

## ***“We Have Seen His Glory”***

With the birth of a child there is great joy – and as you ponder that child – you might wonder what the future holds for him – what will he become?

As we gather this morning to celebrate the Birth of Jesus – St. John says, “we have seen His glory.” The glory of which he speaks is not seen in the manger, it’s not to be seen in Bethlehem. After all, the shepherds have to be told. Like Joseph and Mary – who also have to be told – they do not see His glory.

What they see is inglorious. Lowly manger where cattle normally gather – a place with earthy smells and the flies that are attracted. What they see is lowly, crude, common.

What St. John writes about “His glory” is only seen later – when this Child grows up – to do what He was born to do.

We are blessed to follow the Church Year which leads us through the life of Christ and the story of God’s salvation. We have come through the waiting period of Advent to Christmas – to celebrate the fulfillment of God’s Old Testament promise – to send the Messiah, the Christ, to deliver His people.

As we go forward, we will follow this Child born of Mary in Bethlehem, the city of David. We will follow Him throughout His life – to see why the Son of God left His heavenly throne to become incarnate (to become flesh).

We will follow Him to see His glory. As St. John tells us at the end of his Gospel – “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” (20:31)

When Jesus is born, He is worshipped by the shepherds – for the angels have declared – “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. He is worshipped and adored by the Gentile Magi – for He is the Savior, not just for David’s descendants, but for all people.

At twelve years old, the young boy Jesus humbles Himself to sit at the feet of the teachers of God's Word – showing and teaching that He too must live by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, even though He is the Word made flesh. He humbles Himself in obedience to the Word, that He might fulfill all that God has said.

When He has matured, attaining the age to be a public teacher of the Word – Jesus humbles Himself to be baptized by John. This is necessary He says, “in order to fulfill all righteousness” – in order that all people may be made right with God, through Him.

From His baptism by John, Jesus goes out – as a light into the darkness – “and the darkness has not overcome it.” Though many would reject Him and His teaching – including His own family members – one of His chosen disciples (Judas) – Herod – His fellow Jews --- He doesn't pick up and go home. He humbly continues to preach that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus performs miracles – showing forth that He is “supernatural” (literally, “above nature”) – for He is the Creator of all things, and all authority belongs to Him.

He heals the sick and raises the dead to life again – showing what His true glory is all about – releasing sinners from the bondage of their sin – restoring them to life, the life they were created to live.

Jesus humbles Himself – GOD humbles Himself – to suffer and die. All the Scriptures direct us to this very point in time – when the Son of God sheds His blood to atone for all sin – for it is here, in the crucified Christ, that all mankind is delivered from their captivity to sin and death.

**THIS IS HIS GLORY** – to sacrifice Himself to save you! This is the glory of His resurrection – showing that His sacrifice has redeemed all sin, and its wages of death. This is the glory that John has seen – and this is **YOUR GLORY!**

All that John has written in his Gospel, all that the Scriptures speak about Jesus – all of this is so that “YOU may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing YOU may have life in His name.” For this He was born – so that you may believe that He suffered and died for you sins – and believing, have eternal life.

For now, the fullness of His glory is hidden. You live with the corruption of sin – suffering its attacks on your body, your family, the whole world. You live where sin’s wages of death are evident all around you – preaching, “this is what lies in store for sinners!”

But you have seen His glory – revealed to you in the angel’s message. All who receive Him by faith are made to be “children of God.” In Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit created a faith in you that trusts in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of all your sins. This was His doing – His working in you – His delivering to you all that Jesus has won for you at the cross. You are “born of God.”

Dearly beloved, hear the angel’s message – “born for you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Jesus the Christ – the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us – who has revealed His glory to your flesh – so that by believing, you may have life in His name.

May the glory of Christ and His Christmas be your life – now and forevermore.  
Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.