

The Vigil of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord
St. John 1:1-14
December 24th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Word Became Flesh

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dearly beloved, in the beginning the Triune Lord God created the heavens and the earth. Both St. Paul in the Epistle reading from the book of Hebrews and St. John in the Gospel reading make this point. Tonight is about creation! The Vigil of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord is about creation. All things exist in this world were made by the Lord God. They did not evolve. They did not magically appear because of some big bang, or meteoric destruction. No, my friends, the earth, the sky, the universe, and everything in them were created by the Lord God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. There is not anything in this world that was made without Him making it first. Even the creations of mankind have been made because the Triune Lord God first made all the elements and materials that man uses to make things.

It is very important for us to understand this point first of all. This is why both the Epistle and the Gospel talk about the creation that occurred at the beginning. The second point that must be understood by us is that everything in the world was made by the Word of the Lord. He spoke and it became. He said, “Let there be” and there was. The earth and sky; the light and the darkness; the herbs, plants, and fruit-bearing trees; the fish and the birds; and the cattle, creeping things, and everything that moves upon the earth. The Lord God made all that exists in the world by His Word. Everything in the world, that is, except mankind.

Mankind was specially made by the Lord God. This is what sets us apart from the rest of creation. The rest of creation was created by the Word of the Lord God. We were formed from the dust of the earth. The Lord God used His very own hands to make us. He formed Adam, the first man, from the dust of the earth. The Lord God breathed into Him the breath of life. He breathed life into this lump of clay called man with His very own breath. He gave mankind His very own Spirit. Eve, the first woman, was also specially made, for she was formed from the rib of her husband Adam. She was given as a gift to Adam to be a helper that was meet and right for him. Therefore, every man will now leave his father and mother and cling to his wife. For the two become one flesh. Such is the union of man and woman in the bonds of holy matrimony. The Lord God has united husband and wife together in a perfect

union; what God has joined together let no man put asunder.

The Lord God placed Adam and Eve, His beloved and special creation, in the Garden of Eden. He gave them to eat of every tree in the garden. There was food in abundance. They would never lack or go hungry and thirsty, for the Lord God provided for all of their wants and needs. Even as He had provided for mankind's need for companionship by unity man and woman. There was one command that the Lord gave to man and woman: to not eat from the tree in the center of the garden, for in eating from that tree their eternal and infinite life would cease and they would die. The devil, in the guise of a serpent, deceived Adam and Eve, and they ate from the tree of which they were forbidden. The Lord God had created a good and perfect world. Mankind in its sinfulness created a world filled with corruption, greed, war, animosity, hatred, and death.

This reality has been passed down to us, the children of Adam and Eve. We bear the marks of our sin. We sin daily in our thoughts, our words, and our actions. And even if we had it in us to stop being evil in our thoughts, and in our words, and in our actions, we would still not be free from sin, for sin inheres in us. It has thoroughly corrupted our nature. This flesh that we bear is full of sin. If we need proof that sin inheres in us all we need to do is look at a cemetery. No man born of woman has ever lived forever in this frail, sinful flesh. Like the Lord God told Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden after they had sinned, we all return to the ground from which we came. On account of sin, we will die and be buried in the ground. This is the world that mankind created because of his sin.

We remain, however, the special creation of the Lord God. Even though our sinfulness has not only corrupted all of mankind and has even corrupted the rest of creation, but our Lord God also still continues to love us, His special creation that He made with His very own hands. The Word of God was with the Lord God in the beginning. The Word of God was the Lord God. The Word of God is the Lord God. This Word of God is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity: He is our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. He promised Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden after they had sinned that there would be born One Who would deliver mankind from the bondage of sin and death. This promise was repeated throughout the centuries through Moses and the other prophets. This promise was given to the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was given to King David and his son Solomon.

And this long-foretold promise was fulfilled in the Baby that we celebrate this night. The Baby lying in a manger, and wrapped up in swaddling cloths, of Whom angels sing and shepherds adore is the fulfillment of the promise made to us poor sinners. The Lord God created a perfect world. Mankind created a world filled with sin. And tonight, our Lord God takes upon Himself our flesh. There is a third creation that we celebrate tonight. The Lord God creates a Redeemer and Savior by becoming one of His own creation. The creation which He formed with His own hands, now enjoys a Man, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Who bears our flesh. But He does not bear our sin. A sinless, spotless, innocent Baby has been born into the world. The Lord God Himself has joined His own creation.

This is what this night is all about, my dear friends, it is about our Lord God creating salvation for us. He creates salvation by becoming one of us. The true meaning of Christmas is about the Lord God becoming man in order to save mankind. For this Infant will grow and become a Man. He will perfectly fulfill the Law of God which we break daily and often. This Infant will grow to be a Man Who will offer up His life as a ransom for our own. This Child will suffer and die at the hands of evil man. He too will enter into the grave. But He will not stay there. For after three days He will rise again from the dead. And through this death and resurrection of this Baby Boy born in Bethlehem on this night, mankind will no longer need fear the sting of death. For He will win forgiveness of sins for mankind. And bestow on all those who cling to Him in faith, eternal life with Him and all the saints and angels, and salvation from all of our enemies.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, we have a great cause to celebrate tonight on this Vigil of the

Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, for our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, has been born in our flesh. The Lord God has become man and dwells among us. He does this for us so that we may no longer fear death; that we may be free from the bonds of our sinfulness. This is how much our Triune Lord God loves us, His creation. He humbles Himself to be born of a virgin, in order that we might be made new creations. We are born again through the washing of water and the Word. Through our Lord God placing His Name upon us, the Name with which the minister blessed us with at the beginning of the Service, the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. We have been given the gift of faith to cling to the gifts of the Lord + Jesus. For through faith, we behold His glory. The glory which only comes from the heavenly Father, full of grace and truth.

Tonight, our Savior and Redeemer is born. Tonight, the Word Who was with the Lord God in the beginning, Who is and was Lord God, has come to us to be one of us. He has come to make us all new creations, full of righteousness and life. There is no greater gift that can be give or received by man. This is the greatest gift of all. For we have been given the gift of an eternal life with our Creator and our Redeemer, Who sanctifies and keeps us in this precious gift by continuing to fill our ears with the wonder of this great gift. So that when our last hour comes, we may not fear, but look forward to our heavenly home. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!