

“The light shines in the darkness” John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Word of God is amazing. The Bible is amazing. The more you read it, the more you can marvel about God's self-revelation. Dwelling in the Word, meditating on the Word, that truly is a great adventure.

It takes you to different time and places. It takes you to the very beginning. The beginning of times. It takes you to the very end of this world, to New Heavens and New Earth. It helps you to meet God's people of old, faithful saints and fragile sinners at the same time.

You can be inspired by their example, and you can be comforted learning that it is God's grace, and not our goodness, that counts the most at the end. The Word allows us to see how God has worked in the history of humanity, and how He always accomplishes what He is set to do.

And you can get to know Him. Yes, God Himself. You can get to know Him as your Father in Heaven. And as the Son, your Brother and Savior Jesus. And as the Holy Spirit, who comes to you and brings you in the fellowship with the Triune God and with all God's saints from all times and all places.

You get to know His grace. His mercy. His wisdom. His power. His loving and caring heart towards all His creatures. You get to know what He has prepared for all His people, and you get to know Him as your God. Your God!

And the longer you participate in this adventure, the more exciting it gets. That's one of beauties of being a Christian. We can listen to God speaking to us, in our own language, and as He speaks to us, He brings us close to Him.

Besides, it is not just about knowing, it is about being enlightened, about being transformed, about being made wise and understanding. All of this is done by the Word of God.

Today we heard from the Gospel according John, chapter one, where the Eternal Word, who became flesh and dwelled among us, is described as the life and the light of the world.

The world, on the other hand, is described as ... yes, as the darkness. The darkness. How can this be? Can that be true? We live in this technologically the most advanced age, at least as far as we know.

Already the 18th and the 19th centuries were called the Enlightenment, when people began to realize the power of our reason, but now we live in 21st century, and what we as humanity know and are capable to do today is truly marvelous.

The Holy Spirit still calls this world darkness. Why? Because the world, and by the world John means unbelieving people, doesn't know, and doesn't want to know, in fact, they are hostile to the true light, to Jesus, they resist the light, and do everything to pretend that God is not real.

Everything that exists is created by the Eternal Word. He is the light of the world and in Him is there is true life, He is the source of life for every living being.

In Him everything still holds together, and in Him there are all the depths of God's wisdom. If there is something worth knowing in this world, that is the Eternal Word, Jesus Christ.

And the unbelieving world doesn't know Him and doesn't want to know Him. How can you call the situation, where the unbelieving world close their eyes and ears and don't care about the Creator whose "eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made." Where we know in our hearts that we are accountable. Darkness...

How do you call the situation where God Himself comes to us, speaks to us, confirms His message before the eyes of hundreds and sometimes of thousands of eye-witnesses, and the unbelieving world pretend it doesn't apply to them?

How do you call the situation where God sends His messengers to all nations with the Good News, with the News that should make our hearts jump out of joy, and where people sneeze at His message and despise His messengers?

How do you call the situation where gracious and loving God has done everything to reconnect with us, where He has done everything to bring us into His Eternal Kingdom, where we simply need to receive His wonderful gifts, and where people are so indifferent to God's invitation that it is even hard to understand?

Jesus himself describes this situation: "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the

light, lest his works should be exposed.” This is the state of the unbelieving world. This is the state of so many here is Barossa. This is the state of many, whom we love dearly, and for whom we pray sincerely. The darkness. The spiritual darkness.

And it is more powerful that we think. Paul describes in elsewhere as “dead in our sins”. Spiritually dead. Dead person can’t do anything. You can’t persuade a dead person that they need to come alive? And how could they, if they are dead?

Only the Word of God, who is the life and the light can change their situation. Only the Creator can breathe in them His Spirit and create in them new hearts. And this is, why He came. To bring the live-giving light into this world, to bring it into this darkness and to let it shine, full of grace and truth.

As the Eternal Word first indwelt in the Tabernacle during the days of Moses, as He later indwelt in the Temple built by Solomon, the same way the glory of the Lord indwelt in Jesus from Nazareth. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

But when Jesus ascended back into heaven, He promised that He will be with us till the end of this age. He does what He has promised. He is with us in His written Word, the Bible and as we read it He speaks to us.

He is with us in His spoken Word, that is, in the message about Jesus that we share with others. He is with us through His words in our liturgy, in our hymns and songs, in our prayers.

Remember, when you tell people about Jesus or when you talk about Him with your brother and sisters in Christ, those are not your words, they are the words of the Holy God. He is with us through His Spirit, because wherever the Word of God is active, wherever it is spoken, the Spirit accompanies Him

And finally, He is present with us as our host in His own sacred meal, where He Himself continues to serve us His life-giving body and blood, for the forgiveness of all our sins.

He comes in all these different ways to bring life to us, to create new hearts is us, to strengthen our faith in Him. The Word became flesh and dwells with us. He is still here.

And He shines the brightest right here, where He Himself gathers His chosen people. This setting, the gathering of God’s own people is the very place where the light of Christ shines into our hearts.

This is where God works with us. We come here, in God’s presence, where He Himself enlightens us and drives darkness out of us, where He renews us, restores us, fills us with His good gifts, with His Spirit, and then sends us to shine His light into the darkness of this world. And so we go.

And as we all know it well, the unbelieving world hasn't change much since Jesus time. The world still loves the darkness more than it loves the light. That's why those who try to bring the light to the world often face hostility.

We go to our own, with the hope that they would welcome the light, the most wonderful news about God's salvation, but they don't want to come to the light, they don't want to leave their darkness.

It was the same with Jesus, the same with His apostles, and it has been the same since the very beginning. However, even if the world keeps rejecting the light, we have this wonderful promise.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. It hasn't so far, and it never will. We, who carry the light of Christ, may be few in numbers, we may be ordinary people, we may not be much in the eyes of this world.

But you are great in the eyes of God. Each one of you. For you are children of God. And the light that we carry is His light. And the day comes, when His light will dispel all the darkness of this world. This is the day that we are waiting for.

And as we wait for it, let's rejoice that the Word who became flesh is with us, and that when the time comes, we will be with Him. Amen.