

“The Word became flesh and lived among us”: John 1:14

The first Sunday after Christmas—Dec 27, 2020

Holy Trinity Church - Tom Mount

Introduction

1. Merry Christmas! Yes, it is still Christmas and will be until January 5th. Not a day but a season.
 - **Advent** begins the liturgical year. Four weeks four Sundays before Christmas day. It is all about preparing our hearts for Christ’s coming: tree (life), lights (light of world), Advent candles, manger scenes.
 - **Christmas** on December 25th begins the Christmas Season or Christmastide. Twelve days. It is all about celebrating God’s act of incarnation (Latin: *incarnatio*, “enfleshment”); gifts. In the Orthodox tradition: “Christ is born!” “Glorify Him!”
 - **Epiphany** is on January 6th and begins the Epiphany season. It is all about celebrating God’s act of revealing himself to us Gentiles (non-Jews): magi. In Eastern Orthodoxy, also baptism and the wedding of Cana. In Western Church, “the chalking of the doors”.
2. The church calendar provides structure and tradition. Framework for discipleship.

Scripture Reading – John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- Consummate Christmas text:
 1. Tells us who this baby was
 2. Tells us what he was doing there, what came to do
 3. Tells us the response of others who recognized who this was

Exposition

“The Word”

- Unique to John among biblical authors. “Word” is *logos*: word, message, verbal expression. A word is a thought clothed with language.
- Consistent with other NT texts: Col 1:15: “He is the image (*eikon*) of the invisible God”; Heb 1:3: “He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact representation (*charakter*) of his being”.
- How? He is God: Jn 1:1-2.
- Who is this baby lying in a feeding trough? Nicene Creed: “God of God, light of light, very God of very God”.

“became flesh and lived among us”

- **“became”** is *ginomai*: “became, was made, began to be” flesh (*sarx*); “live” is *skanoo*; can mean “tabernacled, encamped”.
- **“live among us”**: wanted to reestablish relationship, live face-to-face.
- It was an act of compassionate solidarity that defies comprehension.
- People responded to Jesus in different ways.
 1. Herod abhorred him and tried to kill him.
 2. Religious leaders ignored him, later tried to kill him. Why? (Jn 3:19; Jn 1:11).
 3. The magi and his followers adored him.

“and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”

- Three things to note:
 1. Normal humans were able to understand and appreciate Jesus’ glory. **“Glory”** is *doxa*, trans. Heb. *kabod*: weightiness, substance.

2. It was obvious to people that Jesus' glory was the result of his one-of-a-kind, face-to-face relationship with the Father: **“glory as of the only Son (*monogenes*) from the Father”**. The one and only, unique.
3. People encountered Jesus as both imminently approachable and entirely trustworthy. He was **“full of grace and truth”**.
 - God has always revealed himself as entirely trustworthy: full of truth. He has always done what he says he will do. Cannot lie; cannot be other than who he is.
 - And God was pretty approachable before the covenant at Sinai. But in that covenant, he didn't appear approachable. Why?
 - But then Jesus comes as baby born to poor parents lying in feeding trough. From the get go, Jesus was approachable.
 - The whole tenor of the Christmas story seems carefully orchestrated way of saying: “Come and be with me. You don't need to be afraid. I won't hurt you or condemn you. I am for you. I'm on your side.”
 - All throughout Jesus life, he was known for his approachability. He was a person that children were attracted to. He developed a reputation for hanging out with the “tax collectors and sinners”. He was expressing the true heart of the Father.
 - Is this the way you see God? Many Christians subconsciously don't want to be with him; want to keep their distance.
 - But when you are deeply convinced that Jesus and the Father are our friends and love us and delight in our companionship, then we can't wait to spend time with God each morning.

Take away

- We are in Day Three of the Christmas season. This year, don't rush to take down the decorations. Celebrate Christmas as a season, not a single day.
1. Each morning, take a different person in the Nativity narrative and imagine what it would have been like to be him or her: Mary, Joseph, shepherds, magi, Simeon, Anna, etc.

2. Watch The Chosen Christmas Special 2020. Whole episode (1:47:33):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5ftnTK9-3w> Story only (24:17):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paOjgZZDads>