

John 1:1-14
The Light and Life of the World
Christmas December 25th, 2022

Today we heard the Christian Creation story where all life and light comes from. John 1:1-5, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.** **In him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind.** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

That’s it. That’s our story. One sentence. “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

In these verses life and light are intertwined. The beginning of all creation and its fulfilment in God are implied. The beginning of our path to God and the path itself to our eternal destination is defined. It is the Word. The Word that became flesh on the first Christmas day so long ago. Light and Life combined to give us direction.

On earth light is the building block of all life. From the chlorophyll in plants that gives them the energy to grow from the light of our sun all life in some way feeds if not directly off the plants, then from them in some way in the food chain. They produce our oxygen which is necessary for all life. Without light the earth would be a frozen ball of rock spinning in the dark void of space. As Genesis 1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep.”

Without the light provided by the Word all of creation would still be formless and empty... Maybe that is why on the first day of Creation God said, **“Let there be light!”**

Now this Christmas day we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the birth of the Word, the birth of God into this world. Light and life entered creation in a cold dark stable.

In the wisdom, majesty and mystery of God, God stuffed all of himself that he could into the baby Jesus. As Colossian 1:19 tells us, **“For it pleased God to have his full being live in his Son.”** All of God that could be stuffed into human being was stuffed into Jesus. So that God could speak to us in a form and a way that we could see, hear, touch, and understand. Jesus was and is the Word of God become flesh.

The Light of the World came to earth to give enlightenment and give life. The Word came to speak life and teach us how to live lives that were fully alive. He came to teach us how to live lives that were fully alive,... the lives that God intended for us. The Word came to speak life and teach us through sermons and words, parables and actions, signs and wonders. Jesus the Word of God came to teach us what God is like and invite us into living godlike lives.

Now the size and majesty of our God can seem overwhelming for God created the Heavens and earth, and God is larger and more powerful than all the universe and the size of the universe itself can overwhelm us.

Here is an artist’s rendering of our galaxy.



Our galaxy is a spiral galaxy, and our solar system is a little tiny star we call our sun and 8 planets on one of the arms which stretches out into space.

Our little star is one of 100 million stars in our galaxy. How is that for feeling small in the vastness of space?

Now here is a picture from the old Hubble Telescope.



In this picture you can see many galaxies. In our universe there are probably between 100 to 200 billion galaxies, each has around a 100 million stars. This picture is only one tiny spot in space that we can see with a telescope. One writer said that what we are seeing in such a photo is the size of the head of a pin held at arm's length. There are hundreds of galaxies in this picture. How's that for feeling small and insignificant?

But out of that vastness God chose to come to us and dwell with us and share with us the light that gives light to all humankind!

We don't have to have a faith as big as the whole universe in order to be saved. We don't have to have the light of God as big as the sun in order to guide us. We just have to follow the small flickering light of Christ we have within us for that is an incredibly powerful light overcoming all the forces of darkness we face.

For verse 5 says, **"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."** It doesn't take much light to overcome a lot of darkness even the total darkness in a cave.

I used to demonstrate this to my youth groups when I did youth ministry. I would take youth groups to Pepper Sauce cave on the back side of Mt Lemon to demonstrate the power of light over darkness. In the back of the cave there is a large room about the size of this sanctuary. I would take the youth in there and we'd turn off all our lights.

When our eyes were accustomed to the total darkness, I would light a single match, and then a candle. That candle produced enough light that it lit up the room. We could see each other clearly and the absolute darkness of that cave could not overcome the light. It is the same with Jesus Christ, which is the point I made then and today.

Jesus' light guides us in this life. We often wish he would light up the entire pathway of our life, but often we are given just enough light to take the next step of faith and grow to the next stage in our spiritual life.

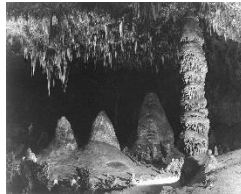
I own an oil lamp from the 1st Century AD. Here's what they look like.



They would fit in the palm of your hand, and they burn a single wick. They are one candle power, which is enough to see and take one step at a time. One step at a time is what Jesus wants us to take. He doesn't want us to run in the dark and he doesn't want our whole life highly illuminated unless it's time to clean something out.

And the light of Christ helps us clean out our lives so we can live more like Jesus. So that we can become more godlike in our thoughts and actions.

The Light of Christ illuminates the sin in our lives that we can be unaware of and guides us to new life. I once took a group of youth to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico.



I received permission to carry in a 1 million candle power flashlight. I regretted that on 2 levels. First, it was heavy as sin. Second, the light showed all the formations for what they truly were.

They were dusty, dirty, covered in bat guano and frankly not very pretty in that glaring bright light. It is the same with our lives. That cave had been dimly lighted in just the right way to make everything look pretty, but the low light covered up a lot of ugliness. When the true light of Christ comes into our lives it shows a lot of ugliness, dirt and sin, even guano that needs to be cleaned out once it is seen.

The miracle is that once we see the sin and ugliness within us through the power of Christ it can be cleared away. The light drives out

the darkness. The light of Christ guides us into new life!! And through the power of the Holy Spirit grants us the ability to follow and to change.

My friends, follow the little bit of light that you have and you will find your way home to life eternal. Use the little bit of faith you have and step by step it will lead you home.

The Word of God has been immortalized in the words of the Bible and they are an immediate guide and light for our lives. I love to use illustrations out of the Upper Room for that devotional is accessible to us all. The Bible has ?? verses but the light from single verses can change our lives. A single verse can give us the light to take the next step of life.

The Dec. 3 devotional is from a girl named Eliza who struggled with an eating disorder that threatened to destroy everything she held dear, even her life.

She wrote, "I abandoned the Lord. However, the Lord never abandoned me." She entered a residential treatment center where one night God led her to a single scripture passage. The Word spoke to her through the word of God.

That verse was, "Jesus said, **Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.**

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes."

Those words spoke to her when she needed to hear them most. They gave her a little light to guide and encourage her to pursue recovery and she writes, "God gave me courage to pursue recovery and was with me every step of the way."

She concluded, "Today, by the grace of God and the support of my family I am free from my eating disorder."

From Nov. 5th, Remigio from South Africa wrote, “As I write this, I am 11 months into my journey to sobriety. It has been a difficult pathway with many challenges, but I am encouraged by Phil. 4:13, “**I can endure all these things through the power of the One who gives me strength.**”

These words aid me in my recovery from addiction and empower me in my daily activities. Believing in the power of Christ makes all the difference. Christ has given me the confidence to stay committed in my recovery and seek the spiritual, physical, and psychological healing I need.”

Each of these persons is guided day by day, step by step, verse by verse by the light of Jesus Christ into life, good life here on earth and eternal life in the life to come. That power and guidance is available to you wherever you find yourself in life.

So, I want to close with an invitation to follow the light of Christ to Life eternal. In your heart and mind make the following commitment in prayer. Let us close our eyes and bow our heads and pray. And I ask every one to keep their eyes closed until I ask you to open them.

Lord, we ask you for the Light of Christ to come into our lives and lead us in the way of life here on earth and life eternal. We admit to the areas in our lives that you wouldn't exactly approve of, and we have known for a long, long time we need to change.

Fully illuminate those areas and grant us the power of the Holy Spirit to change and follow you. In Jesus name amen.

Now every head bowed and every eye closed. If you have prayed this prayer for the first time or it's a prayer you've repeated many times raise your hand. By doing this it is a physical confirmation of what you've decided in your heart and mind.

In Jesus' name amen.