

John 1:1–18
Christmas Day
Kaiserslautern Ev. Luth. Ch.
December 25, 2023

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,

The Gospel reading for Christmas Day from John 1 takes us back to the beginning, to the first day of creation, and even beyond that to eternity. On Christmas Eve, we focus on the fact that God became man in time, born of the Virgin Mary. On Christmas Day, we focus on the fact that that same Christchild, born of the Virgin Mary, is LORD over all things.

The creation account of Genesis 1 is a parallel to John 1. “In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth.” That’s how the Bible begins. And then John the Evangelist says: “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 Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, was there with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in eternity. He is the Word of creation, spoken into nothingness, the cause of all that exists.

John continues with His theme of creation saying that in Jesus, in the Word of God, was life, and that life was the light of men. Life and light go together. Without light comes the darkness of death. On the first day, God said: “Let there be light.” And there was light. God separated the light from the darkness and called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” There was evening and morning, the first day. On the third day, there was life, plant life. On the fourth day, light from the sun, moon and stars, on the fifth day the life that fills the sea and the air and

on the sixth day the life that inhabits the land. In the Bible and in creation, from Paradise until today, life and light go together.

And in the Bible, God is described in terms of both light and life. He who dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:16) is also called “the living God.” In Him is life and in His light we see light. Everything that has life, whether plant or animal, derives that life from God Himself, who is the source of life, the one who breathes life into His creatures. Light and life always go together, and they come from the living God.

Jesus is the living God. He is the light of the world. In Him there is no darkness at all. In Him, in the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. When you turn on a light, the darkness flees. That’s the way it works with Jesus. Light swallows up darkness, and life swallows up death. As creation defeated nothingness, so does new creation overcome what has been lost to sin and death.

And there are witnesses to this light, witnesses to Jesus. People have seen this light, and they say to those sitting in darkness: “Look, there’s light! There’s hope! The light will swallow up the darkness, life will swallow up death!” Jesus is the life and the light. And the preachers of the Gospel from Adam to John the Baptist and beyond bear witness to this life and this light. They proclaim what has long been written down, that Jesus Christ is the light shining in the darkness, the light no darkness can overcome. The Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. The Word of God is clear and He shows us the way to the Father.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. It started with rays of light in the Old Testament, with prophecies of the coming Messiah. It continued with John the Baptist, who revealed the Messiah to the people of Israel. Jesus was born into the world that He

made. That's what Christmas is all about! But the world did not recognize its Creator. That's how far man fell into sin. Fallen man runs away from his Creator and attempts to hide within creation, surrounding himself with the pleasures of this world. Jesus came to His own people, to the people of God, and His own people did not receive Him. They nailed Him to the cross. Our sin snuffed out the light. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among man, but man exchanged the glory of the immortal God for mere images of Paradise, images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

The world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him, but by a miracle worked by the Holy Spirit, those who do receive the Christ Child, those who believe in His name, are made children of God, saved not because of their flesh and blood ancestry, but by water and the Word, by the grace of God alone. In Baptism, sinners from every tribe, and language, and people and nation become God's children, including you. In Baptism, the spiritually blind receive the light of Christ. The eyes of faith are opened so you can see Jesus in the Scriptures. Your eyes are opened to see God at work in the world and in your life. Indeed, in Baptism, you are given new life. You are a new creation, born from above. Baptized into the Son of God, you became sons of God, truly born of God. In Baptism, you were joined to the Light and the Life, to Jesus Christ Himself.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Word who was with God, the Word who is God, became flesh. God became man. We repeat this truth over and over again in Christianity. Never let the profundity wear off. God and man are united forever. In Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh, God dwells with us. The baby in the manger is God. The man nailed to the cross is God. The man risen from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sitting at the right hand of His Father and your Father, is God and man, united forever, ruling over all creation.

The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and He continues dwelling among us forever, in His Word and in His Sacraments now, and later in eternal glory. In the face of Jesus, the Christchild, we behold the glory of God, full of grace and truth. May that same Word of God, our LORD Jesus Christ, grant you life and light now and always. 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.