

December 29 2013

**Scripture Lessons** *Isaiah 63:7-9*

*John 1:1-14*

**Sermon** *God's Night Light*

I don't know how it was in your house if you had children but one of the most important fixtures in each of my boy's bedrooms, really not that many years ago when I think about it, was a night light. Having a night light in each of their bedrooms of course served a practical purpose because it helped them to see and to be safe if they had to get up in the middle of the night. And it did the same thing for me as a parent if I got one of those late night calls that I had to get out of bed for. The night light for a child does a lot more than provides for safety, it provides security as well. It reassures a small child in the darkness of the night that he or she is not alone. That somebody in the house cares enough to provide that same reassurance that in reality there is nothing to be afraid of in that darkens room. Similar I think it is appropriate as I mentioned before with the boys or girls that we use light and we use candles for decorating in worship in this Christmas season. Jesus in fact is, in my way of looking at it, God's Night Light. He was sent into the darkness of our world to provide the same kind of safety and the same kind of security which a child's night light gives. The light of God that was promised by the Old Testament prophets became a reality with the birth of Mary's little baby. We took a look in Bible Study at this story from Luke's Gospel; Zachariah spoke of the coming of the Messiah with these words, "by the tender mercies of our God the dawn from on high will break upon us to give us light. To give us light to those who sit in darkness in the shadow of death and to guide our feet in the way of peace." So the theme of light runs like a bright metallic thread throughout the whole of biblical revelation. It starts with the separation of the light from the darkness in God's first act of creation and it takes all the way to the end of the Bible to the book of Revelation that God will the light of the new creation. Our destiny is too defined by light and darkness as well as life and death. The theme of light occupies a central

place then in Scripture and also plays a primary role as we have seen in the Christmas Story itself. Now according our Gospel lesson for today, Jesus was the true light coming into the world to enlighten every person. The light was to overcome the darkness. Jesus was to lead all people from death into the light and life of God. So on this Sunday after Christmas I would like to invite you to reflect and mediate upon three different ways that Jesus is God's night light; in ways in which Jesus bring light and life into the midst of the darkness of the world and also in the midst of our own lives as individual followers on Jesus' path.

First of all, Jesus as God's night light shines upon the darkness of our path and in the process helps us to recognize and reflect upon the our short comings and failures but far more importantly than that encourages us to put them behind us and move toward the new light of our relationship with God. God sent Jesus into the world to be a powerful light. This light was to be a sort of spot light in the darkness of our less than perfect lives and brighten the darken pathway that we sometimes tread in life. Jesus in fact came as a light to show us a better way to live our lives. When we see our lives in the light of Jesus' life and in Jesus work we realize there is a pretty significant gap between where we are and where we want and need to be in life. We learn through God's Holy Spirit that we live in a state of a sort of dimmed reality in the need of constant illumination from God. But God in Jesus also calls us as Second Peter puts it, "Out of darkness", and I love the way it puts it, "into God's marvelous light". It is a rich light. By responding to this call we are transformed from residents of the kingdom of shadows into citizens, to full citizens of the kingdom of light. With Jesus we share the destiny as the children of light we come to the fullness of God's saving light now and also then in the life to come.

Secondly, Jesus as God's night light also provides to the light of guidance for our journey of faith. John wrote in his Gospel because he believes that Jesus is the light of living. He says in that opening prolog in Jesus was life and the life was the light for all people and then later on in chapter in eight John's reminds us that Jesus says of himself, "I am the light of the world whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." The light of God acts as a kind

of lighthouse in the midst of the stormy seas of life. As God's children we are to walk in the light. The coming of Jesus, then is light of the world into the world brought into bold relief the tensions between darkness and light. Its coming shows the difference between walking in darkness and walking in light. Light defines the reign of Jesus in the world as one of love and peace and justice. Darkness defines the domain of chaos and those places of evil in the world. So we as human beings unfortunately exist somewhere between these two poles. In life we have to choose whether to walk as children of darkness or children of light. And there are those who choose to live lives less than what God intended and sometimes want to flee that light, fearing the reality of what that light reveals. I have been there and you have as well, so those who choose to act in love and in mercy come to the light and their needs are a reflection of their relationship with God. The challenge then before each one of us in this New Year is and in this waning season of Christmas is to see whether we will live according to light or whether we will live according to darkness. The choice is yours and mine to make. But far more than this we are to be lights to others on this journey as well and when they lose sight of God's love on their journey, we are helping them to see that light in that way.

And finally, Jesus as God's night light leads us into the next life where God will provide unfailing continuous light. Jesus will lead us to the eternal light of God. Like many of ourselves we can hope for marvelous transformation, a transformation which God has promised to us as people of faith. That new Jerusalem spoken of in the book of Revelation we will finally arrive and we will reflect upon us that divine light of God. John in fact wrote that in the Book of Revelation the city has no need for a sun or moon to shine upon us for the Glory of God is its light and its lamp is the lamb. By seeing the face of God we will be illumined by God divine light. The eternal light of God is the blessed hope of God's children. When the light of God shines upon us every single moment we will know that we are in the eternal presence of God and we will know that we have finally reached our eternal home. This then as we gaze upon the waning light of Christmas, I encourage you to reflect upon the light night of God which is Jesus Christ. Remember that

first of all this light saves us from the weakness of our own humanity. Secondly it guides us in our journey of faith day by day and helps us to guide others as well. Finally it leads us to our eternal home with God. So may God's light be with you in this New Year which lies before each one of us.

And together we say AMEN