

The Light Shining in Darkness

2018-12-24 - Year C - Christmas Eve - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas

Isaiah 9:1-7; Psalm 96; Luke 2:1-20

- We depend a lot on light. Imagine making yourself a meal or navigating on roads, or doing your daily work without any light? Without even the sun?
- Light can also have a significant effect on our emotions.
 - Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAR) can cause depression when the days become shorter in the winter months.
 - I knew this happened to some people, but I didn't realize that it affected me until we moved down here to the sunshine state from Pennsylvania!
- Beyond our moods, the lack of light also allows evil to have its way.
 - Why do we put up security lights on our homes and businesses?
 - Because when people are trying to do evil and not get caught, they try to do the evil they do in the darkness.
 - When a movie or a show has a lot of violent or evil elements, we describe the movie by saying that it was really dark.
- It is not surprising, then, that God uses the image of light to describe the coming of his Son when he speaks through the prophet Isaiah.
 - Isaiah 9:2 "The people who walked in darkness"

The Darkness

- What is this darkness that Isaiah speaks of?
- "In sorrow that the ancient curse / should doom to death a universe, / you came, O Savior, to set free / your own in glorious liberty." (Creator of the Stars of Night, 1982 Hymnal, 60)
- The curse spoken of here is the curse of the fall. When God first created everything, he made Adam and Eve, the first two humans, and instructed them to eat anything in the garden that they wanted to, save for the fruit of one tree.
 - Adam and Eve disobeyed God, this was the first sin, and it brought a curse, darkness, on humanity from that time forward.
 - To sin is to miss the mark of God's best for us.
 - A result of this curse is that we are all broken, bent towards sin, and unable to save ourselves from drifting further and further away from God.
- So the darkness spoken of by Isaiah is the darkness of humanity no longer in the presence of God, as in the garden of Eden.
 - It is also the darkness that each of us face in our own lives when we are separated from the God who made us and who loves us.
- But God had a plan from the very first moment of sin.

The Coming Light

- Here is God's plan: Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given..."
 - God's plan is a baby?
 - "When this old world drew on toward night, / you came; but not in splendor bright, / not as a monarch, but the child / of blessed Mary mother mild." (Creator of the Stars of Night, 1982 Hymnal, 60)
 - Yes, a baby, but not just any baby. The Son of God.
 - "...his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).
- Jesus, God himself, took on human flesh so that he could save us.
 - He became one of us, not losing his divinity, but also becoming fully human, so that he could bear our sin on the cross.
 - Jesus, being human, has faced every temptation and struggle that we face, but he never gave in to sin.
- So if Jesus is this one who was to come, this "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Why have we not yet experienced the everlasting peace that Isaiah speaks of? Isaiah 9:7
 - There is still so much darkness in the world.
- John 8:12 "I am the light of the world"
 - "Whoever follows me" Jesus is talking about individuals here.
 - Jesus is not pushy, he doesn't force anyone to accept his light, but he offers it as a gift.
 - Instead of turning on the blinding light that floods the whole room, he decided instead to bring light to one individual at a time.
 - Almost like people in a dark room holding candles that are lit one by one.
 - The room starts in darkness, but when everyone's candle is lit, there is a warm glow.
- In another Gospel, Jesus says that YOU are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). When we receive the light of Christ into our lives, we become his representatives, bearers of his light, and it is our job to pass it on.
- Have you received this light, or are you still walking in darkness?
 - Jesus wants to shine his light on everything that is dark in your life. This is a free gift that he offers you and it is always available.
 - I'm sorry, thank you, please.

The End

- Despite the slow growth of this light, there has been a steady increase throughout the years. More and more people walk in the light of Christ each day.
- All of history is building towards a final culmination when Jesus will return and finally set things right. The whole world will finally be as it is supposed to be.
- Revelation 21 promises that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And there will be a new heavenly city, the new Jerusalem.
- Revelation 21:23-25