

LENT, A TIME TO REFLECT ON OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST AND WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR ME, FOR ALL OF US.

So in January 2012 I am asked to prepare a Lenten devotion for the WA-AK LWM District Website. Today is dark. The darkness surrounds me. The Christmas lights are down. The sky is cloudy. The daylight seems so short and it is already dark outside *again*... and I don't feel well – and I'm asked to think about Lent? I feel cold. So I search for healing, warmth and light ... a candle, a flame... a fire! I long for the warmth and glow of Christmas ... and the bright Glory of Easter Morning! But it appears I am stuck in this long dark season, this place and time. The darkness is all about me and left on my own... my searching and self help, I would remain in the darkness. Thanks be to God that he has not left us alone in the darkness! As we begin this Lenten season once again and for always, God provides salvation and peace in the "*Light of the world*" our Savior, Jesus Christ.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made;...” *Nicene Creed*

First, let's start our Lenten reflection with John 1 as it takes us from the beginning, to Christmas, to Easter and to the end. (*Bible verses are in English Standard Version – ESV*)

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Second, let's look what the Bible has to say about "light." In a Bible search I found 277 "hits" for the word "light." Let's review only a few of those Biblical "light" references to see how God uses "light."

Genesis 1:1-4 ¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

We know that Jesus is God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is the Word. He made the world and *light*. He separated *light* from darkness. God guides us with His Light. He does not depart from us. Jesus is consistently our light through all time.

"In the Cross of Christ I glory, Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sacred story Gathers round its head sublime." "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" LSB 427 v.1

Exodus 13:21-22 ²¹ And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

Psalms 18:28 ²⁸ For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God lightens my darkness.

Psalms 27:1 ¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 112:4 ⁴ Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

Psalms 119:105 ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Isaiah 9:2 ² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Isaiah 60:1 ¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

Micah 7:8-9 ⁸ Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication.

"Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father."

Nicene Creed

Matthew 4:16 ¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.

John 3:16-20 ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

“When the woes of life o’er take me, Hopes deceive, and fears annoy, never shall the cross forsake me; Lo it glows with peace and joy.” “When the sun of bliss is beaming Light and love upon my way, From the cross the radiance streaming Adds more luster to the day.”

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory” LSB 427 v2-3

John 8:12 ¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 12:46 ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:6 ⁶ For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:8-10 ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Philippians 2:14-16 ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

“OUCH!” the Word shines a bright light on our sinfulness; (see my previous grumbings at the beginning of this devotion ☺) calls us to repentance of all our sins. Then... “in fervent gratitude for the Saviors dying love and His blood bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have...”

2 Timothy 1:9-10 ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

1 John 1:5-8⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

“And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.” *Nicene Creed*

Revelation 21:22-25²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

Revelation 22:5⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

“Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure By the cross are sanctified; Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide. Amen.” “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” LSB 427 v. 4

This Lent – let us not forget, but rather, thank and praise Jesus, who paid the price for our sins ... who suffered and died for our sins, ...who did not stay dead ...but who rose to life again – so that we may have forgiveness of all our sins and eternal life in heaven – that we may be called *“children of God.”*

This Lent - let us share the love and forgiveness of our Savior Jesus - let us share Jesus *“the light of the world”* - with the world.

Isaiah 58:10¹⁰ if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

Matthew 5:15-16¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.¹⁷

This Lent - let us - serve the Lord with gladness and glorify His name!

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