

Christmas Day, 2009

Text: John 1:1-14

Title: Words of Light and Life

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We are surrounded by words. We are a very literate culture, and words are everywhere. Words on TV, words on the radio, words on the internet, words in books and magazines and newspapers, words on t-shirts and billboards and the sides of busses.

This place is full of words- words on the sign outside the church, words of greeting, sung words, prayed words, spoken words. When you walked in you were given a bulletin full of words, which helps you to use a book full of words. And now you are listening to my words. Words, words, and more words.

Some words are more weighty than others. Remember the first words spoken by your children. Or the last words spoken on a death bed. Remember the words will you marry me and "I do".

Special words are those spoken by special people at special times. These words can change our lives.

Other words are worthless and useless.

I spent several hours on Monday talking with various people in customer service and technical support from a large company that shall remain nameless. All the words spoken to me were worthless. No one seemed willing or able to help with my problem.

It was frustrating. It was aggravating and exhausting. The so-called experts didn't have the right words and no one could help with my problem. At the end, I was done with words. I didn't want to talk to anyone else. I just wanted someone to come and solve my problem for me, to fix everything in person.

When God interacts with His creation He uses words. But His words are the special kind. His words actually get things done and solve problems. They are not the useless telephone tech support words, but living, active, creating words.

In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God.

How can God be the Word?

Words are an expression of who you are. We get to know one another through our words. Yes, there are other ways to express yourself, but the simplest, easiest way to do so is through words.

When God speaks, He reveals who He is. God's Words are special because His Words are actions. God's Words do things.

In the beginning, God's words create things. God speaks His word into the darkness and there is light.

As God creates light, He reveals who He is. God is light. "In Him was light and that light was the light of man." "In Him there is no darkness."

To be in the light is to be illumined by God.

God is not only light, but He is life. To the newly enlightened world, God gives life. First plants and then fish, birds, animals, and finally, man.

God through His word God brings light and life.

But God's word is not the only word. God lets you speak, too. You are free to speak God-words or your own words.

To speak God words is to agree with God and to speak light and life. To speak your own words is to disagree with God, to doubt and disbelieve, to speak words of darkness and death.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, chose to speak their own words. They listened to the serpent's words and they spoke death and darkness into the word.

But God kept speaking. He spoke to the people of old by the prophets. Through Moses and Micah, Isaiah and Ezekiel, God spoke of light and life.

The final prophet was John. He also spoke of light and life. He was not the light, but He pointed the way to the light through His words.

Finally, in these last days, God spoke to us by His Son.

God spoke His Word into the Virgin Mary.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God's Word was made flesh- incarnate. God took His Word, His expression of Himself, His light and His life and made that Word flesh.

In Jesus all that is God dwells with us.

When God wanted to communicate with us, when God wanted to get His Word to us, He did not send a message. God did not use e-mail or text message, He did not do an infomercial or put up a billboard.

When God chose to send His word among us, He made His Word flesh, and God came as a human being. God revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. God poured all of His light and all of His life. In Him was life, and that life was the light of man.

Jesus brought life and light to a dark, dying world. That is what Christmas is all about. The beginning to the renewal of creation. The return of light and life.

Jesus spoke light and life into the dark, dying world around Him. He healed the sick, cast out the demons, raised the dead and forgave sins.

But as before, other voices still spoke. They did not recognize Him and so they nailed Him to a cross to silence Him.

But it didn't work. The Word of the Lord grows. God sent out the apostles to speak His word. He who hears you, hears me. In the church, the light still shines, and the life is still lived.

The words of light and life are still spoken here.

In Holy Baptism, the word brings new life and dark souls are enlightened.

In Holy Absolution, the word restores life and brings our feet back to the lighted path.

In the Lord's Supper, the word is again made flesh and dwells among us, bringing us His life and light.

The world around us is dark and dying. Many of the people you know are still living in death and darkness.

They need Christmas. They need the Word Incarnate. They need light and life.

So speak God-words to them. Bring them here to be enlivened and enlightened.

God is not some tech support guy on the phone miles away. God is here in the flesh, to bring you light and life.