

“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: John 1:1-14, 18

Prayer: Jesus, as we enter into this advent season, open your Word to us in new and fresh and deep ways than ever before, that we may see you and know you and worship you and love you.

Introduction.

I have given our Advent series this year the title: The Incarnation: A Riches to Rags Story.

There are a lot of rags to riches stories in the world. Some of you can even tell a story like that. Growing up in the Great Depression with little or nothing, learning how to survive without necessities. And now you are blessed and have all you need and much more.

And there are a lot riches to rags stories in the world. People who started out with a lot or maybe had great successes and then lost it. We hear again and again of people winning the lottery and a few years later being worse off than ever. The same story can be told too many times in the world of Hollywood stars and pro sports, athletes making millions and a few years after retirement having nothing left.

The incarnation is a story of a Great Condescension, a riches to rags story.

II Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

But in order to more fully appreciate the heights and depth of this riches to rags story we need to first appreciate the heights, the riches, the glory of Christ before the incarnation.

Who doesn't love Christmas and the Christmas story, Jesus coming to earth, born as a little baby in a manger. Jesus becoming one of us, becoming human. It's sweet,

heartwarming. It's so beautiful, wonderful, and so familiar, so normal to us who have heard the story so many times.

But who was Jesus before He was a baby and what was He up to?

John's Gospel gives us a glimpse into the riches side of the Christmas story. Only John pulls back the veil to give us a glimpse into eternity past where we can see the incomparable and incomprehensible glory and majesty and splendor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a great harvest of riches in our text, let's glean from it all the Spirit has for us as we embark on another advent journey together. Like Mary did, I urge you to store (treasure up) these things up in your heart and think on these things.

Let me tell you about the God we worship, about God the Son whom we celebrate this season. Let me lift Him up out of the familiar, out of the realm of what has become common place and maybe even taken for granted. Let me lift up Jesus to His exalted place above the heavens.

In the beginning was the Word.

There is no question who the Word is. He will see this plainly next week when we hear the Word became flesh. The Word is Jesus. And John wants us to know the very most important things there are to be known about Jesus and he does it in 5 verses.

Jesus is eternal.

In the beginning was the Word. The beginning here can't be referring to the beginning of creation like in Genesis 1:1, because in verse three John is going to tell us Jesus was the one at creation doing the creating. This doesn't mean Jesus had a beginning, it means Jesus was already there at the beginning.

Whenever matter began, whenever the very first thing ever to be created was created, whenever the very first pulse of energy went out, Jesus was already there.

He who was in the beginning, never had a beginning. In the beginning Jesus was. Period. Not was made, not was created, not began to be, but simply was.

There never was a time when Jesus was not. There was never a time when the Father didn't have a Son, or the Son a Father.

You can't ask a question like how long did God exist before He created the universe. That's a time question. Time is part of creation. We can't say Jesus has existed for millions and billions and trillions of years. Jesus was before there was time. From everlasting to everlasting the same without beginning or end.

John 8:58 Before Abraham was, I am.

In the beginning was the Word in the riches of all His eternal glory.

And the Word was with God.

The Word was with God. He was in the beginning with God. Jesus is a distinct person from the Father, yet one with the Father. From all eternity they were two persons bound in the most perfect and intimate union.

It was to Jesus that the Father said, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26).

Is there mystery here? Of course, we are finite and human trying to understand infinite and divine things. How is there unity in plurality and plurality in unity, three persons in the Trinity yet one God in essence? How can Christ be at the same time in the Father and with the Father?

We will never fully comprehend it until we come to enjoy it in glory and even then it will take eternity to fathom the depths of these immeasurable riches.

John 14:9 Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

John 14:10 I am in the Father and the Father is in me.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one.

The Word was with God.

The Word was God.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

It is one thing to say the Word was with God, but an entirely different matter to say the Word that was with God was also God.

Can you believe it? One of the most profound and important truths that can be known by man is stated in four words. The Word was God.

Forgive me if I take a couple of hundred words to unpack this and bring it home.

The Jesus we make so much of at Christmas and worship is God. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, is in His nature, essence and substance very God of very God.

There is not God and then Jesus who is less than God. Jesus is not inferior to God, Jesus is not a Junior God or a Vice-God. Jesus is not second in command, He is not an angel or just a man.

John is establishing this truth and grounding us in this truth so that when we get to next week's text that the Word became flesh, no one says Jesus was only a man. There are people who call themselves Christians that say that, like Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

It is a lie, it is a heresy, it is blasphemy, to call Jesus anything less than the true and living Son of God, very God of very God. If you don't worship Jesus as God, you don't worship God.

All things were made through him, without him was not any thing made that was made.

As if John has not already proved the divinity of the Word, he goes on to prove His divinity by what He does, by His works. Whoever creates all things must be God.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

So not only is He not a creature or a created being, He is the creator of all that is created.

The Father made all things by the Son, through the Son.
God made the world by a word and that Word was His Son.

Psalms 33:6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

Psalm 148:5 He commanded and they were created.

Romans 5:17 calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

What this means is that the Word spoke to the nothingness, to what wasn't there, and the nothingness obeyed and became something. He is so powerful that when He issues a command and there is nothing there to hear the command, the power of His Word brings it into existence.

Remember when Lazarus was dead and buried in a tomb for four days and Jesus commanded in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." How did Lazarus obey? He was dead, he couldn't hear, he couldn't obey. The power of the Word carried out the obedience. He spoke and it was.

What riches of mind-boggling power and authority. What a gloriously great God. This is why evolution is such a terrible lie trying to cover up God's glory with the folly of some big bang.

There is nothing that is created that He didn't create. There is not one stray, rogue dust particle, or germ cell or molecule. Everything is from Him and ruled by Him.

He is the Word that spoke the worlds into existence and the galaxies and stars and planets and moons and the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that inhabits all of them.

Jesus made the donkey Mary rode on and the sheep out in the fields as the shepherds kept watch. And He made the other 8.7 million species that are on earth, a million of which are insects. He made the trees used to build the stable and the manger. He made the gold, frankincense and myrrh that were given to Him as gifts.

He created the vast universe that can't hold or contain Him and then came into it. He created the star that guided the wise men and then came to live under the stars.

He created this little earth that He would inhabit. Yes, its little. 1.3 million earths would fit in the sun. He created our little sun. Yes, its little. VY Canis Majoris it

would extend out to the orbit of Jupiter. Then there is UY Scuti which would extend just beyond the orbit of Saturn. It is 5 billion times larger than our sun.

Our sun has a diameter of over 800,000 miles, Scuti is almost 1.5 billion miles.

And that's just one star. There are 200 to 400 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy. There are now believed to be about a trillion galaxies in the observable universe. Using averages that's over 10 to the 24 number of stars in the observable universe, and that's a low end number.

If stars were grains of sand, it would cover the earth to a depth of a couple of feet.

Jesus created them all and knows each of their names. How vast are His riches.

Now let's put away our telescope and get out our microscope and look in the brain that knows this stuff and comprehends the Christmas story. How many connections are in our brain?

A typical healthy human brain contains about 200 billion nerve cells, or neurons, linked to one another via hundreds of trillions of tiny contacts called synapses. One neuron may make as many as tens of thousands of synaptic contacts with other neurons, passing signals to each other via as many as 1,000 trillion synaptic connections, equivalent by some estimates to a computer with a 1 trillion bit per second processor. A single human brain has more switches than all the computers and routers and Internet connections on Earth.

Theoretically there are more synapses than atoms in the universe.

<https://www.quora.com/How-is-it-possible-that-there-are-more-neuron-connections-in-the-brain-than-atoms-in-the-universe-Surely-there-is-more-than-1-atom-per-connection>

Jesus created our brains with fantastic complexity and capacity to comprehend the glory of Jesus. Jesus made it and then stooped down to have one.

Jesus sustains and holds together everything He created.

We take it completely for granted that the sun is going to come up tomorrow and that gravity will still be working tomorrow and that the world is going to keep spinning and the tides keep working and the atmosphere will stay in place protecting us from UV rays.

Not only is everything that is created by Him, called into existence by Him, but it continues to exist by the Word of His mouth. God is not like the clock maker who winds up the clock and then sets it down and leaves it. God is not an impersonal, passive God, an absentee-landlord.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:3 He upholds the universe by the word of his power.

If God for a second stopped saying the Word, we would cease to exist. We are sustained by His Word.

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Nothing exists on its own and nothing continues to exist on its own. The universe and everything in it is always dependent on its creator. The universe is still here because He tells it to still be here. You and I continue to exist because Jesus says so.

We are totally and completely and utterly dependent of God for everything, more dependent than a new born baby. We depend on the Lord's sustaining grace for every breath we take, every word we say, every move we make. In Him we live and move and have our being.

He is the potter and we are the clay. We owe everything to Him who owes us nothing.

It is all grace, it is all blessing, it is all gift.

Implications and application.

Let your mouth hang open, tremble, just be speechless for a minute, be still and know He is God.

What has the Spirit shown us?

Our salvation could not be accomplished by any other means than for the eternal Son of God, the creator of all things, to become incarnate. There was no one else who could do it, and there was no other way it could be done. It had to be God and God alone.

We must not seek life and salvation outside of Christ, in no one else. Of this we must be certain and unwavering.

And it is a measure of how lost we are and how sinful we are that it takes this kind of Savior to redeem us and forgive us and deliver us from darkness.

And it is a measure of how much hope we have that our Savior is the eternal God, who creates out of nothing and who creates saints out of sinners and saves us to the uttermost.

From before the foundations of the earth Jesus was planning and preparing to come and redeem us for His glory.

What kind of being is this baby we worship and adore at Christmas? What kind of God is He? What kind of redeemer is He? What kind of claim does He have on our lives and our worship? What kind of difference does He make in who we are and what we are doing and where we are going and in what we are living for?

When we worship Jesus we are worshipping the one to whom all worship is owed, for He is our creator.

Is this sweet news to your ear, do you find comfort and rest and peace in this news, that God has complete control over life and your life, that He is with us always?

He is bigger than our biggest problems.

He is greater than our worst fears.

He is stronger than our strongest sin.

He sees the future and knows it perfectly and is guiding us each step.

He is with us always.

Think on these things, ponder them in your heart. Treasure the fact that so great a God did so great a thing for you and went to such lengths.

II Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.