

Poetic Truth

2018-12-30 - Year C - Christmas 1 - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas
Isaiah 61:10–62:5; Psalm 147:13-21; Galatians 3:23–4:7; John 1:1–18

- “I fled Him, down the nights and down the days; / I fled Him, down the arches of the years; / I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways / Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears / I hid from Him, and under running laughter. / Up vistaed hopes I sped; / And shot, precipitated, / Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears, / From those strong Feet that followed, followed after. / But with unhurrying chase, / And unperturbèd pace, / Deliberate speed, majestic instancy, / They beat—and a Voice beat / More instant than the Feet— / 'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me'.”¹
- Poetry is beautiful and it can help us to describe the indescribable, but it can also sometimes be a bit cryptic!
- The poetry of this prologue to the Gospel of John says something about God, something about us, and something that seems almost too good to be true (but it is true!).

Something About God - The Word

- Sometimes “the Word” refers to the Scriptures, other times it refers to Jesus.
 - This can cause some confusion as we study the scriptures!
- Why is Jesus sometimes called the “Word,” *Logos*.
 - To Greeks, the universe or *cosmos* was an ordered place, and that which ordered it was *logos* or reason (impersonal).
 - To the Jews, the world came into being as God spoke.
 - Either way, *logos* describes who Jesus is as he came into the world.²
 - This is a beautiful hint that Jesus came not just for Jews but for all of humanity.
- Jesus existed before the world was created.
 - “In the beginning was the Word...” (v. 1)
 - “All things were created through him...” (v. 3)
- Trinity
 - “the Word was *with* God” shows that the Word is distinct from the Father.
 - “the Word *was* God” shows that the Word is one and the same with the Father.

Something About Us - Humanity

- “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (v. 4).
 - I’m not going to focus on light and darkness. What I am going to talk about is life.
 - Jesus is the source of life for us. This is a major theme in the writings of John.
 - John does not talk about the Fall explicitly here, but he does imply the fall when he says “the light shines in the darkness.”
 - In our natural state as humans, we are cut off from the one source of life.

¹ Thompson, Francis. *The Hound of Heaven*. <https://www.ewtn.com/library/HUMANITY/HNDHVN.HTM>

² Whitacre, Rodney A. John. Vol. 4. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. (John 1:1-5).

- Like fish just caught and flopping around on the dock.
 - We need to be reconnected to the source of life.
- “...the world did not know him...his own people did not receive him...” (vv. 10-11).
 - Even though we need Jesus as our source of life, our fallen state prevents us from seeing this need clearly!
 - In fairy tales, the rescuer rides in on a white horse to save those who are in trouble, and the people are thankful for it.
 - Jesus knew ahead of time that this was not the welcome he would receive. And he decided to come anyway!
- “The light shines in the darkness, and *the darkness has not overcome it*” (v. 5).
 - Darkness has not overcome the cosmos, and it doesn’t have to overcome us.

Something Almost too Good to be True - Children of God

- John 1:12 - “To those who did receive him...children of God.”
 - Everyone is made in the image of God, but not everyone is a child of God.
 - This only happens through adoption when we receive Jesus.
- John Chrysostom - “For he became Son of man, who was God’s own Son, in order that he might make the sons of men [humankind] to be children of God...By no means did he diminish his own nature by his condescension, but he raised us, who had always sat in disgrace and darkness, to unspeakable glory.”³
 - This does not mean that we become God. Our sonship is not exactly the same as the sonship of Jesus.
 - It does mean, however, that God becomes personal and we gain an inheritance.
- God becomes personal
 - “No one has ever seen God” (v. 18)
 - The temptation in the Old Testament was to gravitate towards idols and kings because they could be seen and touched.
 - Golden Calf
 - The people ask Samuel for a King
 - Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).
 - Jesus puts a face (and flesh) on the God who has been hidden to us since Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden of Eden.
 - Galatians 4:6 because we are adopted, we can call God “Abba, Father.”
- Our inheritance
 - Galatians 4:6 “because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son...”
 - Galatians 4:7 because we are children of God, we receive an inheritance.
 - Eternal life.
- Rise up church and rejoice! For the Word became flesh, and we have become children of God! “For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace” (John 1:16).

³ Joel C. Elowsky, ed., John 1–10 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 40.