

“LOVE HAS COME TO US”

John 1:1-14

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In Advent, we sing

*“There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to reveal yourself to us.
There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in you, our God.”*

There’s an African-American Spiritual that could be a response to that song.

It goes, in part, like this:

*Hurry on, my weary soul,
And I heard from heaven today.
Hurry on, my weary soul,
And I heard from heaven today.*

*My sin is forgiven and my soul set free,
And I heard from heaven today.
My sin is forgiven and my soul set free,
And I heard from heaven today.*

*A baby born in Bethlehem,
And I heard from heaven today.
A baby born in Bethlehem,
And I heard from heaven today.*

We have “heard from heaven’ today.

Jesus is both the messenger and the message, come to us.

He is the Word of God

become flesh

and the Word we hear is love... the love of God

made visible, touchable, alive in the world in a human being.

We have been talking about journeys through this Advent and Christmas season -

Mary’s journey, Joseph’s, the journeys of the shepherds and wise men.

But none of them so great a journey as Jesus’ journey from eternity into time,

from endlessness into human limits, from power into vulnerability.

Especially when we consider how far away God sometimes seems... or how far we feel from God, and how distant our world seems from heaven... it's an unimaginable journey, crossing a great divide, bridging an enormous gap.

Theologians debate where we ought to place the most emphasis in the story of Jesus:

How he lived?

The sacrifice of his life on the cross?

His resurrection that demonstrates power over death?

I think a good case can be made for seeing his birth as the center of the story, the point at which the divide between heaven and earth is bridged, and our alienated humanity united with God.

Perhaps you might even say that Jesus' giving up heaven, for the weakness and dependency and vulnerability of a human child was the greatest part of his sacrifice.

For us tho', the birth of Jesus is a gift.

The word we've needed to hear from heaven:

That God has not forgotten us or given up on us,

That Jesus is forever one of us,

That our humanity is not worthless but holy,

We have heard from heaven today

a word of good news.

and the Word is love, and the Word is Jesus.

Amen.