

John 1:1–18
Christmas Day
Kaiserslautern Ev. Luth. Ch.
December 25, 2022

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dearly bought hearers by the blood of Jesus Christ,

Last night on Christmas Eve, we heard about the lowly child born in Bethlehem, our Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Today we delve even deeper into the mystery of the incarnation, that God Himself, the maker of all things, became a man to die for us and to make us new. We consider who this Christ child actually is as the Son of God and creator of all things and how He makes us sons of God.

Our Gospel reading this morning opens with the words “In the beginning was the Word.” The Holy Spirit inspired John to begin his Gospel at the beginning to remind us of the opening verses of the Bible in Genesis 1: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” “In the beginning was the Word.” “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” And “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God *said* . . .” There you have it. John is not making up something new. He is telling us exactly what Genesis says, something that many don’t see. And God *said*, that is, he spoke something. In the beginning was the Word.

This Word of God, though, is both similar and different from our words. Like our words, God’s Word has the power to do something. The tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things (James 3:5) because of the words it speaks. Our words have great power. Just think about the pain you’ve caused or the pain you’ve felt because of words that have been spoken. Think about the affection you’ve shown or how you have been strengthened by the encouraging word

of a friend. Our words are so powerful because they express our internal thoughts and emotions. Our words are so powerful because they reflect who we actually are. Sometimes this leads to great harm and sometimes to great good. Like our words, the Word of God has the power to do something. God's Word reflects His very being. God speaks and creation is there. God speaks and miracles happen. God speaks and lives are changed.

But the Word of God is most unique in this sense: the Word of God is a person. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *He* was in the beginning with God. All things were made through *him*, and without *him* was not any thing made that was made." The Word of God is the Second person of the Holy Trinity. There is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; three Persons, yet one God. All three persons of the Godhead are always together. They can never be separated. In anything God does, all three persons are involved. So we see in creation, back in Genesis, that God, that is, God the Father, created all things by speaking a word, that is God the Son. And the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, was hovering over the waters. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons. One God.

And what was the first thing God created by the power of His Word? Light. In Genesis 1 we read: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" In John 1 it says "In him" that is, in the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." The Word of God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord is the light of the world. Later in the Gospel of John Jesus says: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jesus is the true light. All natural light, the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars, the light we produce with electricity, all that light is like Jesus, the Son of God. Just as light brings clarity and illumines our way, so does Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity. The

world makes sense in light of Jesus because Jesus made all things. In Christ Jesus, the Father made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose. In the Word made flesh, the Father revealed a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is what unites all things in heaven and on earth. Jesus shows us the way to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself is that way to the Father. Later in the Gospel of John Jesus says: “ I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus reveals the will of God the Father to us. He is the light shining in the darkness, enlightening mankind by clearly showing us that God loves us. All the trials and tribulations of this life make sense in light of the truth of Jesus Christ, for in Him, all things work together for our good.

Jesus Christ, the true light, who enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. That’s what we celebrate at Christmas. The true light of the world, the creator of light and of life and of all things, came into the dark world as a little baby. The one who created man at the beginning became part of His creation. The one who created life came into this life to give us new life. Jesus came into the world to reveal the path that leads us back to God and He Himself is that path. Throughout history He came into the world in the words of the prophets, in the words of Holy Scripture, but at Christmas God Himself came into the world. God became man.

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know him. The light of the world came into the world to reveal the Father, but the world preferred to cover its eyes. The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. The Word of God came to speak about the things of God, but the world covered its ears. John says that the Word came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. Jesus Christ was born a Jew, but the Jewish people rejected Him. The teachers of

Israel sought to have Christ killed for blasphemy, for speaking against God. God came to man as a man, and man rejected God by nailing Him to the cross.

But to all who did receive Christ, who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. “God the Father chose us in our Lord Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him” (Ephesians 1). Before the Holy Trinity created the world, He had you in mind. He knew how He would draw you to Himself. “In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. In Him, we children of the world become children of God.

When John says that the children of God are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God, he is saying that being born as God’s children is different than natural birth. In John 3, Jesus says to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, that “unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus thought this would involve entering a second time into his mother’s womb to be born again, but Jesus explains that “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Think back to Genesis 1, water and Spirit. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit. Just as the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the world in the beginning, so does the Holy Trinity re-create you, dear Christian, in the waters of Holy Baptism. Jesus Himself said to go into all the world, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is in Baptism that you became a child of God; a new creature. When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, when the Word of God came into this world as a child, He saved us not because of our works but according to His

mercy. God saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. He justified us by His grace so that we might become heirs, children of God, according to the hope of eternal life. In Baptism we are joined to Christ's death and resurrection. In Baptism, we are joined to Christ, and if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

At Christmas, the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He continues to dwell among us in His word. And in Holy Baptism we dwell in Him. We have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. The true light that enlightens the world, Jesus Christ, is among us and reveals to us the way to God the Father through Himself and in the Holy Spirit. And in His light we have life, life in Him who is making all things new. The Creator of all things has been joined to His creation. He who spoke all things into existence still comes to us with His Word to give us light and new life. Praise be to the Triune God for all eternity! In the name of Jesus, Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. We stand for the Offertory.