

December 25, 2022
The Nativity of our Lord (Christmas Day)
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH
Pastor Joel Sutton

John 1:1-14 (Hebrews 1:1-6)

YOU HAVE THE WORD.

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

Our text for meditation today comes from the Gospel according to St John, the 1st chapter, which you heard read earlier.

If you were like me as a child, your eyes always got big and wide as you scanned under the Christmas tree searching for a huge gift marked with your name. But as you grew and matured, you likely discovered that the greatest gifts in life do not come in packages wrapped under a tree.

On the cover of your bulletin this morning is a sketch of the greatest gift ever given, the Christ Child, Jesus Christ, our Lord. He has many titles but perhaps one of His most interesting title is written in the sketch on your bulletin. And if it looks Greek to you – that is because it is Greek. It says “ὁ λόγος” which means The Word.

There is a little phrase always makes me a little suspicious. The phrase is: “*I give you my word.*” In today’s world those five words have become the set-up line for disappointment. We live in a society of broken promises and empty vows. Pledges are made, oaths are given, only to be quickly forgotten or broken. You have heard it before: “*I’ll always be there for you.*” “*You can count on me!*” “*Till death do us part.*” “*I give you my word.*” “*I will keep in touch.*” Promises given. Promises taken back – as if they never meant anything to begin with.

But God keeps His promises. And in our Gospel text it is as if God is saying: “*You have my Word!*” In verse one, St John writes:

“*In the beginning was the Word...*” (John 1:1)

And in verse fourteen he writes:

“*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...*” (John 1:14)

In the Old Testament days God’s prophets were His spokesmen. Whatever He had to say, He said it through His prophets. But in Mary’s womb, the Word became flesh, and after Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem everything changed. God no longer used prophets to speak in His stead. (cf: Hebrews 1:1–2) The God/man Jesus is the Word by which God makes Himself audible. He is not silent. He speaks and He is heard. It is the Word by which He makes all things happen.

When you hear the opening words of our Gospel text, “*in the beginning,*” perhaps you think of the Creation story in the book of Genesis where Moses records:

“*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*” (Genesis 1:1)

Jesus, the Word, was present and participated in creation. The Holy Spirit inspires St. John to connect the dots for us. He writes:

“In the beginning was the Word.” (John 1:1)

When he writes those first three words *“in the beginning,”* John connects Jesus, the Word, with creation using words *“life,” “light”* and *“darkness.”*

When God created the heavens and the earth the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. (cf: Genesis 1:2) But then God said:

“Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Genesis 1:3)

Your words and mine have zero creative power. But God’s Word is powerful. His Word not only creates – but it also powerfully sustains His creation. His Word is the most powerful force in the world. The prophet Isaiah writes:

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” (Isaiah 40:8)

He also writes:

“[The Lord says] ... my word... that goes out from my mouth... shall not return to me empty.” (Isaiah 55:11)

The Psalmist writes:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

God’s Word called Abraham from unbelief to faith. (cf: Genesis 12:1–3) The Word spoke to Moses from a burning bush (cf: Exodus 3:2–4); gave manna and quail in the wilderness (cf: Exodus 16:13, 31); spoke to Moses in thunder from Mt. Sinai (cf: Exodus 19:19); yet spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice. (cf: 1 Kings 19:12) God’s Word even made dry bones come to life and stand on their feet. (cf: Ezekiel 37:1–14) His Word always does exactly what it says. You have His Word.

Jesus, the Word become flesh, is not merely a junior partner with God. Jesus is not God’s vice president. Unlike the prophets of old, He is more than God’s mouthpiece. St John says:

“... the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

... meaning, Jesus is completely, fully, and really, God. The Word is God. The Word is Jesus.

In the Word is Life. (cf: John 1:4) The Word comes into the world to give life to all who believe. The Holy Spirit working through the Word, creates faith and the Word gives life to those who have received the Spirit and have become His children. In the Word is the Light of men, revealing the way of God’s will in the lives of mankind. The Word became flesh, revealing to all mankind, God’s glory.

God is not some mystery to be solved but a knowable God, revealed in the flesh and bone of a walking, talking, eating and drinking man, the Word become flesh. And as John’s Gospel continues, the Holy Spirit inspires John to reveal Jesus being the Word as recorded in the Old Testament. From the burning bush, God told Moses:

“I am who I am.” (Exodus 3:14)

John records seven ***“I am”*** statements. Jesus says:

“I am the Bread of Life...” (John 6:35)

“I am the Light of the World...” (John 8:12)

“I am the Door...” (John 10:7)

“I am the Good Shepherd...” (John 10:14)

“I am the Resurrection and the Life...” (John 11:25)

“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life...” (John 14:6)

“I am the true Vine...” (John 15:1)

Christ Jesus, the Word, is not only connected to God – the Word **is** God! You have His word on it. But wait – there is even more! The Word is also connected to those who believe. We live in a darkened and sinful world. But dear Christian, when you are in the dark you have the Light! The Word is the light of men.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:5)

It is a present tense reality. John does not write *“the light shone”* or *“the light will shine.”* No. He writes, *“The light **shines** in the darkness.”* In your darkness, in the darkest hours of your life, the light shines on your path to comfort you, giving life and salvation.

Think of the dark day of Good Friday. Pain. Suffering. Blood. Three hours of darkness! And then death. But three days later, the Light shines. Again. The present tense. The Light shines! The darkness will never overcome Jesus, the Light of the world. The darkness will never overcome you! And why is that? You have God’s Word!

He says:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.” (John 14:27)

He says:

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Hold onto the Word. Hold **fast** to God’s Word. When fears come, say to yourself, *“I have God’s Word.”* When doubts arise, say to yourself, *“I have God’s Word.”* When guilt overwhelms, say to yourself, *“I have God’s Word.”* In God’s Word, you can trust and depend.

Among sinful humans the phrase: *“I give you my word”* has become a set-up line for disappointment. But not when God speaks. He has given you His word. It is the Word connected to creation and connected to God – so that He can forever be connected to you. Connected to you as the Light that shines in your darkness. God says, *“You have my Word.”* And what an awesome Word it is. Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understand, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,
Amen.