

Christmas Day  
Sermon Text: Hebrews 1:1-12  
Related Text: Psalm 98  
December 25, 2009

Grace to you in the name of Christ, the newborn King.

Today marks a new beginning. We've emerged from the wonder of the night, the ooh's and ah's that came with bewildered shepherds. We've emerged to a new day that marks a new beginning for God's creation.

Our starting point is not with us. The starting point of this new day doesn't begin in Bethlehem. While the sermon of Hebrews speaks of the prophets who spoke long ago, this new day doesn't start with them.

Rather, the new beginning that this birth marks started in heaven. This day starts with God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Everything that exists flows from the very Word of God, "through whom all things came into being."

The next twelve days is a celebration of the Word's coming into the world. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the one that is spoken of in Hebrews. Jesus is the one to whom God speaks and delights. Jesus brings glory to God as only a son can do.

This is Christmas. This is Jesus coming down out of heaven in the most surprising humbling of ways. He comes in a small town of Bethlehem. He's birth is certainly non-descript as far as the rest of the world goes. Shepherds are drawn to this child because their night was interrupted by the singing of a heavenly chorus that gets their attention, but is not seen by anyone else.

Yet it is here where God is glorified. It is among the least of human society to which Jesus associates. A lowly teenage mother is lifted up as the bearer of God incarnate. God is glorified.

Those who are hungry and sitting on a hillside are fed with teaching that serves to influence their life. Those five thousand plus are also filled with gifts of bread and fish. God is glorified.

Those who are sick, lame, deaf and in other ways physically limited are not simply made well; their sins are forgiven. God again is glorified.

Women, tax collectors, and those labeled unclean by society are made new. Their sins are forgiven. They are welcome and told they belong in this home of God that is emerging in their midst. God is glorified.

These vignettes are the images Jesus gives us of God. In other words, for us to see, know and love God is to meet our Lord in the most surprising of places. For in these places we see the clearest picture we have of God. In these places, among His people, God is glorified.

That is what matters not only in this season but throughout each season of life. God is glorified in the redemption of sinners. Such redemption comes at the foot of the cross, where Christ fulfills the purpose of his birth.

For in death, God is glorified. It doesn't make him happy. But the penalty for our sin is paid. It is paid in flesh and blood of Christ the Lamb of God.

In Jesus resurrection from the dead, God is glorified. Life is given. Mourning is turned into dancing. Tears of sorrow are now ones of great joy. Hope illumines the darkness of our lives.

God continues to be glorified. Today, people are eating perhaps the first full meal in a long time

thanks to the gifts of secret Santa's, the generosity of scouts and members of our congregation and others who have provided food and gifts. God is glorified.

Those who now call home a nursing facility heard good news. It was sung to them by a flow of people singing tidings of comfort and joy. Again, God is glorified.

As we move through the coming new year, it is not a return to the same old, same old. Opportunities exist each day through our own work, through our interactions with family, through our church and the other places we give our time and energy to glorify God.

Indeed, God will be glorified regardless of what we do. For again, Christmas or any other day is not about us. What is exciting is that we are privileged to be a part of glorifying God.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Amen.