**Christmas Day Sermon John 1:1-14 2023**

Sermon video link: <https://youtu.be/lZu7n2_a2Q4>

In the beginning was the Word!

God is not silent. God has never been silent.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and Word was God.

The Word has power. The power to create from nothing. Whenever the Word speaks things happen.

Through the Word all things were made, without the Word nothing was made that has been made.

God’s word is powerful and always achieves what it says.

In the beginning, the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep. There was darkness until the Word spoke.

The Word said, “Let there be Light!” and there was light and never again has or will the darkness overcome it.

The Word says, “Let there be life!” and there is life.

Not only does the Word create but the Word also sustains what has been created. Without God, without the Word the universe would fall back into chaos and the darkness would overcome it. God the Father through Word and Spirit maintains and sustains the universe.

Not only does the Word sustain but the Word transforms, redeems, renews, and brings new life.

God is not silent. God speaks to us human beings. In the past, God spoke to humanity through the prophets. Not once but many times and in many ways. God spoke to us to shine a light on us, to expose the things hidden in darkness, to enlighten us, redeem us, transform us, and bring us life.

Then things changed. It was the single most amazing change in the history of the universe. A virgin conceived and within her womb was the Word become flesh. We human beings are so important to God, so loved by God, so favoured by God that the Word made his home among us human beings. The bearer of life and the light of all humanity was born in Bethlehem.

This is no small thing, that God would choose to come down from heaven and become a human being. It means God is not somewhere up in heaven moving us human beings around like chess pieces. God is not somewhere up in heaven looking down on us without any emotion. God is not like some watchmaker who set the universe in motion and has forever been sitting back, watching time pass by.

No longer can we accuse God of not caring. No longer can we accuse God of not knowing what it is like to be a human being living in a broken world. The Word became flesh and entered our broken world as one of us. From that moment on the Word was and is and always will be Immanuel, God with us. Living with us, walking with us, conversing with us, loving us to the point of dying for us. Rise for us, living eternally for us.

The Word became flesh and that means God is with you. God is with you when you gather with your family over Christmas and enjoy the company of the ones closest to you. God is with you when Christmas doesn’t turn out the way you had hoped. God is with you as you reflect on the past joys of your life and God is with you when you are filled with grief, guilt, and remorse.

Immanuel, God is with you every moment of your life, both good and bad. This is true whether you know it or not, feel it or not, believe it or not. This is true because The Word became flesh and God is always with you.

Immanuel speaks to us and plants faith in the unbelieving heart. Immanuel speaks and shines a light on all human words and actions, both good and bad. Immanuel exposes our darkness, our sins, and our failures. Immanuel brings us forgiveness no matter how often we have fallen into sin yet again. Immanuel speaks and promises us life in all its fullness now and life even after death, bringing hope to those full of grief and despair.

The big question is, are we listening? Have we noticed? Have we recognised Immanuel, the true light that gives light to us all?

There were not many people listening when the Word became flesh.

This amazing event went largely unnoticed.

To most people, Immanuel was merely another baby born to an ordinary couple in not the best circumstances. A few people noticed. Mary’s relative Elizabeth noticed as the child in her own womb leapt. Mother and child noticed the child in Mary’s womb was special. Mary and Joseph knew he was special. A few shepherds knew, and a few Magi knew. King Herod knew he was a king, but Herod didn’t want to listen to Immanuel, Herod wanted to silence him to kill him.

For something like 30 years, Immanuel walked the earth and virtually no one knew or listened. Every day he spent time with people, and they didn’t notice God was speaking to them. When he was 12, he spent time in the temple talking to the scholars and they were impressed, but even they didn’t know God was speaking to them.

 Not until another prophet, John, came preaching a baptism of repentance and baptised the Word made flesh. Then John knew and John became a witness testifying to Immanuel, the light of humanity. John told everyone who would listen,

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (vs 19).

Some heard John and came to faith in the man who is the light of all humanity and believing in his name they became children of God.

The Word continues to speak. The Word continues to bring light and dispel the darkness in every corner of our lives. The Word continues to create faith, and make people into children of God, adopted by God the Father.

How can this be? Once the Word became flesh, the Word was forever flesh. God the one and only Son, who came from the Father, is still God the one and only Son. Through the man Jesus, God is still a fully human, still flesh and blood, still one of us. The man Jesus is still the Word through whom all things were made. When Jesus speaks, God is still speaking to us.

The Word who became flesh still takes people from darkness to light, and through faith we can still see the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**Amen.**

Pastor Rolf Lungwitz