

# “Light was Life to Live By”

## John 1: 1-14

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

<sup>2</sup>The Word was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.<sup>5</sup> The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not <sup>4</sup>comprehend it.

### The Witness John

<sup>6</sup>There <sup>4</sup>came a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup><sup>4</sup>He came <sup>4</sup>as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup><sup>4</sup>He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.

The true light that shines on all people  
was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>The light was in the world,  
and the world came into being through the light,  
but the world didn't recognize the light.

<sup>11</sup>The light came to his own people,  
and his own people didn't welcome him.

<sup>12</sup>But those who did welcome him,  
those who believed in his name,  
he authorized to become God's children,

<sup>13</sup>born not from blood  
nor from human desire or passion,  
but born from God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh  
and made his home among us.

We have seen his glory,  
glory like that of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth.

This week, one of the questions from our devotional was “Where do you see the hand of God working in the midst of the shadows?” I think the better question is “Where do you see the hand of God working in the midst of the chaos because

that is what it has felt like for me this week....chaos. From moving back to virtual school, to missed important zoomed board meetings, to reluctantly embracing the challenges of social media as it relates to mission and ministry, something which is pushing me way out of my comfort zone, chaos has definitely been defining the beginning of Advent for me.

I know that I am not alone in this sentiment. We are watching the rising COVID-19 numbers. We continue to see our state show red. More and more, we are hearing stories about the people in our circle who are being diagnosed with COVID-19, which has us constantly wondering are we next? And on top of all this happening at the community and state level, on the national level, we are sensing the unease of transition as it spills over into power plays and power struggles while the people on the margins continue to be forgotten and ignored. Here and now, I think it is safe to say that Chaos is a living, breathing, tangible thing which is threatening to overtake our world.

I do not say this to alarm anyone because I think we are all alarmed more than enough at this point. And I do not say this to preach gloom and doom when we were just hoping to find a little bit of good news this morning. I share this with you because it is against this bleak background of broken systems, rising numbers of sickness, against this bleak background of sorrow and pain, on this Second

Sunday of Advent, as people of faith, we are invited to find the hand of God working. In the midst of this chaos, we are invited to find light. In the midst of all this chaos, we are invited to find hope, to find peace, to find strength, knowing that the darkness will not overtake the light, to find courage, knowing that in the midst of all this stuff which we cannot comprehend, we can rest assured that we are not alone....just like people of God have been doing since the beginning of time when the Spirit of God first moved across the darkness and brought forth new life for all of God's people.

In our text for today, John tells us that in the beginning was the Word, and that the Word was with God, and that the Word was God, that the Word was Love, that the Word comes to us telling us that "it will set us free, that it will not let us be anything but holy, good and free." In our faith story, time and time again, both in the New Testament and in the Old Testament, as people of faith, we are told that in the beginning, there was life, there was light and it was good.

With just the first few words of John's prologue, we are taken back in our imagination to the first days of creation, when chaos swirled all around and darkness filled the world. Then suddenly, through the chaos, a light appears, a light begins to shine.

The darkness and the light....each one blending together, each one outlining the Breath of God as it moves, each one working together to tell the story of creation, to tell the story of new life, to tell the story of God's love for the world.

As we hear these familiar words, as we remember our beginnings which are found in the darkness and the light, it would be so easy to assume that these two things are opposites, that they stand in contrast to one another because that is how we have been trained...to simplify everything, to see this world in terms of either/or. Yet, John reminds us that the story of our faith does not work that way. John tells us that the Word of God is both seen and unseen. It is both experienced and remains a mystery. It is here but not yet. John tells us that darkness and light are working together bring understanding, bringing us wisdom, showing us God's grace in the midst of it all.

By seeing the darkness and light as two parts of the same whole, we are invited to reframe our conversations, to experience the complexity and simplicity found in God's creation, to experience the known and the mystery of our faith because as one commentator put it, they point us to a foundational truth of our God....which is that "Jesus did not rescue God's people from a dark and dangerous world. Rather Jesus comes into the world and becomes one of us so that we might become as he is."

That is the promise of Advent...God with us. The Word Made Flesh...  
“living among us, living with us, mending broken hearts, wiping tears from crying  
eyes, feeding the poor with bread and hope, God with us. The Word Made Flesh  
“healing the blind and sick, making the lame walk, speaking God’s love to all  
people.”

God is with us, The Word Made Flesh becoming a light for all God’s people,  
bringing life for all God’s people. God is with us, The Word Made Flesh, shaping  
us, transforming us into the people God created and call us to be...people of hope,  
people of peace, people whose mission it is to testify to one and all concerning the  
light because....we have seen it’s glory. We have experienced its grace. Because  
of the light, because of the Word Made Flesh becoming one of us so that we can  
become as he is, we know that the hand of God is always working in the midst of  
the shadows, in the midst of the darkness, in the midst of the chaos, illuminating all  
corners of the world, telling us once more of God’s love for all of God’s people.

That is why in the midst of the pain, we can sing hymns of comfort and joy  
because we know that our God is so much bigger than any box we try to put God  
in. God is always moving. God is always changing the narrative. God is always  
there to remind us that light and love will always have the last word.

Because you see, our faith has never been about either/or. It has always been about both and. It has always been about shadows and light telling us the story of new life for all of God's people.

So it is my prayer, it is my hope that as we continue our journey through Advent, letting the shadows and the light guide us, that our hearts will be open, that our eyes will be open, that our ears will be open to where the hand of God is working in the midst of chaos telling us the story of God's love now and forevermore. Amen.