



December 24, 2005

Preaching: Ronni Sue Verboom

CHRISTMAS EVE

Reflection #1

Isaiah 9:2, 4b-7

“Are you longing for a Savior?”

As we stand in checkout lines at the grocery store, as we listen to the radio in the car, as we surf through TV channels at home, we are reminded of the violence and tragedy present in this world.

The world of the prophet Isaiah was also filled with injustice, oppression, war and tragedy. And God gave him a vision that became a promise of hope. This vision was of a Savior, a Ruler, whose reign would be like that of God himself. This Savior would bring peace, justice and righteousness. There would be no more war, no more exploitation or abuse of God’s children.

Many, many generations later this promise was fulfilled—but not in the way Isaiah or his people expected. God didn’t use military might or the world’s power. God sent the long-awaited Savior, but in a manner totally out of keeping with human expectations:

(READ Matthew 1:18-25)

PRAYER:

Thank you, God, for your promise of a Savior. Thank you for fulfilling that promise. Help us to see beyond the perspectives of this world to the truth of your saving love. May we experience that love surging through all creation. May we experience that love filling our hearts this very night. Amen.

Reflection #2
John 1:1-5, 14

“The Word became Flesh”

Who is God?

My four-year old grandson has been wrestling with that question this Christmas season. He has enjoyed playing with figures from nativity scenes. He loves playing with the Baby Jesus. But sometimes he looks puzzled, runs to a family member and asks, “But where is the GOD toy?” He keeps looking to find the GOD figure. Our explanations just aren’t quite enough for him.

Who is God?

God is EVERYWHERE AT ALL TIMES, and CREATED EVERYTHING that IS.

God SEES ALL, KNOWS ALL, past, present and future.

God is HOLY, SACRED: clean, pure, absolute goodness, through and through.

God is JUST, calling those who harm themselves or others to a strict account.

God is MERCIFUL and FORGIVING.

God LOVES his children with a steadfast, unwavering, unswerving, unconditional love.

God is MAJESTIC, like a snow-capped mountain towering over grassy plains.

But wait.....

There’s a baby crying—in his weak little newborn voice.

He is cold; he is hungry; he needs his mother’s arms.

This baby is wrapped in rags; he’s sleeping on straw piled in a feed box.

He is helpless, completely dependent on those older, wiser and stronger to care for him.

And there is something else we are told about this child:

THIS CHILD IS GOD.

How can that be? How is it possible? But John's Gospel tells us it's true.

The creative aspect of God's Being that was at work in the creation of the universe....

That "WORD" of God, that said, "Let there be....." and there WAS....

That SAME "WORD" became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.

This is the miracle of miracles that we remember and celebrate tonight. God came to us, to be with us, to be one of us. And that very God, made flesh in the baby Jesus, is with us here now. That God is as REAL and PRESENT as the heart beating within you. Stop a moment now. Feel the beating of your heart. Feel each breath that sustains your life. God is here, speaking his love with every breath we take, with every beat of our hearts.

Will you receive him? Will you serve him? Will you love him as he loves you, forever? He waits with longing to hear your reply.