

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
Christmas Day
25 December 2010
Grace Lutheran Church, Wichita
John 1:1-18

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

It's much easier emphasize the light of Christmas morning when there's snow on the ground.
It has a way of reflecting the sun's rays so that light hits you both from above and below.
And in a certain sense, you get wrapped all up in this light.

In this morning's Gospel, the word "light" appears 6 times, 7 if you count the verb "enlighten."
In other words, it's a big deal.

You'll also notice that St. John begins his Gospel,
"In the beginning..."

The Apostle John here is writing a new Genesis—
he's saying "Moses has taken you so far; now let's connect the dots."

"In the beginning was the Word" (Jn 1:1).

Again, think back to Genesis,
**"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...And God said,
'Let there be *Light*'"** (Gen 1:1,3).

Light came forth from the Word.
"In the beginning was the *Word*; the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God."

It was the *Word*, the Son of God, who brought light first into the world on Day 1 of creation.
There was no sun or moon or stars or fluorescent light bulbs on Day 1—
and yet there was *Light*!

And so John goes on to tell us,
"In Him was life, and the life was the *light* of men" (Jn 1:4).

The Word, the Son of God, has life in Himself and that life is your *light*.

But this world has become a very dark place.
It's not only darker this time of year, but it's dark and blackened by death.
It's dark because it doesn't know the light—
and when the light shines, this world tries its best to shut it out.

This is no longer the "Christmas Season" but the "Holiday Season."
It's no longer okay to decorate public yards with Nativity Scenes,
but Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red-Nosed-Reindeer are just fine.
And perhaps most devastating yet, it's not faith in Christ that counts,
but "do you believe in Santa."

The world is dark with sin,
 it's dark with broken homes and broken families,
 it's dark with hatred and violence and mourning and sadness,
 it's dark with death.

But as dark as this world is, it's not dark enough to blot out the light of Christ!
"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not [cannot] overcome it!"
 (Jn 1:5)

This *Light* that shines in the darkness,
 the *Light* that shined in the darkness on Day 1 of creation,
 is the *Light* that comes from the Word, the Son of God—
 and that **"Light was coming into the world"** (Jn 1:9).

This Light, this Word of God, is seen throughout the Old Testament on the Prophets' lips—
 "The *Word* of the Lord came to...so and so."

Whenever the prophets spoke, they spoke the *Word*, the Son of God.
 But as John says,
"He came to His own, but His own didn't receive Him" (Jn 1:11).

Now, it's easy to understand *why* they didn't want Him—
 darkness is fun, it's thrilling,
 you do what you want, when you want, and how you want.
 You're in charge in the darkness.

But God wouldn't have you dwelling in darkness.
 As much as you like it and as much as you think you have freedom in the darkness,
 you're actually trapped—
 what looks like freedom and fun is actually death and slavery.

Darkness is death—it's without the light which is life.

Just as you can't live without the sun's brilliant rays of light for a long period of time,
 even more so, you can't live without the *Light* of the *Word*, the Son of God!

And so John gives us the most astounding Christmas message:
"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).

The Word that brought forth Light on Day 1 of creation,
 the Word that came down through the lips of the prophets to the people of old,
 the Word who is Himself Light and Life,
 became *man* and lived among us.

Jesus is the Light of the World (Jn 8:12).
 In *Him* is life—He's the Life of the World (Jn 14:6).

The little baby Jesus,
 whom we gather around and worship this day with Angels and Shepherds,
 with Mary and Joseph,
 is Himself our Light and our Life.

He shines in the darkness;
He brings comfort to the distressed and worried;
He heals our diseases and raises the dead;
He comes to us in flesh and blood as our Creator and now Redeemer.

And when this Light comes to you, it won't let you stay in the darkness.
 It draws you out, lifts you up, and surrounds you—
 even without any snow outside, you have light both above and beneath.

It's by this *Light* that you have become Children of God.
 You are the *enlightened* ones—
 those bearing the Light to the world.

This Light, this Christ, the Word, the Son of God came to you in your baptism.
 You came to believe in Him—you received Him—you were born *again* by Him—
“Not by a certain blood line; not by your own will, nor the will of another” (Jn
 1:13)—
 you were born by God, by the Word becoming Flesh and dwelling *within* you.
 It was Him coming to you; not you coming to Him.

The Word, which is the Light of the World took on flesh and now lives within *you*.
 God now lives within you.

And so, just as Christ is the Light of the World,
 you also are the Light of the World.
 You are little *Christs*, little *Words*, little *Lights*,
 sent to be Light and Life in the midst of darkness and death.

You're, like St. John the Baptist and St. John the Apostle,
 witnesses to this Light.

You speak and live and work in and for this Light.

The Christmas message of the Word becoming Flesh isn't just for this “Holiday Season—“
 it's for always—always giving light and life in the midst of darkness and death.

At your work in your home as you play and in your tears,
 may the Word become Flesh be your light and your life—
 and not yours only, but also all those wandering about in a dark and broken world.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit