

You are God's gift of light to the nations

Bible reference for sermon text e.g. Isaiah 49:6b

*"I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*

The prophet Isaiah writes:

I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Strong! powerful!! The light of Christ shining to each and every corner and the end of the earth.

Onward Christian soldiers! Marching in the light of God!

But what is it to be **in** the light? What is to be **the** light?

So, what does it mean to be the light for the nations and for you and me today to bring the light of life to people in our lives?

We're going to turn to the Gospel reading in John 1 in a moment to help us but first let's pray...

Jesus, the light of the world, send your Spirit to open our hearts, our minds, our lives to live in you and shine the light where we go. Amen.

Jesus is revealed. He's revealed by the witness and confession of Andrew.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed).

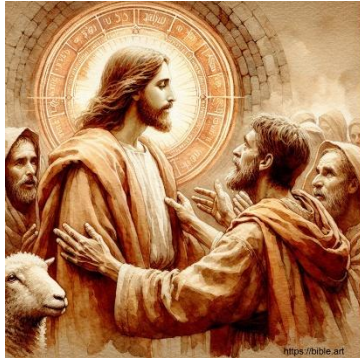
Andrew's witness to Peter is that he has seen Jesus. Jesus invited them to "come and see". And come and see, they did. Andrew rushes excitedly, we can imagine, to tell his brother Cephas: "we have found him! We have found the messiah! And this brother, Cephas, who Jesus will later rename 'Peter', meaning the "the rock" will become one of the closest of all witnesses of this Jesus throughout Jesus' ministry.

What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah? Well Peter and the other disciples close to Jesus will be called to learn and to witness.

Of course, those of the day still assumed the Messiah would come in almighty human power and would rule by the sword. But that's not the Messiah of God. That's not how God brings salvation to the end of the earth.

Peter and the disciples and all who meet Jesus including you and including me must learn from Jesus himself and Jesus alone what it is that he is my Saviour...that he is the one who serves and he is the one to win the victory.

And this is the witness of John the Baptist. John tells us...



"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

30 And again...

35 The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he

watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Here is the Lamb of God...who takes away the sin of the world.

Not a powerful warrior God but a fragile lamb. What? Is that right?

As people heard this, they knew of the image of the lamb which saves. It's an Old Testament Passover reference. Do you remember the story? The people of Israel have been enslaved by the Egyptians, and they cry out to God. God sends a messenger, Moses, to the Egyptian king,, the sun God himself "Let my people go" and of course Pharaoh will not hear of it.

God sends plagues upon the Egyptians and their king, but he remains hard hearted. He will not listen to God. "I'm god", Pharaoh still thinks.

Until the final plague which is one of death of the first born. God through Moses instructs his people to prepare a meal with an unblemished lamb to be roasted and eaten and its blood painted above the doorways.

The lamb was to be roasted and eaten in full and the people were to prepare to leave by witnessing God win the victory.



It's from this story that a verse of Scripture has been sustaining me as I've been diagnosed with incurable cancer but also being treated to give me a quality life as well.

God institutes the Passover in Exodus chapter 12 when the angel of the Lord passed over the houses of those who had washed their door frames in the blood of the lamb.

He rescued his people and led into the desert where Pharaoh and his army pursued them. The Israelites scream for fear. Has God abandoned them?

Again?

Where is God?

But Moses assures them, calms them, promises them:

“The Lord will fight you, and you have only to keep still.” (this is what happens)

The gift of God in the Passover is this: that it is he who fights the battle for the people he loves. Their call is “still and know that he is God”. And this is my call and yours too.

This is further revealed at Jesus’ last Supper. Jesus came to give his life for you. Don’t miss out on learning what this means for you as a disciple. Don’t ignore him and think you know better. As much as you might say “I do” - “you don’t”

For it is in what follows that we learn who Jesus is as Messiah for the world...for you and me.

Pain, suffering, death...to take away the sin of the world.

Yours

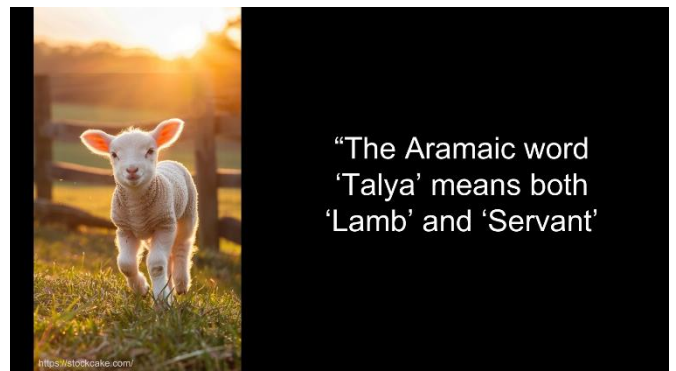
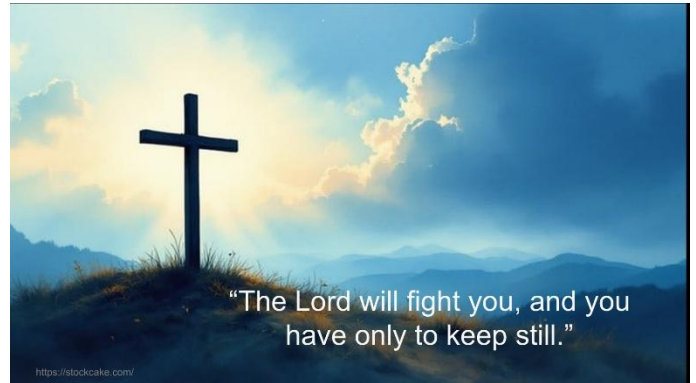
mine

It had to be this way for this is the way of love...

of sacrificial giving. It’s God’s gift for you each day and for me each day. “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Jesus’ suffering servant heart and life for us is the light to shine into the world. The suffering servant is pictured in Isaiah 53 as a “lamb led to the slaughter” who bore on himself the sins of many.

And its good to note that the Aramaic (language which Jesus spoke) word ‘talya’ means both ‘LAMB’ and ‘SERVANT’.



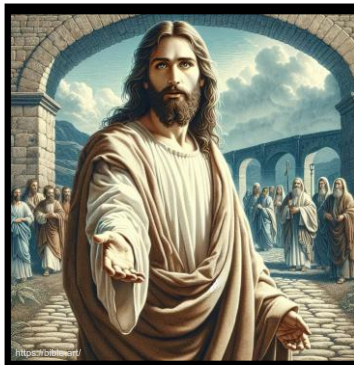
So, this messiah, this anointed is not some kind of earthly power who rules by threat of putting pain and suffering on people who disobey him. But it is a suffering servant Lamb who offers the gifts of rescue, of forgiveness, of life eternal and of his presence to fight for us. And our call is to be still, to have faith that he will do what he promises in us, through us, and for us when we can do nothing ourselves.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed).

What or who did they find? Well this is what John tells us..

³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.



The key to faith life is to "come and see Jesus" as he invites us to be with him everyday.

The key to faith. The key to life. The key to witnessing to the light of God to the world is to hear Jesus say

"Come and see." And for us to go where Jesus is and to remain with him, the Lamb of God who fights for the people he loves, the Lamb of God who comes to serve, the Lamb of God who

loves all people, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

My experience of this...being with Jesus and more particularly now, as Jesus is with me in my sickness, is to be with him...to remain with him...to abide with him and to learn from him. Then in whatever situation I face in life in whatever phase of life I may be, there I will witness to him. and so will you. God promises in Christ:

I will give you as a light to the nations,

that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Come and see Jesus. Follow him. Amen.

Video of the service including the above address can be found on the St Paul's Lutheran Church Youtube page <https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulslutheranchurchboxhi1133>