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Our Saviour Lutheran Church  
Christmas 2  
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Let us pray...May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, for you are our strength and you are most certainly our redeemer. Amen.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, our gospel reading this morning consists of the Prologue from John's Gospel.

And this Prologue is a snapshot of the Creation Story from Genesis.

Indeed the Prologue and the Creation Story begin in the same way.

In the beginning...

In the beginning when God made the heavens and the earth...(Genesis 1:1)

AND In the beginning was the Word...(John 1:1)

Indeed, John in this Prologue is describing the process of Creation...

John is describing Creation which sprung forth from God's Word...

In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in in the beginning with God. ALL THINGS CAME INTO BEING THROUGH HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM NOT ONE THING CAME INTO BEING.

Creation sprung forth from God's Word.

Creation sprung forth from God's Word.

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

God spoke Creation into being. God used the Word to bring Creation to fruition.

PAUSE

Now, when my children were much younger...

...when they were just starting out in school...

...their kindergarten teacher worked with them and the other children so as to help them begin to write...

Those kindergarten lessons were called Kid Writing.

And at the time, my wife and I volunteered along with other parents to assist the teacher in helping the children in class with their Kid Writing.

And I distinctly remember how each of those Kid Writing lessons began.

The teacher would say, "We are going to begin our Kid Writing lesson now. We are going to practice writing sentences using our words. For we use words to do what? To think, to speak, to read, and to write."

We use words to think, to speak, to read, and to write.

That introduction to those Kid Writing lessons has stuck with me, even to this very day.

We use words to think, to speak, to read, and to write.

How true that is!

And whenever I come across the Prologue in John's gospel, I immediately think about those words from my kid's kindergarten teacher.

We use words to think, to speak, to read, and to write.

I think about that statement because as true as it is for us as human beings, it is also true of God.

At least, that is what the Prologue to John's Gospel is saying.

In God's mind is the Word.

God conceived the world in God's mind.

God imagine the world via the Word.

God's mind was filled with the Word.

And God then spoke the Word and creation came into being.

In similar fashion, the kindergarten kids were told by their teacher to think of something they wanted to write about.

And then they were to draw a picture of that thing.

And after they had drawn their picture, they were write a sentence about that thing.

The minds of those kindergarten kids were then filled with words, and then they took those words to draw a picture and to write a sentence.

We use words to think, to speak, to read, and to write.

Indeed, words create images in our mind.

I say “A blue sky with clouds,” and you imagine a certain image.

We might then draw a picture of a blue sky with clouds.

God’s mind works similarly but on a different level.

God imagines a blue sky with clouds, and God simply says, “Let there be a blue sky with clouds,” and voila, there is a blue sky with clouds.

God’s Word is infinitely more powerful than our words.

But the concept is the same. God uses words to think, to speak, and to create.

PAUSE

But then, sisters and brothers in Christ, something extraordinary happens at Christmas.

Something mindboggling transpires with the birth of Jesus.

Something utterly remarkable occurs in Bethlehem on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Word takes on the flesh of a human being and is born into this world.

The Word takes on flesh and becomes Incarnate.

The Word takes on flesh and becomes Jesus.

And for the gospel writer John this is what Christmas means.

For John, Christmas is not about angels, nor shepherds, nor wisemen.

Christmas is not about a stable, nor animals, nor about some celestial star.

For John, Christmas is not about Joseph and Mary, and a cute little baby in a manger.

We hear none of that in John's Gospel.

No, for John, Christmas is much more philosophical than it is sentimental.

For John, the Word takes on flesh and lives among us.

This is what Christmas is for the gospel writer John.

The same word that resided in the mind of God, at Christmas walks the earth in the person of Jesus.

That same powerful word that created the heavens and earth in Genesis now exists in the human being Jesus.

That same word that shot forth to establish the cosmos is now encapsulated in a living, breathing body.

And this is why Jesus can change water into wine.

And this is why Jesus can silence raging storms.

And this is why Jesus can multiply loaves and fish.

And this is why Jesus can raise Lazarus from the dead,

And why he can restore sight to a blind man,

And why he can heal the sick and the infirmed.

When you are the Word incarnate,

...when you are the all-powerful Word by which all things came into being...

...when you are the very Word of God, what you speak even in your human form, has the ability to accomplish profound results.

PAUSE

Now with that said, the all-important question for our ancestors of the faith, and for us still today, is where...where does God's all-powerful Word intersect with our words.

How might our words tap into the mighty power of God's Word?

How might we hear then God's Word today?

And I think the best answer to that question is the prophet. It is the prophet who is the conduit for God's Word. It is the prophet who is the mouthpiece of God.

It is the prophet who is able to speak with power and authority because the prophet's word is God's Word, and that word goes forth and accomplishes what God intends.

But history has shown that God's prophets are often cruelly mistreated and even killed by those that oppose the Word of God.

Yes, history has shown that prophets for the most part have not fared well.

Prophets have been scrutinized, lambasted, and in many cases murdered because they speak truth to power.

Jesus was crucified by the Romans.

John the Baptist was beheaded by King Herod.

Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hung by the Nazis.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed by an assassin's bullet.

The world needs prophets, but at the same time the world tends to despise those very prophets it needs.

What a strange irony, isn't it?

The world desperately needs prophets so that the world will hear God's Word, but at the same time the world despises that very person who speaks God's word.

It is so strange that that is the case. And all we can say is that sin is alive and well in the world.

The forces of evil that oppose the Word of God are real and will do what they can to stifle God's Word.

Those forces of evil will seek to confuse us, so as to make us think that God's Word is false.

Those forces of evil will work on us, so as to make us doubt the very power of God's Word.

Those forces of evil want to make us think we are deluded that God's Word doesn't even exist.

And that is why the Church is of vital importance in our present day.

For short of individual prophets...

Short of persons who have been elevated to speak God's Word to the world...

There is the Church.

The Church has the all-important role of being a prophetic voice in a world which is so distracted by so many voices sowing doubt and fear, confusion and distrust, animosity and discord, cynicism and hate.

The Church is THE prophetic voice in the world. To be sure, the Church has always been the prophetic voice in the world, speaking God's Word.

Indeed, Martin Luther believed the church existed since the dawn of humanity. Martin Luther believed the church was not just an invention we see in the New Testament. No, Martin Luther believed the church existed even before Christ, stemming in fact back to the time of Adam and Eve's family.

Adam and Eve had three sons. Cain rose up and killed his brother Abel. But then Adam and Eve had Seth, and it was with Seth and his descendants that people began to invoke the name of the Lord. People began to worship, and herein lies the church, so said Martin Luther.

And the Church continue down through Seth's descendants to the person of Noah, and then the Church resided in Abraham and his descendant, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, then the Church was embodied in the persons of Moses, and David, and Solomon, so on and so on.

The promise of God has always resided within a particular branch of God's people, and the Word of God continued to be faithfully proclaimed down through the ages.

This is prophetic Word, God's Word, that was then lodged in the person of Jesus Christ, and which continues then to find voice in the Church today.

We are the prophetic word of God, and what I mean by PROPHETIC word is that we are the conduit, we are the mouthpiece, we are instrument by which God is speaking to the world, like God once spoke through the prophets to the world.

And, sisters and brothers in Christ, the Word of God is simple. Its message is simple.

God says that He is God of all people, not just the Jews, nor just the Christians, but of all people.

When the Jewish people were chosen by God to be his people, they were chosen to be a blessing for all people.

And when the angel told the shepherds that Jesus was born, he told them that he (the angel) had good news for ALL the people...Jesus is born to bring hope and salvation to EVERYONE.

This is the PROPHETIC Word, Friends. It is that simple. The blessing of God is not just for some. The promise of God is not just for a few. God's grace abounds for all.

But for whatever reason our world just does not see it that way.

For whatever reason, this or that slice of society is disenfranchised, whether it is because of gender, or the color of one's skin, or ethnicity, or economic status, or religion, or creed, or sexual orientation.

For whatever reason the world constantly moves in a direction of exclusivity, opposing God's grace which abounds for all.

And whenever a prophet has sought to proclaim God's grace for all, such as to point out injustice, and unfairness, and the abuse of power well then that is when things have gone terribly wrong for the prophets.

Whenever a prophet has sought to speak truth to power, well then those in power have felt threatened, and they have brought the gauntlet down on the prophet.

But God's word will not be stifled.

I said it once, and I will say it again, the world continues to need the prophetic voice. The world continues to need to hear God's Word of abundant grace, God's Word of blessing for all, God's Word of inclusivity.

God desires everyone to know God goodness of light and life.

This is why God enfleshed his Word in Christ Jesus.

In Jesus is light and life for all people. Jesus is God's Word, whereby God envisions in God's mind a world of grace and mercy for all people, and by God, God will speak this vision to fruition by speaking it through us the Church.

Yes, we use words to think, to speak, to read, and to write, and yes, we the church use words to create God's vision for the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.