Jesu Juva

**The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Day**

Text: St. John 1:1-14

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If you understand nothing else this morning, I pray that when you leave here this day you understand this: the Baby, whom we celebrate this day, the infant laying in a manger, drooling, cooing, soiling His diapers, nursing at His virgin mother’s breast, burping, and spitting up, the Baby who, except that He is without sin, is fully human in every way, that this Infant Child of Mary, is God of God, Light of light, very God of very God; He is the only-begotten Son of the Father, and it is by Him all things were made.

I do not mean to insult you; I know that you know this. Still, this is extremely important. It is important that this is the picture you see in your mind’s eye in order to understand the significance of this miraculous birth. For if one does not see this, then the Nativity of our Lord becomes nothing more than a romantic story, full of dreams and angels, shepherds, oxen, and donkeys, a story with just the right amount of suspense and mystery to keep your interest, and of course a story with the cute little cherub-faced Baby Jesus.

However, such a story gives one nothing more than a fuzzy, warm glow. And while this is all nice, after all, only a Scrooge or a Grinch would not want to feel warm and fuzzy on Christmas Day, it is not the whole story, in fact, Saint John tells us that there is far, far, more to the story than this.

St. John tells you that this Infant laying before you in a manger was in the beginning with God and in fact, is God. The Infant Jesus is the very Word breathed by God, the Father, in human flesh, through whom all things are made that have been made. St. John tells you that this Infant, who is God in the flesh, is the Life and Light of men. He is the Light, who is come to shine in the darkness of our depraved, sinful world. Jesus came to give you the right to become children of God by simply believing in His Name.

It is this Life and Light, this Word, this God, who has taken up residence in the tent of our humanity, taking on our flesh to dwell among us, as one of us; fully God, yet, fully human in every way, except, as I said, that He is without sin. That, quite simply, is what Christmas means. Jesus is not simply one baby among all babies. He is the one Babe who calls all mankind to worship Him. He is Immanuel; His is God with us!

The infant, Jesus, who is the Word Eternal, has fingers and toes and a nose and two eyes and hair. He is just like us and was born like any other human child.

Yet in Him is an important difference. He does not suffer from our inborn blindness to the light. He is the Light. He is not deaf to the Word of God. He is the Word. In His humanity, Jesus is everything God intended us to be. In Jesus, the Creator has come in the flesh of His creation in order that mankind be re-created in God’s image. It is as though at His conception all mankind is re-conceived in Him. In His birth, we are re-born in Him. The joy of our Christmas celebration is not simply that God came to earth and made His home among us; we also celebrate the fact that we are reborn in Him. We celebrate the rebirth of all humanity in Jesus Christ.

Of course, all this creates questions. Jesus’ Virgin Mother, St. Mary, pondered all these things in her heart. The Jews could not understand it. Even Jesus’ Apostles did not comprehend all that the incarnation of the Son of God meant until the day of Pentecost. The Church and Her greatest theological minds have struggled to understand what all this means. Prophets, priests, and kings have spent their lives studying this miracle. The Church has even suffered division over the incarnation of God.

Perhaps you have suffered your own doubts? Maybe you have asked yourself, *“How can this be? How can God become Man and still be God? How can Man be God and not cease to be man? How can the infinite Word become finite flesh? Is Jesus truly fully human and fully God?”*

Still, truth is no less truth, whether you understand it or not. We do not *need* to explain or understand how the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and not being able to does not make this truth any less true.

Can you explain how simple water can be a Baptism of the Holy Spirit, or how simple bread and wine can be the true Body and Blood of Jesus? You cannot and neither can I, but that does not make these truths any less true. Can you explain how the sun makes its heat and light? Can you explain why the world spins on its axis and revolves around our sun? If you are like me, then probably not, but the sun gives us its heat and light anyway, and the spinning globe gives us night and day, and the revolutions around the sun give us our seasons. Not understanding them does not change the fact that these things are true.

We do not need to understand how God accomplishes these great miracles. We only need to hear the Word and believe. The darkness need not understand the Light to receive it. It only needs to be darkness. Darkness cannot keep out or resist the light. It cannot overcome it. Light always floods the emptiness of the darkness whether it understands it or not.

So, we come back around, as St. John might say, to the beginning. The same Word that was in the beginning with God and is God, the Word by whom all things are made *“…became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* This *“Word”* is the Baby whose birth we celebrate this day.

This is the Holy Child who came for the purpose of taking your pain, your despair, your fear, your sin into Himself. In return, He gives you His life, His righteousness, His innocence, His blessedness, His inheritance, and He fills you with His grace and truth. In assuming our flesh, He made Himself our Brother giving to us *“the right to become children of God.”*

The Eternal Word has made you the children of God by mixing His Word with simple water and washing you clean in rebirth, making of you a new creation. He sustains and strengthens you with His Word that makes simple bread and wine His Body and Blood; the same Body that laid in the straw of the manger, the same Body nailed to the Cross of Golgotha, the same Body that laid in the tomb but rose to life again in three days, the same Body that ascended to Heaven and is enthroned at the right hand of His Father and ours; all the same Body that poured out its Blood for you for the remission of your sins. By His Word, through this Water, Flesh and Blood, your fears, your sins, your death were washed off of you and you are clothed in the Life and Light of Christ Jesus.

This is the glory and miracle and the very purpose of our Lord Jesus’ birth. It is for this reason the Eternal Word of God took on our flesh. His birth and life, His suffering and death, His burial and resurrection, His Body and Blood, they are all yours and you are His. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God,”* and from the very beginning He has had one message for you, *“I forgive you all your sins.”*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

 Soli Deo Gloria

Rev. Raymond D. Parent II

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church

Crestview, Florida

12/25/21