

First Lesson: Jeremiah 23:2-6
January 5, 2014 John 1:14-18

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.



Children of our Heavenly Father – precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

These last few days – more than any other time each year – we think about time – the passage of time – tick, tock, tick, tock. I heard the other day – that this year – the year of our Lord 2014 the world's population will surpass 7 billion people being alive right now. They say – on average a new person is born into this world about every 8 seconds. That means between the time Mrs. Schadt rang the bell and the sermon started – about 150 little babies were born. Between the time Mrs. Schadt rang the bell and the sermon started – about 100 people passed away. Did you know that? That's a lot of people in and a lot of people out! Part of why we are in Church today is because some day – maybe this new year – we could die! This year could be the year we see Jesus face to face. We will be ready to meet Jesus face to face by grace through faith. This 2nd Sunday after Christmas God's Word reminds us:

1. Jesus Is God's Word Made Flesh

2. Jesus shows us His Father

With Jesus' permission we will read from the Gospel of John some 15 times – in ILCW Series A. 46 times we will read from the Gospel of Matthew – so mostly Matthew this ILCW Series A. 4 times from Luke and 9 times from Mark – unless Pastor Gartner or I or Pastor Schneider or some guest preacher chooses a free text! This is all very tentative – and so? It is entirely up to Jesus – whether we make or hear or write or read another

sermon or not! It's not up to us. It's all up to Jesus! This new year will be full of things Jesus causes – and full of things that Jesus allows. There is a very important distinction. Blessings from Jesus are sure to come. Painful and difficult and sad things are sure to come too. Jesus is never ever the Author of evil. But from time to time he allows evil – always and only to make all things work together for good – for those who love God. That would be us! Just one more thing to remember – context wise – the Gospel of John is unique in several ways. It was written much later than the other 3 Gospels. It is much more about what Jesus said – than what Jesus did. John records what Jesus said.

John chapter 1:1-14 Christmas Day. Remember? **1.1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. (*John the Baptist*) ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He (*Jesus*) was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God –** Do you hear all the resistance that Jesus encountered? Jesus came to be light and life – and so often he was met with darkness and death! He was not the kind of King or Savior or Lord that people were looking for and expecting. People wanted freedom from the Romans, freedom from taxes – freedom from sickness – the leprosy and blindness and lameness that had to do with their eyes and legs and skin. Jesus came to give them eternal life through his sacrifice on the cross. Again – the more we read and study and discuss God's Word – the more obvious it will become that Jesus is exactly the kind of redeemer we need!

¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. Grace – confirmation definition – undeserved forgiving love! Every year one of the very last days of the year – *USA Today*

publishes 2 ½ pages called *Passages* – all about the people who died last year. They reduce some 80 or 90 years of a person’s life to about 50 words. A very famous – very handsome actor nominated 8 times for an Academy Award – recipient of a lifetime achievement award – passed away. His 50 words end by saying he “*was an unrepentant bad boy to the end. Long illness. December 14.*” What does that mean – unrepentant bad boy? It means he did things even this world counts bad! Like drinking and smoking and having “hugs and kisses” with people who are married to someone else! Unrepentant means *I’m not sorry*. I make no apologies! I will do these bad things right up to the end! If I could change my past – I would not! I would do it all over the same way! I don’t care what anybody thinks! We need to care what Jesus thinks! When you love Jesus with your whole ♥ your whole life is one of repentance! Repentance clings by faith to the powerful Gospel promises of Jesus!

17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Moses. God’s Word says concerning Moses: **Since then – since Moses died and the LORD buried him – Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt – to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.** Deuteronomy 34:10-12 The Law came through Moses – the Ten Commandments – “**You shall have no other gods before Me... You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God... Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy... you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal...**” It was back in 1963 – the British Great Train Robbery. The mastermind of the crime named Bruce died last year. So did one of his partners in crime--a robber named Ronnie – who had in fact broken out of prison and lived in Brazil for decades – before giving himself up 12 years ago! Why would you turn yourself in? At 72 years old – why would you walk into a police station and tell them – I am an escaped train robber – and spend the rest of your life behind bars? Why would you do that? Wouldn’t it have to be guilt? A guilty heart and guilty conscience that said robbing a train was wrong! Beating the engineer on the head with an iron rod the point he could never drive a train again was wrong! To take what wasn’t yours – and never give it back – was just plain wrong! Do you know what that feels like – guilt

eating away at you? Today is the day that can stop! The mistakes and failures of the past—we lay down at the foot of the cross. We lay our sins on Jesus and he takes them all away—no matter how horrible and inexcusable they are. Jesus died to forgive them all!

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Mr. Bose died last year. Mr. Bose they say was a visionary, an engineer, an inventor, literally a billionaire! I have a little box in my living room that has his name on it Bose—it literally makes my house tremble—when we watch Jurassic Park—and the dinosaurs run. Mr. Bose died. I wonder if he knew Jesus? Mr. Dolby died last year, too. He like Mr. Bose—was a creative genius. When we go to the movies at Johnson Creek—just before the movie starts—they do that sound check thing—and it says Dolby! The whole theater trembles—from the Dolby sound—through the Bose speakers, and so? I wonder if Mr. Dolby has heard the music of Angels—their singing, their stringed instruments and their trumpets? Mr. Toyoda—100 years old—Mr. Toyoda—from the family that founded the automaker—died. I wonder if he knew Jesus? Mr. Yamauchi died last year. Do you recognize his name—Mr. Yamauchi? Mr. Yamauchi figured out the future was not in making playing cards—but video games! A guy named Doug Engelbrecht—I know a Pastor Doug Engelbrecht—invented the computer “mouse”! Did he know Jesus? Mr. Cassagnes died, too. He was 86. He invented Etch-A-Sketch. How wonderful was that? I wonder if he knew Jesus? The fact is—that’s all that really matters—to know that Jesus is your Savior from sin. To Jesus is to know his Father—who sacrificed His one and only Son to redeem us.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Some very tough guys died last year. Ken Norton died. How tough was Ken Norton? He was so tough he beat Muhammad Ali—punched him so hard—he broke Muhammad Ali’s jaw. That’s pretty tough! Emile was pretty tough, too. He fought against a guy who mocked him—taunted him. Emile beat him so badly he killed him—beat him quite literally to death! Emile himself died from what’s called pugilistic dementia—to lose your mind from getting hit in the head so many times! How sad is that? This world is full of tough people—physically powerful people who can literally do fatal damage in a moment to another human

being. That kind of toughness is everywhere! But the only toughness that really matters – is to be strong in your faith. That strength is a gift of God – through the power of the Gospel. The Apostle Paul wrote, **“When I am weak – then I am strong.”** When we realize that on our own and by ourselves – there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. Then we rest in Jesus’ grace and mercy. When we know we weak on our own – then we understand in Jesus we are strong to stand against any spiritual threat. If Jesus is for us – who can be against us? No one. We are safe for now and for eternity in Jesus. That’s why we can face this new year – unafraid!

To God alone all glory!