

Becoming human- giving glory. 30 December_2018.

(PP1) Becoming human- giving glory x 52 Sunday 30 December_2018.

Moving into darkness with the light of the Word of God.

After Christmas what are we left with?

A glorious Book of mystery and meaning and a way forward in Christ, together.

“On the next day of Christmas Almighty gave to me:

13 men at supper

12 sons of Jacob

11 friends in mourning

10 rules for living

9 fruits of Spirit

8 lighted candles

7 skinny cattle

6 days of working

5 barley loaves

4 books of news

3 dark days

2 little fish

And the same cup for you and for me.”

Lucy Berry on behalf of the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union.

Q. So quick check – how much can you remember?

What assurances or lessons does this give us?

READ: JOHN 1: 1 – 5.

Psalm 119: 105 *The Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path...SOF 1066.*

Isaiah 9:2 *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows but now light is shining on them.*

John 1: 4,5 ...The Word brought light to humanity. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.

As we move through life we need light to live by, light to walk by. As we prepare to transition from 2018 into 2019 and continue to celebrate the 150th year of this church's

life we should be aware of the darkness that surrounds us...the darkness of an unknown future which can so easily unsettle us and make us fearful.

In following Jesus, we might like to think that we are **leaving the darkness behind** as we seek out Jesus' way and walk towards him. This is true BUT we are also very much **walking into darkness**.

Like Abraham and Sarah, we press on to a land that we don't yet know – that is the nature of faith. We are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. (*Hebrews 11: 8-10*). Like Abraham we believe the City exists – they were a tabernacle people looking for something permanent and secure. (Spoken of in *Revelation 21: 2 the Holy City, the New Jerusalem*). In life we get glimpses of it, we begin to experience the outskirts of it but we need to journey deeper).

Mary and Joseph with Jesus fled Bethlehem – going into the darkness of an unknown future in Egypt – as migrants fleeing conflict. *Matthew 2: 13 After the (Magi) left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said “Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave.”*

The Word of God can and may call us to move into darkness, but we have the light of the Word to walk by.

We pray: “Jesus light the Way” – and the person, the Word made flesh leads us. **It as we walk in darkness that we see and experience the light lighting the way.** “*Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path*”. *Psalms 119: 105* Jesus reveals the way as we walk into the darkness of the unknown immediate future.

We can look back in history and see that with the birth of Christ the Light has entered into the World in a new and powerful way. This is the Light that was promised. There have been many dark times, and many very dark times throughout the ages but the Light of God's Word has never been extinguished. There were “3 dark days” but the darkness of death did not extinguish God's glory.

John 1: 18 NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN GOD. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

We walk in light and we must choose to keep walking in the light – even if some turn back. *God is light and there is no darkness at all in him. 1 John 1:3*. We need to live in fellowship with one another to remain in the light. There is “*one Cup for you and for me*”. By continuing in fellowship and Breaking Bread together we live in the light.

If we feel that the darkness is closing in, then we need to draw closer to God who is Light. Remember God is with us – Immanuel. Like a “city on a hill” (*Matthew 5*) we are to let our light shine in community we can offer a place for others to come out of the darkness and into a place of light.

It is in living in the light and becoming more like Jesus that we **become more human and give glory to God.**