

# “Let There Be Light”

Isaiah 9:2-7

Tonight, we hear from the prophet Isaiah. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Jesus Christ is that great light. There is no other. As His people, we daily participate in that light. Tonight, we share that light. I have said that this Christmas Eve candle lighting ceremony is probably my favorite service of the year. And that surprises me because we don't share the body and blood of Christ. For that, we have to wait until tomorrow. But this service is a favorite because it is more than some traditional ritual of feel-good symbolism or emotionalism. Tonight, we share the light of Christ.

Light is so important in our relationship to God, because it is so important in the history of God's relationship with His people.

When God created the world, the first thing that He created was light. God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” In

the New Testament, Jesus Christ is often called the light of the world. St. Paul says that “if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has gone; the new has come.” You are a new creation.

You are a creation of God, not just because He gave you a body and breathed life into you here on earth, but you are a creation of God because God said to you, “Let there be light.” When you were called to faith in Baptism, God said to you, “Where there was once darkness, let there be light in your heart.” The light of Christ is in you.

In the beginning of John’s Gospel, Jesus Christ is called the incarnate Word of God, the Word made flesh who dwells among us. He still comes to us. That is what we celebrate this evening. The Word of God is, as the psalmist says, “a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” Christ comes to us in His Word. God’s Word of truth is like the oil in the candles. God lights the flame and gives us the fuel to keep it burning that we never again need walk in the darkness of guilt and unbelief.

However, there are those who imagine that anything can be added to the reservoir of the oil candle and it will keep burning. Throw in some beach sand or coffee grounds and the candle keeps burning. That is the illusion or delusion – that God’s Word in its

truth is not needed for the flame to keep burning.

It certainly will burn for a while as the remaining pure fuel is soaked into the wick, but as the pure fuel becomes more and more diluted, the fire flickers, fades, and will eventually go out. There is no substitute for the Word of God and the light of Christ.

Light is a very unique thing. When the people who were walking in darkness see a great light, what happens to the darkness that was around them? It disappears. Where there is light, there can be no darkness. When light appears, darkness ceases to exist.

On that glorious eve in Bethlehem that we are celebrating tonight, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, entered into a dark world, and since that day, the people who were walking in darkness have seen a great light and are filled with that light.

In a little while, we will gather in the darkness of this night, and we will share that light. The light of Christ symbolized in the passing of the flame from the Christ candle to each one of your candles, and greeting one another with the words, "Merry Christmas". It is more than just some traditional ritual. This is a microcosm of how we are to live every day.

Our prayer this Christmas is that the light of Christ will continue to shine in our lives even after we snuff out the candle as

we walk out the door. We are the children of light. God has said to each one of you, "Let there be light, in your heart." Let the light of Christ shine in you and through you, for all the world to see. May God's Word be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.

Tonight, we greet one another with the light of Christ, the eternal Word of God who has enlightened this dark world of sin with the bright hope of salvation. Tomorrow, we gather and participate with one another at the Lord's Table as we partake of the broken body and shed blood of the Word made flesh. And the next day, and every day until we see our Lord face to face, we will continue to greet one another with the bright hope of salvation just as we greet one another tonight with the light of Christ. Rejoice that you have seen that great light. And have a Merry Christmas. Amen.