

AFFIRMING LIFE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT LCMS

Unwrapping the Gift

January is hard month for many people. The days are darker. Christmas is over, and the “holiday cheer” that filled December is now gone. The presents have all been unwrapped. All the food and fun is finished, and we are back to reality. Add to that a culture that is increasingly nihilistic, thinking that life has no purpose or meaning, and we have a lot of people with a very bleak outlook on life. We need not despair, for God has given us His Son.

My mind is still on Christmas (the season of Christmas does last for twelve days). On Christmas Day the Gospel reading from John 1 declared God’s wonderful gift of His Son.

The mystery of the incarnation is something our minds cannot fully comprehend, yet God reveals it to us and we confess it.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-2, 14 ESV)

These words speak to us about the very person of Jesus, declaring who He is. He is fully God and fully man. Colossians 2:9 says, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (ESV). The mystery of the incarnation is something our minds cannot fully comprehend, yet God reveals it to us and we confess it. We confess that it was necessary for this baby, true man, born of the virgin Mary, to

also be true God, begotten of the Father from eternity. If He were not true man, He could not have suffered and died for us on the cross. If he were not true God, He could not have risen victoriously from the grave. This is God’s gift of life!

Again, my mind goes back to John 1.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:4-5 ESV)

As we enter into the Epiphany season we should not see it as an end of Christmas, but rather, the continuation of it. In Epiphany God is unwrapping the gift! God is revealing to us the true nature of His Son. He does this at His baptism where the voice of the Father declares, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17 ESV). He does this at His first miracle at the wedding in Cana, changing water into wine. John 2:11 says, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him” (ESV). Consider also the glory of God that the disciples witnessed in Jesus at His transfiguration. Each and every miracle of our Lord was doing just that, manifesting the glory of God in Christ so that we may believe in Him. God is unwrapping the gift so that when Good Friday

This monthly newsletter, serves to support the Rocky Mountain District in the ministry of defending those who cannot defend themselves and proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to those struggling with life-related issues.

Comments and suggestions are always welcomed and appreciated.

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comes and we see Jesus hanging on the cross, we understand the fullness of His gift.

Back to John 1 again.

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:11–13 ESV).

God has something to say about our lives when we believe in Him. Don't be drawn into

nihilistic thinking. Don't believe the lie that our lives are without purpose or meaning. My mind is still on Christmas. Keep your mind there too, that as we enter into Epiphany we see God unwrapping the gift of Jesus, so that we may see Him as true God and true man who came that we would be children of God. May the light of Christ shine in the darkness, that others may see Him too.

In Christ,
Pastor Mark Nierman
Mount Olive Lutheran Church
Loveland, Colorado



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Coming in Spring 2023

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More details to follow. To learn more about this grant

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