John 1:1-4 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 everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind.

I have to confess that the words before us today are words that have grown in my heart more and more as the years go by. I remember when I first caught the wonder of these words. It was in exegetical class at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We were translating the Gospel of John. Up to that point I had read and heard these words. Like many of you I had memorized those words as a part of some Christmas Eve worship service, but it wasn’t until I actually translated these words that I began, just began, to grasp the fullness of their flavor. To get this section, to understand this section is so very important for us.

It is important because in many cases it is the heart and core of our faith. Huh? What? What do you mean Pastor? I thought salvation by grace is the heart and core! I thought Jesus is the whole point of our faith and what we are given?

And I would answer, “Yes, you are right! Jesus is the heart and core. Jesus and his gift of salvation by grace through faith is the whole point of what we believe.” But here is the driving question: “How do you know anything about Jesus?” How do you know what Jesus has done or promised or promises? How do you know the grace of God and the wonder of eternal life? How do you know about the forgiveness of sins and Jesus going to hell for you? How do you know about this baby born in a barn and laid in a manger in swaddling clothes?”

What shall your answer be? I am pretty sure it is not going to be “Well, I just follow my heart!” Oh, seriously gag me? I pray and hope that not a single one of us here has ever said and promoted such a thing! We are by nature sinful and inclined to evil. Even the Lord makes it clear to us: **“Do not rely on your own understanding.”** And again the Lord declares to us: **“Certainly my plans are not your plans, and your ways are not my ways, declares the Lord. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my plans are higher than your plans.”** And again the Lord declares to us: **“Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Jewish law? Where is the probing thinker of the present age? Has God not shown that the wisdom of this world is foolish?”** No, dear Friends and fellow believers in Christ, we must not decide that the wonder and wisdom of God is found in us and what we think, EVER! So back to my question: “How do you know of truth and wonder of God?”

The answer? Through the Word of God. Let that sink in! No, let it sink in deeper than that! Our text told us of the Word. It is clear that what our text says of the word is absolutely important. Because our text tells us the word is Jesus. Our text is speaking to us of Jesus! Our text is laying out for us the very means and method by which God has and still does reveal and declare himself. It is His Word! His Word! And now, on this Christmas morning, let’s make sure we grasp and understand just what God declares about His Word and His Son and how they are connected. Our theme will be: **THE WORD IS GOD!**

What does our text say? It starts, **“In the beginning was the Word.”** Could I just direct your eyes for a moment to the opening words of our Epistle letter for this day? It said, **“In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways.”** Put the two together. For that matter let me help you by telling you how many times in the Old Testament this truth is found for us but we have a tendency to not see it. Here is one of the first times we are told that God comes to his people. Genesis 15:1 says, **“After these events the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision.”** I spent a lot of time looking for the same kind of wording and in just a brief time I came up with about 40 times where that same kind of phrase is used…**”The word of the Lord came…spoke…revealed and said.”** Nearly every Old Testament prophet is introduced to the world by such words. Nearly every important statement of truth and revelation is found near those words. And why? Because God revealed himself by and as the Word.

Please know that I did not count every time the word “word” was used. I counted only those times when it was clear the Word of the Lord was spoken of as something or someone special and unique. Nor did I get every instance. Yet in the very brief time that I spent looking one thing clearly rang out in my head. We know what we know, we understand what we do, we see what we see because of the wonder and marvel of God’s Word coming into our life and world. The revelation of the Bible is called God’s Word. The wisdom and truth of our knowledge of God is called the Word. The joy and power of our salvation is called The Word! Oh there is no doubt, the word is the very revelation of God for the good of our souls.

Yet there is more. Our text goes on and it says, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** There it is. I am not sure how best to convey the importance of this truth into our hearts, but that this truth get there is so important. What you need to grasp is that there is an intimate connection to the Word and to the Lord God. So much so that I want you to hear and contemplate a few verses for yourself.

Here is what we hear in 1 Samuel 15:26. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord is speaking to Saul the King of Israel at the time. God is directing what Samuel says, **“But Samuel said to Saul, ‘I will not return with you, because you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”** I love how that is spoken. It is the rejection of the Word pointed to as the very sin that ultimately leads to the rejection of Saul as King. In other words, the Word is treated as if it were God himself. Here is more.

In Psalm 130:5 we hear this: **“I wait for the Lord. My soul waits, and in his word I have put my hope.”** Do you hear it? Do you understand it in a different way now? This is from Psalm 33, verse 4: **“Yes, the word of the Lord is right, and everything he does is trustworthy.”** Verse 6: **“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.”** What you need to grasp is that there are dozens of passages like this in the Old Testament. Passages that speak of the word as if the word itself were the Lord. And no wonder, we learn that it is one and the same. In the New Testament the same truth is found in dozens of passages.

Think of John 8:51. Listen with new ears: **“Amen, amen, I tell you: If anyone holds on to my word, he will certainly never see death.”** Here is Acts 11:1 **“The apostles and brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.”** Or here is Colossians 3:16 **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God.”** Dear people, these are but a fraction of the passages that clearly let us know that the Word of God and the word of God that we call the Bible are literally one and the same. To teach Jesus is to teach his Word!

Here is what I will tell you. You cannot reject a portion of the Word and not reject what Jesus himself is. Why? Because Jesus is the power, the majesty, the awe, and the living truth of the Word. That word is also the Bible. You cannot reject portions of the Bible and not be involved in the rejection of the Lord our God. They are one and the same. Let what our text says sink in. **“The Word was with God and the Word was God.**

Now there are those who want to debate things like science and such that seem to show that the Bible is wrong. But they are wrong. Why? What does our text say? **“He was with God in the beginning. Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made.”** This is what God’s Word says and to say it is false and wrong is to deny the very word that God has given us. I would rather put my soul into the hands of Jesus than to trust and hope in some scientist and the conclusions he makes about things. As you have heard me say, there is no conflict between science and the Bible but there is a problem with what many call scientism. Scientism is not what science knows but rather what science wants you to believe. Learn science but believe God. Because to do otherwise is to say that you think Jesus, supposedly your God and Lord, was ignorant and a liar.

And then there is the most important thing about our words today.They say this: **“In him was life, and that life was the light of mankind.”** We are, of course, speaking of eternal life. Jesus, as even this baby lying in the manger whose birth we celebrate today, Jesus is about life. The eternal life that God created us for and wanted us to have. That life, that true, eternal life, was lost when Adam and Eve brought sin into the world by doubting and in truth, acting against the Word of God. God had told them, **“The day you eat of it you will surely die.”** Because they doubted the Word of God and did eat, we suffer from this calamity called sin. And what a devastation it has been.

Please note our section does reference that devastation of sin. It says in our reading, **“The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it…He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him.”** That’s the devastation that sin brings. God has shared with us the majesty and wonder of his Son Jesus. God has shown us the glory and joy of the Savior who so loved us that He went to the cross to pay for our sins and thus in that wonder offers you and me the gift of the forgiveness of sins and with that gift eternal life and salvation. Because of what this baby will grow up and do, eternal life, true life, the promise of life with God forever is ours. It is not a maybe thing. It is not a “could be” thing. It is a reality and fact. Heaven is our eternal home because of the wonder and joy of Jesus.

**“In him was life.”**  Jesus was complete perfection and holiness, no, let’s be more accurate here. Jesus IS complete perfection and holiness. He is the very embodiment of where life, our lives have come from. It is his creating hand that formed us. It is his loving heart that breathed into us the breath of life. It is his suffering and death that paid the debt of sins we owe to God. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

That life that is and was and always will be Jesus is given to us. Given not because we earn it, but given because God in grace and love gives it to us. Our God has done everything necessary to grant us the joy and wonder of eternal life in heaven. Heaven is our home because of Jesus. Because this baby will grow and as a man go to the cross to pay our debt. That is why He came. Came to share his life. Came to grant us life free and sure. As I say and have said for a long time now, “Salvation is about what God has done for us and all we need to do is believe what God says! By the way, ever grasp that we are in the same position as Adam and Eve? They could believe what God said and have all the more his eternal life or deny the truth of God and die. Same with us. We can believe what God has done in Jesus and live, have eternal life or we can deny God’s truth and die. Jesus is our life.

Jesus is more. Again our text. **“The life was the light of mankind.”** Did you ever wonder how the world could be so blind, so sometimes backward in what they grasp and see? There are people who want nothing to do with God and yet they claim and proclaim things about ghosts and spirits, and hauntings and other paranormal stuff. People, all of that is because of the revelation of God and his eternal spiritual world. And yet they want to dismiss God. Ever wonder how woman can decide that the thing in their womb is but a blob rather than a child, their child? Or look at how we have decided that morality is nothing, we steal, kill, bad mouth, show no love or respect, engage in godlessness and proclaim it our right! Such is the world. Why? Because they have rejected the Light!

Jesus has come to show us truth and wonder. Jesus has come to demonstrate love and compassion, to literally cast a light on the problems of this world and give a solution. Mankind keeps thinking we can ignore and turn away from the wonder and wisdom of God. That is to live in darkness and to reject the Light of Jesus. Everything we need to know and grasp is found in Jesus. He has given his Word that shines his wisdom and shares his love with us and the world wants to reject it. Please don’t be like the world. Recognize that Jesus has come to make sure we have the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth of God in His clear, precise and awesome Word. Because He is the Word. The world is often like a person caught in the depths of a cave. Though they can see a light up ahead, representing freedom and life, that person constantly turns and goes deeper into the dark. In the end they are lost. Sadly in the end, they blame God when God was right there shining for them.

I hope I have helped you to grasp all the more the wonder of this day where we focus on the celebration of the birth of Jesus. God son has come to save. The Word has come into our world, the Word filled with life and light that we might live. Amen.