

December 27, 2020

Christ Episcopal Church Dallas

John 1:1-18

The Word Lived Among Us

“How was your Christmas?” Is a question I have asked and been asked over the last few days. While I understand what is being asked I also hear an underlying assumption that Christmas is over. “Happy Birthday Jesus” suggests that Christmas is the celebration of a past event, an anniversary. It is the reason why in at least a few homes the tree has already been taken down, the decorations packed away for another year, and the leftovers thrown out.

This isn’t a criticism or judgment just an observation that we are an event driven people. We tend to live our lives from one event to the next. If you don’t think so just take a look at your calendar. Even in this time of a pandemic our lives are a schedule of events. On the occasional day with no scheduled events we tend to say “nothing is going on that day” or “I’m not doing anything that day.” As if there is no life, nothing to learn or discover, nothing to experience on those days. How different is St. John’s view of life and humanity!

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” St. Gregory of Nyssa, says Christmas is the “festival of re-creation.” It is God giving God’s own life to his people. It is as if God is saying “I want people to see my face, hear my voice. I want them to live my life.” The son of God became the son of man so that we could be clothed in his divinity.

This festival of re-creation is God's way of celebrating humanity. It means we are holy and intended to be holy not as an achievement of our own but as a gift from God. This is the gift of Christmas. We have been given the power to become children of God. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us."

The purpose of this prologue of John's Gospel is to answer "What is God like? Who is God? How can I know God?"

To begin, we as humans are the tangible, outward, and visible signs and carriers of God's inward and spiritual presence. Have you ever thought of yourself as a sacrament? Are we not the sacramental image of God? If not, why not? Why do we not see that in ourselves and each other?

In the Jewish tradition rabbis tell a story that each person has a procession of angels going before them and crying out, "Make way for the image of God." Isn't that wonderful? Imagine how different our lives and world would be if we lived our lives this way? Everywhere we would go angels go with us announcing us as the image of God? Reminding us who we are. That is the truth of Christmas. It is also the Christmas truth for the person living next door, for those we love, for those we fear, for those who are like us and for those who are different, for the stranger and for our enemies. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us."

This changes how we see ourselves and one another, the way we live, our actions and our words. It means that Christmas cannot be limited to an event. Christmas is a life to be lived, a way of being. Christmas should be seen more as a verb than a noun. Instead of how was your Christmas we should be asking how is your Christmassing! How are you recognizing the Word become flesh in your own life? Are you recognizing the Word

become flesh in the lives of others? Do you see the procession of angels and hear their voices?

The Word became flesh and has never ceased living among us. So make way. Wherever you go. Whatever you are doing. Whoever you are with. Make way for the image of God. Christmas your way through life.

Now more than ever we need to experience the joy and love of Christmas daily; for ourselves and for others. Listen for the sounds of angels.

Amen.