***God’s Christ Comes Enfleshed***

**Eternal Word Made Flesh**

12.25.2020

Christmas Day – 2020

Today, we are here to celebrate a birthday, but who is this Child whose birth the angels heralded? What is it about Jesus, the Christ, that the whole nation takes a national holiday to rejoice at His birth? OK, maybe that is not entirely true. Some have no regard whatsoever for Jesus, God’s Christ.

Unfortunately, many people think of Christmas only as a day to exchange gifts in some sort of “holiday” spirit with family. And if they cannot get together with family for this yearly exchange of gifts, Christmas does not happen.

I wonder how many understand the etymology of the word holiday. (Etymology is a $2 word that means, the historical development of a word) Holiday is actually a compound word coming from the words holy and day. It means holy day. Of course, the meaning of holiday is now perverted to mean a government mandated day off.

Many try not to think of Christmas as a holy day, and want nothing to do with the Child born two thousand years ago. You are here to celebrate a birth. Why? What is so special about this one Child?

Our Gospel illuminates the importance of this Child, reminding us that He has been from before the world began. This Child is the eternal Word.

Our text teaches us much about Christ, the Word of God incarnate. Verse one says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Verse 14 makes a further connection, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

This Child, the Christ-child, is the Word of God made flesh. He was in the beginning when all was made, He was with God, and in even more, the Word was God. This Word still is God. Further on our text explains what this Word has done: *He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.* Yes, all thing were made through Him.

In Genesis’ account of creation, we know that God spoke things into existence. And God said, "Let there be light," and it happened. The Word of God brought the reality into existence. Six times Genesis recounts for us God's speaking things into existence. It was solely The Word that caused the reality to come about and exist. That Word of God is still in force today, causing all life that comes into existence, to come into being.

Does it mean that God is still speaking as that creative Word, bringing about life? Yes! You see, God spoke, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply." It is this Word which causes all life to reproduce. That Word of command is still in force. That Word, spoken millennium before is still producing life. If God were to speak a different word ending that command, all life would cease to procreate. There would be no more new life in any of their kind, because God's Word would remove the power to multiply.

Too often, the procreation of life is said to be in the hands of the individual species. You know how science textbooks say that new life comes about? There is the male and the female of the species that mate, and bingo, things happen, and there is an offspring. And God ***said*** to them, "Be fruitful and multiply." (Gen. 1) It is the Word that brought about life in the beginning, that Word still effectively brings new life into the world today.

But what about you, do you view it that way? Do you see the Word of God, Jesus Christ, as He who brings about all life? Is it the Word of God, Christ, who people see as that which brings all things into being? Let our text answer for us. *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

When Adam and Eve fell, darkness covered the soul of mankind, a darkness so deep that even light is not powerful enough to overcome it. Man's free will rejects God, it is a darkness that covers our benighted planet. Paul writes to the church at Rome: *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.  (Hear how the darkness covers men's hearts?)  Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.  (Romans 1:21-23)*

Today we see this all over as creation is elevated, and God is devalued. Now we have people worship creation, ascribing the bringing about life of through a chance process called evolution. Many people today believe that all plants and animals evolved from lower life forms. If God was involved, He simply set things in motion, and all life simply developed on its own. Even man, who the Word created as the crown of His creation, the same man whom God gave dominion over all life, this man – humankind – is seen as just another animal.

Look at your own body. Could that have evolved from primordial mud?  Your blood vessels, veins, arteries, and capillaries if put end to end would reach around the world two and a half times. That kind of complexity happened all on its own?  It takes an enormous amount of faith to believe such a thing, but people deny God?

You and I like to think that we have so much control over our own lives. When in truth, our lives and the lives of our children were made, not by the whim of our parents, or even by an ooops! God chose who we would be, when we would be, and when our children would come about. The Word planned even the ooopsies, at the beginning of creation, He decreed that they would be born. Not only did He decree they would be born, He knew the name of every person who would ever live, and what their lives would be like, when spoke in the garden, "Be fruitful and multiply."

But today, the darkness is pervasive - denial of the Word rules in our world.

Christmas Day is the celebration of the Word becoming flesh to dwell among us.  It is the day in which God bestowed upon the world His gift to bring about life, even life eternal to all who believe. And those creatures He created bow down before a decorated tree and reach beneath it with such joy to find the man-made gifts wrapped in pretty paper, ribbons and bows. They thank Santa, family and friends for the gifts they receive, while the Word, which gave them life, hears little thanks or praise this day.

We are all guilty, to some extent, of worshiping the creation rather than the Creator.

You are all guilty of getting swept up in the spirit of this age and the rapture into which Satan has perverted what should be a celebration of the Nativity of the Word made flesh.

Still others will take today and claim worship of the Word made flesh as their first priority. They will state how they have come to faith, and that they have chosen to worship God first this day. They will claim that they have decided to follow Jesus and not the world. But in this claim, they are also worshiping the creature rather than the Creator. They are claiming that they themselves are responsible for their faith and have rendered null and void, the very gift God wishes to give them. They rob God as they claim responsibility for what they believe, by claiming that their faith is their own work.

This is not so my friends. Even your faith is not your work. Faith is not something you do. You cannot decide to follow Jesus. It is not your work, it is God's work, it is the work of the Word of God. Look at our text. *He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

God's own did not receive Him. That is, the Jewish people, God's chosen Old Testament church, denied the Christ. And those who did not deny Him, those who did come to faith, did so not because of their own will, not of their own blood, or of the will of their flesh. No, these who believe on His name do so because of the will of God. Their faith was born by the Word coming to them and changing their heart into believing hearts. It is God's Word which creates life and life eternal through faith. God's Word makes a believing heart.

Today you are here. God's will brought you here, He did it by working through the Word you have heard unto this very moment. That Word of God, Christ Jesus, sends His Spirit to make hearts believe unto life everlasting. The Word of God is still the creating Word - creating faith - creating life eternal.

Today again, that Word of God comes to you. The Babe of Bethlehem comes to you. A pastor speaks, and the Word of God forgives sins, for the Word causes the reality to exist. The Word causes the reality of Christ's body and blood to be present in the Sacrament of the altar - sins are forgiven, and eternal life and salvation are given as the gift.

Dear friends in Christ, the Child of Bethlehem is the Word who spoke long ago and brought your life into the world. The Word made flesh gave His life unto death to redeem you. And when you gather together with those who share that same faith with you, He gives you Himself, in the Word you hear and in the Word which is the Sacrament. Each time you receive these gifts is like a little Christmas, for there is God’s gift of Christmas wrapped up an hidden in Word, water, bread, and wine for you to unwrap. These gifts of Christmas give you the life of the world to come. Rejoice in His Holy Name, for all life - your life - now and forevermore - comes from the Word.  Amen.