

Theme: **The Brightest Light**

Date: December 24, 2017

Season: Christmas Eve 2017

Place Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

1st Gospel Reading: Luke 1: 8 – 25

Meditation #1: “The Bright Light break through the Doubt”

Grace and peace to you as you let the light of God shine in your life, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It's just a single light. Oh, you know that it's the light of hope given to you by God, don't you? That is the light of hope given to you by God from His Word. But it's just a single light that shines dimly in the darkness of this world. You know the feeling, don't you? You have had that hope for a long time and you have prayed about it many times, yet it just remains a hope, not a reality, just a hope. As time passes, and I don't mean just days, weeks and months, but many years and decades with that same hope, you start to doubt that it's ever going to happen. Then a bright light come into your life, a light that is filled with God's Words and it says to you, “**Do not be afraid, for your prayer has been heard.**”

Is this where you are tonight as you come to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, the brightest light that the world has ever seen? That single light of faith that you have may be getting a little dimmer, but are there hopes and dreams attached to it? Zechariah and Elizabeth had the light of faith that was getting a little dimmer because of their doubts. Oh, they didn't doubt God. They just doubted if God understood their hopes and dreams. Do you have those doubts in your life about your hopes and dreams?

Then let the light of God shine brighter in your life and give your hopes and dreams to God. Let God take your hopes and dreams and through His Word make them shine even brighter, Zechariah and Elizabeth did. God is hearing your prayers with all your hopes and dreams and He knows when it is the best time, the best way to answer each of those hopes so that the Brightest light of all can shine brightly in your life to help you and others to see the light of God who has come into this world to destroy the darkness of this world. Let the light of God shine brightly in your life so that your hopes can become reality in the end.

Let us respond with Zechariah's Song of hope as the Light of God shone brightly for him and Elizabeth.

2nd Gospel Reading: Luke 1: 26 – 38

Meditations #2: “The Bright Light shines brighter in Faith”

There are two lights now. Two lights are brighter than just one but is that enough? Oh, there is hope and peace found in the light of God but is that enough to get you through when it just doesn't seem to make sense. Mary was favored in that she had the hope found in her faith and the peace that God was working in her life but then there was still that fear of the unknown. How do you explain the unexplainable, you know what I am talking about, those things that happen in life that just don't make sense? We all have that same question that Mary had, “**How will this be?**” “How will I be able to do that with the situation that I am facing right now?” “How can that possible happen, it's not possible for me to accomplish it in my world?”

That's the whole point of the brighter light that comes from God, it's not you working for God, it's God working in you through His Word and Sacraments. Mary could not have the Son of God on her own or even with the help of Joseph, that's true for each of us also. Oh, we may have the hope and peace of God in our life, but God wants our light to shine even brighter and that only can happen by the Holy Spirit working in our lives through His Word and Sacraments. The angel explained it to Mary in this way, “**The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For nothing will be impossible with God.**” (Lk 1:35)

We are limited not because of the light of hope and peace found in our faith in God but in our unwillingness to let God go to work in our lives completely. Our light can shine brighter but it's not up to us. It's letting God, the Holy Spirit, come upon you and letting the Most High overshadow you with a brighter light, the light of His Son who came into this world to take away the darkness and to give us a brighter light, the Light of God's forgiveness, grace and mercy.

Nothing is impossible for God because He has created all the world out of nothing and He can take what He has already created and make it do the impossible. Do you want the light of God doing the impossible in your life? Then follow Mary's example and say, “**Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to Your Word.**”

Let us respond with Mary's Song of peace.

3rd Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 1 – 14

Meditations #3: “The Angels give glory to the God for the Bright light born”

Now there are three lights and together they shine even brighter, but are they bright enough to show us the work of God in our lives. Mary and Joseph knew and gave thanks to God for the light of God given to them by the Christ Child born on this night, but they still didn't completely understand what the full meaning of this bright light was. Is that where you are in your faith in the bright light of God given to you? Do you have the light of God with you but your taking a wait and see attitude about what it all means?

The people in the city of Bethlehem didn't even know that the light of God had been given to them because they just didn't have room for Him at that time in their life, even though the darkness was all around them. Is this where you find yourself in the darkness of this world? Do you know that the brightest light of all God's own Son has come into the darkness of your world or is your life so busy that there is really little or no room for Him?

The Shepherds that night knew that there was darkness in their world and they may have had some light on the knowledge of the coming of the light of God, the Messiah, but when the light came into their lives they were afraid, just like any of us would be if suddenly a bright light comes out of the darkness into our world. **“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”** (Lk 2:10-11)

That's what the third candle is calling us to have in our life, the light of Joy. The Good News is that God has sent the Savior of the world into the darkness of this world to be that bright light that takes away all the darkness and give us a new light of joy that can shine even brighter through God's Word and Sacraments. God has done this for us and has sent His messenger to proclaim that Good News to us in the midst of the darkness that we find ourselves in. God is to be given the glory because He has fulfilled all that He has promised to give us the assurance of the peace that He gives to us, for He want us all to know the joy of living in peace and hope with Him again.

How are you going to respond to the Good News that you have been given this night?

Let us pray:

4th Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 15 – 20

Meditation #4: “The Shepherds give praise to God for the Bright Light”

All four of the candles are lit now and we have moved from the Hope of faith found in one light, to the Peace of God working in us in the second light, to the Joy of the Good News found in the third light and now to the understand of the Love of God for us, in the forth light. The circle of eternal life has been lit before us, so do we say with the Shepherd, “**Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.**” (Lk 2:15)

Where do we go to see this thing that has been revealed to us? We go to where the angels told us to go, to the City of David, as the prophesies of the Old Testament proclaimed that God would send us a Savior to bring light into the darkness of this world. As Jesus tells us, “**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**” (Jn. 8:12)

We go to Bethlehem, the city of the bread of life, as Jesus’ own words tell us, “**I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**” (Jn. 6:51)

We may not understand all that God is doing in our lives but we can go and see as the Shepherds did and share with those already there all that has been told to us concerning this Child born to be the light of the world. We can treasure up all that is said about the Christ Child born in this lowly state and ponder this Good News in our heart as God continues to reveal all that He will do for us by the life, death and resurrection of this Child, the Son of God and the Son of man, that’s what Mary did. We can glorify and praise God for all that we have heard and seen so that others will come to know about the bright light of God given to us by the birth of Jesus Christ, as the Shepherd did on their return to their fields. We can let the light of God be a part of our lives now and forever as many of people in this world have done and let that light shine into the world of darkness that surrounds us.

It’s God’s light of Hope given to us, it’s God’s light of Peace shared with us, it’s God’s light of joy given to us and it all comes from God’s Love for us now and always to be share with others as the light becomes even brighter in our lives. Amen.

Let us pray:

Epistle Reading: Titus 2:11 – 15

Meditation #5: The Brightest Light shines in the Darkness”

The brightest light of all is the light of God’s Own Son shining in the darkness of this world. He was born as a tiny baby and laid in a manger so that He could take upon all the darkness of this world and bring us the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of God through His life, death and resurrection.

The Hope that the Christ Child brings to us is not found in the things that we do, but in what He has done for us by His life, death and resurrection. The Peace that the Christ Child gives to us is found in the victory He has won for us as He lived that perfect life for us and gave us His perfect righteousness to us, taking all our sins upon Himself to make the full and final payment for them all at the Cross of Calvary. We can have peace with Him now and for all eternity. God is working in our lives to bring us that Joy that beyond this world that looks forward to the perfect world to come. This is the Love of God that has made each of us His own as we let the Brightest Light of all light the true light of faith in us and keep it burning brightly through His Word and Sacraments.

Tonight, we come to see the light of God brightly shining in the darkness of this world. We come to let God light our light of faith and make it even brighter so that it can shine out into the darkness of this world for all to see. We hold onto the light of faith given to us by God and we share that light with others so that they too can come to have the light of God’s Hope, Peace, Joy and Love shine in their lives now and forever. Amen.

Thank you, Lord!