



Poland Presbyterian Church

At the Green since 1802

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Poland, Ohio 44514
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December 28, 2014
First Sunday after Christmas

John 1:1-18

The Rev. Robbin Del Nagro

The Cosmic Christ

This passage from the Gospel according to John is actually designated in the lectionary for Christmas Day but it is probably my favorite passage in the entire New Testament and so I wanted to preach on it today. John speaks in words of poetry of a mystery so profound most of us cannot even comprehend the words. But, in fact, these words may be the most significant claim of all Christianity.

The Word, the Logos, speaks into being all of creation. The Word, the Logos, represents the great wisdom of God, who sought through the centuries prior to the birth of Jesus to self reveal to those who, in whatever primitive way, sought to know God and to be in relationship with God. But human beings just didn't quite get it. They thought that God was an angry, punishing God who brought destruction rather than creation; a God who had favorites; a God who was out to get us.

In the fullness of time, God made a choice to self reveal to humankind completely. In Jesus the Christ we see the Word itself, the nature of God, in a way that we could never otherwise know. From the first chapter of the letter to the Hebrews we hear this: **“He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word.”** The true nature of God is seen in the person of Jesus the Christ and it is mercy and compassion. The true nature of God is self giving, self sacrificing. The true nature of God is love. And the desire of God is to redeem the world by making this known.

Redemption is a trade off. I give something to you and you give something to me. God gives us Jesus the Christ and we give ourselves back completely to God. God gives us glory and we give God our sinful ways. Jesus did not come into this world to start a new religion. Jesus came into the world to show the world that it had been redeemed. John Calvin, in his Institutes, tells us that those who shared in God's covenant, even in Old Testament times, were redeemed. “For if God acknowledges us as his people, we are certain of our salvation ... we have nothing else to wish for towards the fullness of all good things and confidence in eternal life, than that God should reckon us among his

people” Calvin tells us that even though they knew nothing about it, those like Abraham, living in the world before the advent of Christ, were already redeemed by Christ through their covenant relationship with God. All those who live today or have ever lived in this world who acknowledged God have also acknowledged Christ, even if they were unaware of this, for Christ has been with God and has been God from the beginning of time.

All things, all peoples of all faiths, the righteous and the unrighteous were created by and through Christ. We reading in the first chapter of Colossians, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rules or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”**

When people created by Christ reflect the glory of Christ they are accepted by God. This extends beyond any name those people may claim – whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or any other religion that seeks the living God. Whether they name or even know that Christ is the author of their salvation they, too, are redeemed by Christ. We all become children of God when we live as Christ lived, showing mercy and compassion to all people. When we show forth Christ's love, we show forth the glory of God, whether we call ourselves Christian or not.

All humanity has come into being through the Word of God, present with God in creation. This is the meaning of the term, “Cosmic Christ” that you may happen across at some time in your Christian reading. While Jesus was born approximately two thousand years ago, Christ has been around for more than 14 billion years. When we do not see Christ in people of other faiths, we deny Him. Part of the mystery of Christ is that we will never know who is “saved” or not, who is a child of God or not, and so we must treat all people as children of God and at the same time proclaim in word and deed, the Christ who we have come to know. For we know that Christ is present in the world today, in every ordinary moment of our lives. .

When the great mystic and catholic priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, was in China and had no bread or wine with which to celebrate the Eucharist, he turned to see the sun in the east and said, “Today the light of creation shall be our bread.” As he thought about all of the suffering that was happening in the world as he spoke, he said, “Today the suffering of the world shall be our wine.” True worship of Christ does not deny the God's life giving act in creation, nor does it deny that self-sacrifice is the only way to follow Christ in bringing light to the world.

One of the mysteries that always delights me is when we make a discovery in our human world, that is scientific in nature, and is also on the same page as the word of God. “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” We know today the speed of light is the only constant in our universe and that there is no total darkness because even in darkness there are neutrinos of light moving through it. When we die the light does not suddenly go out and leave us in a world of dark blackness for Christ is the light that brings life into being, even after death.

In the first letter of John we hear this repeated, “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, and what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

The cosmic Christ takes us out of our isolation and calls us into universal connectedness. Christ is bigger than we allow Him to be. He is bigger than just our own personal salvation. In Him all the peoples of the world have been joined together in fellowship with God. Fellowship is first and through that fellowship with Christ and with one another we have salvation. And our joy is complete.