

Divine Revelation
Luke 2: 22-40

All 5 candles are lit on our Advent wreath this morning, signifying the completion of the Advent season and our time of preparation and expectation of the arrival of Christ. When Al Miller lit the Christ candle on Christmas Eve, our anticipation changed to celebration. We honored and worshipped the Christ child with our voices and our hearts, and thanked God anew for sending His only Begotten Son into the world to save His people from their sins.

We lit candles to remind us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, the One who came to earth so that people everywhere would have no fear of darkness, no fear of evil, and no fear of death. The glow of those candles on Christmas Eve provided not only light and warmth, but eternal hope and security in knowing that Christ is our Savior. As we sang Silent Night, for a few fleeting moments nothing else mattered. Then we extinguished our candles, put on our coats, turned out the lights and left this warm church to find a cold, dark and scary world just outside its doors.

What a contrast! It reminded us that when God's people are all inside, the world outside is a pretty dismal place. God revealed Himself to us on Christmas Eve, and He is revealing Himself to us here again this morning. Do you see Him here? Jesus is not in that manger, but quite possibly sitting in the pew next to you. It is likely that at one time or another every one of us has wondered what God looks like. We might even believe what we tell young children when they turn to us for answers- He is here, but you just can't see Him.

We know better than that. **God makes Himself known and reveals Himself through people.** The praise chorus we sing for time to time proclaims that truth beautifully. "His name is called Emmanuel, God with us, revealed in us. His name is called Emmanuel.

Have you noticed how God has done that countless times already? There is no doubt that God wants to make Himself known. He revealed Himself to the shepherds that first Christmas Eve. The Bible tells us that the glory of the Lord surrounded them as the angel delivered the Good News. There is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. He provided a sign to them, which was the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger in Bethlehem. What was their response? They went to see for themselves, and then they went and told many others the Good News. God had no intention of keeping this event a secret.

God revealed Himself to the Magi of the East. He provided a sign, a great star in the eastern sky. The wise men saw the star, followed it towards Jerusalem where they supposed the Messiah might be found. They inquired of Herod and the Jewish Sanhedrin where the Messiah, the Christ was to be born. They were told that the Scriptures said it would not be in Jerusalem, but Bethlehem. They continued on their way, following that star until it led them right to the doorstep of the house where Jesus was at. God had no intention of keeping this event a secret.

By the way, it probably was no accident that the Magi happened to stop in Jerusalem, as God in His providence revealed to the Jewish leaders that the Messiah had arrived. Sadly their response was one of unbelief, as they chose not to go see for themselves what the Magi had told them about.

God revealed Himself to Simeon, giving the Jewish leaders another opportunity to discover the Messiah. Simeon was no run of the mill Israelite. Historians tell us he was a member of the Sanhedrin, one of the temple leaders. His son was Gamaliel, who taught Christ and Paul. Simeon's response is typical of one who has recognized Christ.

Look at verses **29-30**- peace was with him. No matter what else the world would throw at him, Simeon's future was safe and secure in God's hands. **People who see Jesus have no fear of death.**

People who see Jesus believe that God keeps His promises.

When He tells us that he will never leave or forsake us, or that He will be with us until the end of the ages, or that He will send the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort and enable us we can trust that it will happen. The promise of salvation is offered to all God's people. Christ came to be a light to both Jew and Gentile alike.

And just in case you thought God only revealed Himself to men in Biblical times, think again. God was revealed to Anna, who according to verse **38** demonstrated another characteristic of people who know Christ. She spoke of Him to all those that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. **People who see Jesus want others to see Him too.**

Have you seen Jesus this Christmas season? I hope you all can answer yes. If you can't, it is likely because of one of two things. You haven't looked for Him or you have looked in the wrong place. Or perhaps those people around you have kept the Good News to themselves. I truly hope that isn't the case.

From, all indications, we are headed for some difficult and challenging times ahead. For some, that will be nothing new. Many have already trusted and relied on the Lord to provide. For others, it will be a test of faith. Outside of these church doors lies darkness of the worst kind. Poverty, despair, selfishness, greed, illness, terrorism, and hatred abound. The good news is that none of those things will keep Jesus from loving you. **Nothing can keep Jesus from loving us.**

In the midst of that darkness, the love and the light of Christ shines, and it shines through people like you and the person sitting next to you. God reveals Himself to the world through people like you. When Christ departed for heaven, He left us in His place to fill in for Him until He returns. Perhaps people are having a hard time seeing Christ because we are all in here when we really need to be out there. I pray that we will go out and be His light. Amen