

Message

Sunday, 7 January 2024

“JESUS SWITCHES THE LIGHTS ON”

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In the Old Testament reading Genesis 1:1-5 God's word reminds us that {1} In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, {2} the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. {3} Then 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. {5} God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

THE THEME IS “JESUS SWITCHES THE LIGHTS ON”

For 51 years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn't see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness. A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation and for the first time, Bob Edens had sight. He was able to see. He found it overwhelming. "I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow," he exclaimed. **"I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favourite colour. I just can't believe red. I can see the shape of the moon--and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapour trail and of course the sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is."**

The Gospel reading is all about Jesus' baptism. The baptism of Jesus was an enlightening experience. The clouds tore apart, and heaven opened. God voiced out **“This is my beloved Son” and the Holy Spirit came on Jesus. This is a similar experience for Bob Edens who was blind till he was 51. He was speechless when he saw God's creation. It was a baptismal experience for Bob. He saw the light come into his life that dispelled all darkness.**

Dear friends! I believe that God wants us to know that His voice is powerful, life giving and transforming. Our lives were just like how the world was in the beginning before God created the whole universe in 6 days. Everything was dark, empty, and lifeless. It was God's word that transformed the universe into a beautiful place. It is God's word that brought light into this world. The connection between the Gospel reading and the O.T. reading is God's word. God voiced out let there be light and God switched the lights on and in the Gospel reading God voiced out this is my beloved and Jesus switched the lights on for us through his baptism.

We all have been baptized and we are reminded that we come into the light. In the baptismal service order, we hear the voice of God **“Let every darkness flee and may God's light be on us so that we may be the light of this world.”** Light is a very important metaphor. The light of the sun is converted to energy that is stored in plant life and from there in animal life. In fact, life would be impossible without the sun. So, the metaphor works. **God provides the light of the sun and the light of Christ, without which life would not be possible.**

The creation story reminds us that from chaos and disorder God has transformed the universe to be regular and ordered. Jesus is the light who dispelled all darkness, and the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters. This opens our eyes in understanding that God the Trinity was

present. The Father God spoke the words let there be light, and Jesus came as the light and the Spirit was also present. Even in our Baptism it's not just water but God's word and the Holy Spirit that brings us to light. We are baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The water reminds us that we are washed clean through the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Jesus switches on the lights for us so that we may see things from God's light and not from our own darkness. In the Gospel of **MARK 1:8 John proclaims**, "I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Holy Spirit has different meanings in Hebrew and in Greek. **The Holy Spirit signifies light, fire, wind, and dove. In our baptism we are gifted with the Holy Spirit the refiner's fire that purifies our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Fire extracts all impurities, and the Holy Spirit extracts all impurities from our lives through the body and blood of Jesus who is the purifier or the inner flame.** Jesus purifies our souls, our body, and our mind so that we may be holy and called God's children.

Dear friends do we have the Joy of being brought to the light to see God's creation? In Acts 19:1-7 Paul was concerned for the people at Ephesus who were living in darkness. He found some disciples and said to them, **"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." On hearing this, Paul laid his hands and baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Paul was concerned for the people around him. Imagine if you are sitting in a dark room with no windows, you can't see the objects in the room. Even though the objects are there, you aren't aware of them because you're in darkness. However, if someone turns on the light switch, the things previously hidden from your eyes are now obvious. Don't get angry at people in spiritual darkness for not being able to see what's obvious to you. Instead, bring them some spiritual light. (Matt. 5:14-16) --Kent Crockett

We are called to switch on the light of God in their lives so that they may see by faith and experience and believe. **Edith Wharton once said, "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." Both ways we share God's light. For some of us who are extroverts we become the candle outwardly sharing God's light and for those who are introverts we become the reflection silently sharing God's light through our life. God switches the lights on and may we enjoy God's light and be a light of to this world. Amen**