

CHRIST OUR LIGHT FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE!

The Second Sunday of Advent

5 December Anno Domini 2010

Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

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I. INTRODUCTION:

We are an impatient society; this seems especially true when it comes to Christmas. Even though it's not yet Christmas, we've already been bombarded with Christmas commercials, Christmas decorations, Christmas lighting, Christmas music, and, the greatest of them all, Christmas sales!

That's one of many distinct differences between the Church and society. Society says that the Christmas season begins sometime in autumn, perhaps even already in summer, and ends on December 25. The Church, however, knows that the Christmas season begins on December 25 and extends through the Epiphany season, concluding with the Transfiguration of Our Lord. At least that's the way we are suppose to understand it.

As I reminded you last weekend, we are in the Advent season. In order to understand this more clearly, let's examine the word "Advent". It stems from the Latin language and means approach, arrive, or come to. Advent consists of the four Sundays and days following them that lead up to Christmas. During that time we recall three eternally truths. First, Emmanuel took upon Himself our human flesh and blood in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago when He was, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Second, He enters our lives on an ongoing basis in this present age through the hearing of God's Word and partaking of Christ's Holy Supper. And last, but by no means least, He will return as heavenly King, righteous Judge, and gracious Savior. So, we join together during this time to repentantly prepare to celebrate His historic birth realizing from the reading and hearing of God's Holy Word that ...

CHRIST OUR LIGHT COMES FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE rejoicing that *The Spirit of the Lord Rested upon Him* and gratefully acknowledging that He Produces Peace and Harmony.

II. THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD RESTED UPON HIM. ISAIAH 11:2-5

“And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins” (Isaiah 11:2-5).

Isaiah served God by declaring His righteous judgment and gracious salvation to the Israelites about 650 years before Christ's birth. His message reminded and reassured believers that the Messiah would eventually come in a miraculously physical way into this world. Here He would, and did, live the perfect life that God demands of us all. But we are unable to do this, so He (†) suffered the full penalty that we deserved including crucifixion on Calvary's cross, and majestically rose from the dead, defeating sin, death and the devil, thereby being the atonement for you and for all people of all times

In fact, Isaiah's message describes to his hearers what we know today about Emmanuel, namely, He possessed and exercised the very virtues of God Himself. That certainly shouldn't be strange to us.

After all, Jesus Christ is "very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father" as we frequently confess in the words of the Nicene Creed. Because He is true God He possesses and exercises divine wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and reverence for His Father.

It is what He declared one Sabbath Day in the synagogue for He said, "***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.***" (Luke 4:18-19)

But His realm of greatness included more. He not only possessed and exercised the virtues of God Himself, but Righteousness and faithfulness clothed Him. In good Lutheran fashion we ask the probing question, "What does this mean?" King David explained it by stating in Psalm 9:7-8: "***But the LORD sits enthroned forever; He has established His throne for justice, and He judges the world with righteousness; He judges the peoples with uprightness.***"

In other words, the fullness of Godly wisdom and love are personified in Jesus. That is, He knew and correctly lived God's truth that is His holy will. In so doing, He loved fallen mankind with a Godly love that motivated Him to sacrifice Himself on the altar of Calvary's cross as the only acceptable sacrifice to God for the sins of all peoples. His life that was clothed in human flesh began in the throne of Mary's womb, continued in the throne of Bethlehem's manger, temporarily ended on the throne of Calvary's cross, and now He sits on His heavenly throne of glory.

So, within the context of temporal history, we recognize with our annual Christmas celebration that **CHRIST OUR LIGHT COMES FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE** rejoicing that The Spirit of the Lord Rested upon Him and gratefully acknowledging that He Produces Peace and Harmony.

II. HE PRODUCES PEACE AND HARMONY. ISAIAH 11:6-10

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious." Old Testament prophecy was always two-dimensional; it pointed at the same time to both the present temporal here-and-now and the future eternal there and then.

What God proclaimed through the Old Testament prophet and fulfilled in Jesus Christ was none other than God's creation as He originally made it. How the original creation was before sin had corrupted all things? It was serene and peaceful, without conflict and confrontation. There existed harmony and peace between God's creatures and the Creator Himself.

Such will be restored when the Last Day arrives. At that time all Believers in Jesus will live together in peaceful unity. God desires we live that way in this present life by replacing strife, discord, enmity, and contention with kindness, unity, peace, and harmony. In addition, God desire that all people confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Zechariah the prophet stated it this way, "***And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one***" (Zechariah 14:9).

The prophet Isaiah said **"To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance"** (Isaiah 45:23).

And the Apostle Paul captured this future reality when He wrote to the Philippians, "... **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**" (Philippians 2:10-11).

However, only those who have made this confession, with a God breathed faith, will gain the life of glory with God in heaven. So, let us join our hearts and voices together in true worship and our confession in the true faith that rests in and focuses on our Savior, Jesus Christ who did it all. As we do so, we celebrate the fact that: **CHRIST OUR LIGHT COMES FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE** rejoicing that The Spirit of the Lord Rested upon Him and gratefully acknowledging that He Produces Peace and Harmony.

CONCLUSION:

The Holy Spirit inspired St. Paul to write the following that we heard in today's Epistle Reading: **"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"**(Romans 15:5-6, 12-13)

Harmony, unity, hope, joy, and peace are Advent themes that lead up to, extend through, and continue past Christmas. Those themes are also blessed benefits of our Savior's atoning work. They are, in fact, gracious gifts that He came as a babe born in Bethlehem's manger to give you. He comes daily in the reading and hearing of God's Holy Word as well as the receiving of Christ's body and blood to assure you that He will come on the Last Day to fully and completely restore you. As we repentantly prepare to once again formally celebrate our Lord's incarnation, let us strive to live together in this present age in such a way that declares to the world around us that we are truly children of our heavenly Father as well as brothers and sisters of His holy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!

Let us do so because Christ our Light, comes from Jesse's earthly family, rejoicing that the Spirit of the Lord rested upon Him and gratefully acknowledged that He produces peace and harmony. You have that peace for He gives it to you! For His peace and harmony comes to you telling you that all your sins are forgiven by Christ our Light.

In Him (✠) alone there is true peace and harmony. In Jesus name, AMEN and AMEN!

The peace of God which passes all comprehension keep your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus!
AMEN