



“And the Word became flesh...” St. John 1:14a

The Word became flesh is very familiar, we hear it especially during the Advent and Christmas season proclaiming to us God coming into human flesh and dwelling among us for our salvation. Yet, there is even more to understand about our Savior, Jesus Christ who is like us with flesh and blood. What does the Word continue to give us today as we understand that the work of salvation by Christ is accomplished once and all for us on His cross?

St. John’s Gospel, chapter 3 gives us the account of the Pharisee Nicodemus who comes to Jesus at night with questions. From this, we learn the Word is not in the past, but that the Word continues to work in our lives today. The Holy Spirit opens the Scriptures to us through faith, as we are saved by grace, given the gift of faith which trusts in Christ as Savior. (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) God’s Word gives to us salvation. Only through faith can we understand what we are given in Christ, through His Word.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 teaches that it is The Holy Spirit who gives understanding because **“the natural person does not accept the things of the spirit of God...” v 14**. God gives His Spirit that we might understand what God has given to us through Christ.

Human intellect has its place as we understand grammar, words, and sentences in human language that God has given us. However, the human mind is clouded by sin, our intellect will not suffice to take hold of the truth of God’s Word. Nicodemus could not understand what Jesus was teaching. **St. John’s Gospel chapter 3 verses 1-8** helps us to realize, even though Nicodemus was certainly an intelligent individual, he was looking at Jesus from strictly a human perspective. He needed spiritual insight given only by God’s grace.

So also, our own human intellect has this fatal flaw. Just like Nicodemus, who could not understand **“How these things can be?” (St. John 3:9b)**, we too are unable to comprehend the things of God without the intervention of God through the working of God the Holy Spirit as Jesus reveals in **John chapter 3 verses 9-10**. Since we have inherited the sinful human nature from our parents, we struggle with God’s Word to understand the truth revealed to us. However, God gives His Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures to us to see Jesus our Savior and how through Him we are rescued from sin, death and the power of the devil and given forgiveness and eternal life. (**St. John 3:16**).

St. John 3:31-36 reveals to us that Jesus comes from above to bear witness to all who hear His testimony that God is true and faithful to His promises. The One God sends is His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord who speaks the words of God, who gives His Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son giving all things into His hands that whoever believes in the Son will have life everlasting in the presence of God.

Study God’s Word this Advent and Christmas season and know that God in the person of Jesus has come and accomplished salvation and that He continues His presence in our lives through Word and Sacrament and by His Holy Spirit that creates and sustains saving faith. Christ has indeed come to earth once and died on the cross once and risen again once to win salvation, give forgiveness and calls us into saving faith by His Word and Sacrament as the Holy Spirit brings us to faith by water and the Word as Jesus refers to in **St. John 3:6-8**.

As we look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ this year and hear God’s Word through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, learn from God’s Word that while His work of redemption was the one-time sacrifice for the sins of the world on His cross, His work continues to keep us in that one true faith to life everlasting through Word and Sacrament. As we continue in our faith given by God’s grace, we come to understand as we study the Scriptures, that God’s Word, the Word made flesh (**St. John 1:14**) is Jesus who reveals Himself in the written word for our benefit, for life and salvation by Jesus our Lord, and Savior, The Babe of Bethlehem.

Donna and I thank all of you for your gracious care for us throughout the year as we share together our faith in Jesus, the One who is The Word made flesh for our salvation. Glory to God in the highest!

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt