

## **Sermon – Christmas Night**

**John 1: 1-16, Hebrews 1:1-4, Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 98**

Oh sing a new song to the Lord, today is born a savior, Christ the Lord!

It's Christmas! A time of celebration! Across our nation, we have a public holiday. Many people will be celebrating in various ways, with food and wine, family and friends. That Christmas spirit is pervasive in our society, and even if people aren't celebrating the day as the birth of Christ, there is definitely a sense of the celebration of life, of all that can be good in our world. Christmas is often a day in which we suspend thoughts about the brokenness of our world and even in our own lives and, for a moment, bask in the haze of hope of good times and the joy of a better place.

But for Christians, and those who find themselves in church at the midnight service, there is something more to Christmas. And our gospel reading tonight invites us into the deeper meaning of the coming of the Christ child, the revelation of God in human form. So tonight, I want to look into this revelation, this good news, and how we respond to it, 2000 years later in a world where much has changed, but at other levels, a world where much remains the same.

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.....

The opening line of John's Gospel is poetic, evocative, and intriguing. It is poetic in cadence and rhythm. The Gospel writer immediately lifts us up out of the normal and engages our minds and perhaps also our hearts. It is evocative, sending us into our own thoughts of the beginning, perhaps our own beginning, our own creation, beyond our memory and into our imaginations. It takes us back to that other beginning in Genesis, when God created the universe, light and dark, land and sea, man and woman.

And like that "In the beginning", this opening verse of John's Gospel is intriguing. God again takes centre stage with John introducing another term for God, the Word.

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.....

This Word, this divine wisdom, this divine action, as when God said "Let there be light" in the very beginning, the power and transcendence of our great creator God. And John goes on with more echoes of Genesis and in more poetic language:

In him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it.

In God we have life, and this life is available to all people. And in using the metaphor of light overcoming darkness, John is saying that all people have access to this light and that this light can indeed be a beacon into our lives no matter how dark our earthly life might sometimes be.

Our great creator God made life and is life, and in the most intriguing and mysterious twist of all, verse 14 says:

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This Word, this God, became human and lived with us. Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation. God coming to be with us in the form that we can actually relate to, as a human being. Christ is the creative power of God made visible to us in a human life – full of grace and truth.

And this is reiterated in the Letter to the Hebrews in verse 3 when referring to Jesus:

He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word.

So how do we respond to this revelation today, 2000 years later? This great Christmas revelation? God revealed to us in human form. Jesus - who will ultimately take away our pain, our disconnection, our brokenness, with saving grace today and the promise of eternal life tomorrow. This is a message of great joy and enormous hope.

So, let us all go out with joy, confident in this good news and praising and glorifying God. This celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ is a special day. And God calls all of us into the joy of this light, the grace given through Jesus and the promise of life eternal. Let's spread that joy among our family and friends and the people that we meet today, tomorrow and the next day. Let us share this precious light with the world.