

Pastor Jordan Gades Sermon 1.5.19 John 1:1-18, Jeremiah 31:7-14

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

There are just some things you don't think about in life. And some things that really grab hold and hold you. I remember sitting in one of my first seminary classes and one of my profs talking about the first 3 gospels and then he starts talking about John. His beginning of the story of the good news, the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is different, not just a little bit, completely differently. Mark avoids Jesus' early life, Matthew and Luke show some of the early stories that are known about Jesus. That amazing Christmas story that we are still in the midst of. But here John does something from out in left field. He doesn't leave you hanging about who this Jesus is. And he does a quick recap. Of everything. One line to bring us up to speed in case we're not. All history summed up in a little bow.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

But from this quick recap we get so much information. We get Jesus, as co-creator of all things, of all the stuff, of us, our world and everything in it. It places Jesus as the center of the story. We know life because of Jesus.

We get to hear this line the "the life was the light of all people" - again putting Jesus as front and center in importance - he is the light of all people. ALL PEOPLE. ALL PEOPLE.

And then this beautiful line - the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

Jesus, the creator, light, and life of ALL PEOPLE, was not overcome, and has not been overcome, and never will be overcome. This is the hope of the nations. John not only brings us up to speed, he tells the whole story and gives away the best part. This is the core message of what we believe. Our God is a light for you and you and you and you and you. And that light will never go out or leave you.

That's a message that I am needing to hear today. I am supposed to be celebrating in the light. I feel like I supposed to be living this life that is described in Jeremiah

“their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry.”

And yet I can't comprehend that rejoicing in this moment. I am afraid. I am full of anxiety and fear. I look around and I see More war, more death, more hate. more injustice, so much injustice. More apathy, more division. Impending doom from global water and food shortages and Climate change.

I see corruption in every corner of our government and governments around the world. I see greed and revenge. I see the strong attack the weak. I see pain every day on the news, I see suffering. And I cry to God WHY, What can I do, What can we do? I find so few answers. But more I cry out, the more I lean into God, the deeper I go something else pushes back, something else starts pulling me.

“For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him”

Jeremiah knew what he was talking about when he gave this word of hope. He is watching the fall of the kingdom of Judah. His nation, his people, his family, his home; all is on the verge of destruction. And to him, In the midst of war and fear and anxiety, God says to him, God says to us. I the Lord your God will not leave you. No matter what. I will turn your mourning into joy, I will comfort you. I will give you gladness for sorrow.

I have redeemed you from hands too strong for you. That is what baptism is for us. God saving us when we are weak, when we can do nothing to protect ourselves or survive this onslaught by ourselves. Our God comes to us.

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth”

This is what our God did for us, Does for us. I could do a whole nother sermon about how stupid it was for Jesus to come to this earth as a baby. But he did, and because he did we know the saving power of God every day when we walk in the darkness. Because our god walked with us, ate with us, slept with us, we can know peace.

We know peace right now. We know a peace that abides. We know the peace of being in the presence of our God. We know that constant in our lives. We know one that loves us, walks with us through every storm that rises and walks with us through that storm as our companion and Guide, as our Light.

Today we trust in our Lord, and not the powers of this world. We trust in the one who came for us, to seek us out and know us as we are.

That's what I'll be doing today.

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Today we rely on Grace and Truth. Amen.