

“THE TRUE LIGHT”

PASTOR MIKE CORWIN

CHRISTMAS EVE

TEXT: JOHN 1:1-9

GOD’S WORD: LUKE 2:1-14

I – STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT:

There is a simple little poem about a star that most of us learned sometime early in our childhood that goes like this:

*Star light, star bright
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may,
I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.*

Parents taught us the poem and then we’d look up in to the sky and make a wish upon the first star we’d see.

That’s where I became traumatized as a child. I never got to make a wish because I could never decide which star was the first one I saw and evidently if you don’t wish upon the first star your wish won’t come true. We lived on the outskirts of Crestline before all the city lights existed. When you looked up at the sky it was full of stars. It didn’t matter if you closed one eye, or if you squinted, or tilted your head, you could not hone in on one star, so you couldn’t have your wish.

II – THE NATIVITY:

I was thinking of that poem and my childhood experience with it this week as I read the story of the nativity. You heard it read to start our worship this evening. The story of Jesus’ birth. The people of the time had a wish already in mind. They suffered under the rule of the Romans, they suffered under the yoke of their religious leaders, and

they suffered because of the economic conditions of the day. Sounds a little like today's society doesn't it?

All their prophets had promised them a Messiah...a Savior, who would come and deliver them from all their sins and all their problems. And then I thought of the Shepherds. Those who were some of the lowest of society, those who surely had their hopes and dreams placed on this prophecy of the coming of Christ.

As they sat in their fields watching their flock's by night, I'm sure they gazed at the stars every once in a while. I'm sure they too had hopes and dreams, and I imagine that on occasion they must have made wishes as they looked up at the stars. Then their lives changed. Their lives were suddenly ablaze with heavenly light as first one angel appeared and told them the wish of their people had been granted. That the Christ child had been born this very night and told them to go to Bethlehem and search for him in the stable. Then more stars of light, more angels, appeared as a whole heavenly choir appeared and sang out praising God and telling of his blessings shed on humankind this night. If you were to read further you would see that after the angels left they left their fields and went to town in search of the baby in a manger. Can't you just imagine their emotions? They had been surrounded by the light of heaven and as they approached the city they would have seen the lights of the homes and the streets as they approached. They would have been taken aback by the star shining down on the stable, and the glow from within. Their attention would have been diverted to many sources of light, to the many stars of the night.

Yet, when they entered the stable, they saw the real star, the real light of heaven, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger. Their wish had been granted...the Messiah had come. They looked through all the other stars and picked out the right one.

III – THE FIRST STAR:

The Shepherds picked out the first star, the real star of their lives. The star worthy of placing your hopes, dreams, and wishes on. They looked through all the other lights and found the Light of the World.

John's Gospel puts it this way:

John 1:1-9 (NLT)

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

² He existed in the beginning with God.

³ God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.

⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

The first star, the first light of the universe is Jesus Christ. He was with God from the very beginning and is the source of all Creation. John tells us that without Jesus our existence is impossible. Our very lives come from this creative power. That through the Light of Jesus, God's power and grace is made available to all of humanity.

This light, this star, is so bright that it can never be extinguished. Unlike other stars it will not become a super nova and flame out and die. This Light is permanent, this Light will shine forever. It cannot be defeated by sin, by evil, or even by death. And it exists for one reason...to shed the love of God on everyone who places their faith on this light.

As we live in this world we are constantly bombarded by different stars, by different lights that clamor for our attention. Stars that offer us fame, fortune, and gratification. But John points out that there is only one light source we should look at. Only one light

source that can fulfill our wishes of life. Only one star that can shed the light of God's grace on us, that can give us forgiveness of our sins and light the way to God for us. That is Jesus, the baby in the manger, THE TRUE LIGHT of life and he came this night to give this light to all.

IV – TONIGHT:

So what about this Holy Night, this Christmas Eve? How are your eyes and heart focused tonight? Star Light, Star Bright...what's the first star you see tonight? As you celebrate the birth of the baby tonight are you looking at the manmade lights of Christmas...or have you focused on the True Light of Christmas?

V – WISH:

The rest of that childhood poem is, "I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight." One day in my life I finally saw the first star and was no longer traumatized. I used the eyes of my heart to focus on the Light of the World, the True Light, the brightest light in the universe. I saw clearly that Jesus Christ, the baby born this night, was the Son of God and through him I could escape the darkness of my sins and live forever in the light of God's love and grace. I accepted Jesus and wished for that grace and love and it has been given to me as a steady stream ever since. I finally got the right star and the right wish! But I have one more wish this night...

*Star light, star bright
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may,
I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.*

I wish Dear Lord that all those here tonight would know you as their Lord and Savior, just as I do. That all those here tonight would see you as the First star in their lives.

AMEN