



The True Power and Joy of Christmas

John 1:1-5; 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it . . . And the Word became flesh and

dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The story of Christmas as told in the Gospel of John has long been sidelined in the typical readings of the Christmas story. It doesn't draw out the drama like Luke does. But it does draw out the true power and joy of Christmas. Allow me to draw our attention back to John's version.

The Word of God came as true life and light into a dark world. He came at Christmas as a person, full of grace and truth.

Full of grace and full of truth.

In this young century, we are increasingly squeezed between vacuous relativism petrified of offending anyone on the one hand, and virulent labeling, name-calling, and belittling of those with different backgrounds or ideologies on the other. In the midst of this dark reality, my heart is awakened, enlightened, and hope-filled by the person of Jesus. Wrapped up in this one person is the answer to both of these extremely propagandized and destructive worldviews. The Word of God, the reality of the cross, and the person of Jesus is my true north when these forces in opposition to God's truth try to steal my joy.

Though He left earth bodily long ago, He is still here -- more powerfully than ever. His Christmas gift to me, as His follower, is that by His Spirit, He lives in me. In Him, I am called to be full of grace and full of truth. In me, He replaces the hopeless and hollow opinions of relativism with clarity, direction, and truth. In me, He replaces conflict and hate with grace, patience, and openness. My gift in response to Him is to seek to harness His powerful and joyful presence in me in a life-giving and soul-nourishing effort to be like Him, and to bring life and light to the world.

What a privilege it is for my family to celebrate this Christmas story with you at Pepperdine.

James A. Gash
President

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Pepperdine University Mail - A Special Christmas Message from President James A. Gash

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