

“Love is the Word”

1. Sometimes we find ourselves at a loss for words
 - a. Shock or surprise twist our tongue in a knot
 - b. Our heart produces feelings but our brain can't manage to utter words
 - c. Usually it is a reaction to the unexpected, and we're left saying, with no irony:
“I don't know what to say.”
 - d. Sometimes, we intentionally don't use words because somehow it feels like words won't do justice to the emotion of the moment
 - i. We cry joyful tears holding a newborn child
 - ii. We sigh in silence as we look into the eyes of a loved one
 - iii. We squeeze the hand of a dying relative in the nursing home
 - e. Sometimes, music, with or without words, sneaks into our hearts in unpredictable ways
 - i. The music unlocks a part of our consciousness we weren't aware of (I didn't realize I was still grieving)
 - ii. Or the music gives perspective to the human spirit and gives us hope (like hearing the Hallelujah Chorus)
2. This Christmas morning we are in awe of what God chose to do with and for human beings
 - a. Our reading is the ultimate origin story
 - b. Or, as I prefer to think about it, it is the beginning of a love story
 - c. And it begins with The Word
 - d. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. We're speaking of Jesus.
 - e. I close my eyes and seek to picture that beginning.
 - i. It is dark, a vast choppy sea churning, a wind blowing restlessly, like Genesis 1 says
 - ii. Or it is the entirety of the universe compacted into the smallest possible space rushing out in a Big Bang, as theoretical physicists articulate
 - iii. Or, as John says: it is the Word. The presence, the power of the Word, in a mindboggling way both the meaning and the essence of God
 - iv. There is nothing or there is something but it is the beginning

- f. In the Greek, the Logos (the Word) is defined in so many ways, from the technically uttered speech to the sharing of knowledge, to the essence of God
 - g. I can't help but linger not on the Greek, but on the Spanish
 - i. For reasons I can't explain, the translation I grew up with turns "Logos" into "El Verbo" -- the Verb
 - ii. God is action, God is creating, and nurturing, and redeeming
 - iii. El Verbo, the Logos, the Word is active, essential, it is with God, it IS God.
 - iv. And it is that which, going back to the beginning, leads to the eternal connection God makes with us, becoming one of us, becoming flesh
3. Listen, this all can sound too... theological. Too spiritual
- a. So let me do something which I think can help us understand the meaning of this day
 - b. Listen to the passage this way
 - c. In the beginning was LOVE, and LOVE was with God, and LOVE was God. LOVE was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through LOVE, and without LOVE not one thing came into being that came into being. What has come into being in LOVE was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the bleakness, and the bleakness did not overtake it. ... And LOVE became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of a parent's only child, full of grace and truth.
4. The Word, LOVE, The Verb which God put into action, in the flesh, is that child born in Bethlehem
- a. This love story between God and humans is from the very beginning
 - b. And it is a story which continues in us and through us
 - c. I have mentioned before: I feel a closer connection to that manger in Bethlehem than to that cross in Jerusalem, but both are signs of a God who stops at nothing to let love shine through
 - d. That child in the manger, Jesus, is the embodiment of love, the enacting of love
 - e. It is a love that is with us and for us before we were even aware of it.
 - f. It is a love we can't buy or earn or even reject.
 - g. It is from God, and it is for us. For all of us.
 - h. And God shows / lives that love in the flesh for us to do likewise
 - i. Love is the word, the verb, the action which births us, which binds us together

- j. When I would call my mother, I would tease her.
 - i. She would say “I love you!”
 - ii. And I would say “I love you more!”
 - iii. But then she would always win, and say: “I loved you first!”
- 5. In the beginning was LOVE. This Christmas morning we celebrate LOVE. In our hearts showing us the way to true humanity is LOVE.