured. I never fully appreciated John's gospel until during my ministry training when I learned that John was intentionally shaping his narrative to show what he believed theologically. In other words, the gospel expresses John's heart about who he believed Jesus to be, and not just the facts. When you hear the opening scene of John's gospel, I want you to think about a grand London theater production...the stage is set, and the curtain is ready to open. The anticipation of the show is about to be unveiled, and these words are read aloud:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1 (NRSVA)

Even before the beginning of time, Jesus, the divine *logos*, the wisdom of God, indeed God in the flesh, was present. This is a dramatic opening for the fourth gospel that differs from the other three. John wants to share a truth about the incarnation (the coming of God to earth) that has not yet been fully clear in the other gospels.

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.

John 1:2-5 (NRSVA)



REFLECTION

In this time of darker days, I need the light. I went out and bought loads of Christmas lights when they all became half price! I love to see the light enter a dark house. The light chases away the darkness and produces a warm glow. I don't know how Lydia will react when all the lights are gone! She loves them too! I do feel a bit like a child when I look at Christmas lights because they just fill me with joy and awe!

Now, when the Christmas tree and lights come down that is where the problems begin. All the hubbub and buildup of the season is gone. Many of us (myself included) might start to feel a little let down...the season is over, and we won't see it again for another year! Yet, when we think of the amazing drama being set in John's gospel, we realize that is far from the truth.

Yes, it is fun to see light displays and to decorate our homes and communities at Christmas, but how much more meaningful is it to know that Jesus brings us light and life that will last into eternity!

John's gospel reminds us that the light of Jesus overcomes all the darkness in our world.

We are all broken and need the light of Christ to live just like beautiful flowers need light and soil and rain to grow. We need all the experiences God gives us to mature in our faith.

Yet, just because Christmas is over it does not mean life has to be depressing. Just because we may feel a bit sad over the season ending does not mean it really has to end!

Why not keep your lights up throughout the year?? No, I am not suggesting you leave your tree up in your living room or your lights tacked up outside your house, but what if we lived with the reminder that Jesus is the one who shines into our dark places? That his light can transform our attitudes and perspectives, just like the Christmas lights give us a lift.

Maybe it is all about how we look at it and how we look to the future. Consider what Anna White, author of the book *Mended: Thoughts of Life, Love and Leaps of Faith*, says about the topic of finding beauty in our daily lives:

'Maybe it's not about having a beautiful day, but about finding beautiful moments. Maybe a whole day is just too much to ask. I could choose to believe that in every day, in all things, no matter how dark and ugly, there are shards of beauty if I look for them.'

God transforms us and that light is never extinguished! No matter how dark it may be, there are always reflections of beauty when we look to God to make it visible. I encourage you to consider how you can remind yourself of this truth during the rest of the dark winter. Here are just a few ideas!

- 1) **Put up some sticky notes with Scripture in places you will see them. Write on them reminders that God loves you and that Jesus is the light of the world.**

- 2) **Play music that lifts you up and brings you into God's presence, or just makes you happy. And who says you can't play Christmas songs after Christmas?**
- 3) **Spend time with God. When I get to feeling down it is usually because I am focusing on the wrong things. Yes, I like the glitz of Christmas, but I can't forget it is all about our relationship with God. So, becoming quiet and sitting before God in prayer, reading scripture and/or journaling can help a lot!**
- 4) **Surround yourself with people who lift you up! Call a friend (you probably will make them feel better too) and encourage one another.**
- 5) **Get outside, enjoy a good walk, observe the beauty of God's creation! Fresh air and exercise are sure to give us a reminder of the blessings and light in this world!**

Let me know your thoughts! What do you do to recover after Christmas?

Remember Jesus is our light and our life!

PRAYER

Loving God,
Thank you for the season that has just passed,
For the fun and for the joy it has brought us.
Help us to remember not everyone feels joy at the holidays.
It is ok that we might be feeling a bit let down after it is all over.
Help us to focus on the truth that Jesus is the light of the world.
He is the light bringer who breaks through our darkness and gives us hope.
Thank you that we can have hope in the darkness,
and we can be a source of hope for others.

In Jesus name
Amen

