

Pastor Jon's Christmas Sermon 2022

Based on John's Prologue

Text: John 1:1-18

In Greek literature, a **prologue** is an opening to a story that establishes the setting and gives pertinent background details... often some earlier story that ties into the main one. (pro) meaning before, and (logos) meaning word... before the word. The importance, therefore, of the prologue in Greek drama was very great... supplying just what was needed to make the succeeding scenes intelligible.

How would your year be different if we wrote a prologue every year?

This is what we get in our Gospel assigned for today... John's prologue... verses 1-18. It's the word before the word. It sets the tone for the rest of the story. It gives useful and pertinent details and that will make the succeeding scenes more intelligible.

We find out that in the beginning was a Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This Word was meant to bring life and light to all people. No darkness could overcome this light.

But there was a problem. The Word was already in the world. John the evangelist writes, "The world came into being through him, but the world did not know him. He came to his own, but his own people did not receive him with favor."

The people did not know the one true God anymore. The words on the page of the Hebrew Bible weren't getting it done anymore. They didn't have an intimate relationship with God. They lost sight of the true Word of God.

If you think about it, how do you get to really know someone? You visit them... you invite them to eat with you. You hang out with them. Listen to what they say to you and about others. You suffer with them and treat them with grace.

At the first Christmas God did exactly this. Verse 14 says that God came to dwell with us... to literally pitch a tent with us. The Word took on a body, flesh, blood, our complicated relationships, our losses, our hardship, our pain, our joy and our laughter. He ate with friends and enemies. He touched the untouchable. He loved the unlovable.

John writes, "Through his fullness we have all received grace upon grace."

You know what this says to me... We have now entered a new era. An era of Grace. An era of God's unconditional love for the world. The prologue is alerting us before the drama of a big change of how we are to experience God.

John sums it up this way, "The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

In other words, we have a new sheriff in town. It is called grace. We no longer live under the shackles of the law to receive God's favor and love. It comes through Christ's action on the cross and in the resurrection with no merit of our own.

God already knows we are going to mess up and he sent Jesus anyway. If you want to see into God's heart, look to Jesus. Your heart will leap for joy and be lifted every day.

Can we be a church that lives out this prologue? Can we operate with grace upon grace? Can we testify to the light and bring light to our community? Can we stand in the face of darkness to proclaim Jesus the light that overcomes all darkness? When we talk about the Word of God, I want you to think Jesus.

Then Amen! Let it be so!