

# Coffee to Go | Second Sunday of Christmas | Year C

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Epiphany Eve, Gospel of John, Jesus, John the Baptist, divine light, God's reign, Holy Spirit, Community of Christ

## SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

### **Karin Peter** 00:26

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we send to ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. This this is the second Sunday after Christmas. And we don't get this particular Sunday in the liturgical calendar very often. It only happens when the calendar falls and Christmas is on a a certain couple of days of the week. And this time around, it was bingo. We get the second Sunday after Christmas. So, if you remember Christmas last 12 days, from Christmas Day to the eve of Epiphany. Epiphany is January 6. And during this time, we celebrate the hope and joy and love and peace of Jesus Christ, all through the Christmas season. So, this second Sunday is on the Epiphany Eve, or 12th Night this year, and as we observe that, we are in the Gospel of John, and John is telling us a little bit about Jesus, rather than us hanging out with Jesus this week. Blake?

### **Blake Smith** 01:48

Yeah, as you mentioned, we're in the Gospel According to John, one commentator talked about this as kind of John's elevator introduction of Jesus. There's a little bit of everything right here together in this, what is called the Prologue. I'm going to be reading the first through the 18th verse.

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 came into being through Him and without Him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him, but to all who received Him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, this was he whom I said, He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me. From His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. The law indeed

was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

So why does this matter? Well, again, like I said, the commentary talks about this as kind of being an elevator speech, but we see what is really important to John. It would appear that John is really, really concerned about the people who think Jesus was just a good teacher, an all around great guy, but don't seem to have a sense of the divine identity of Jesus. So, in the Gospel of John, we get a real strong focus on Christ's divinity. That's really important, and there's some contextual reasons for that in the community to which John is writing, but for the sake of today's episode, I'll just say that it was really important that John include that. For John, Jesus brings the light and grace and truth of God into the world. Bottom line. He's very much trying to convince the Jewish leaders in the synagogue that Jesus, who was a Jew, is God's being in human form. Now he also, in this passage, takes a couple of opportunities to mention John. And by doing that, he's kind of making a distinction, which is important for us to pick up here, because John is not Jesus. John is not the one. John is the one who points to the one, and to the word. He quotes John the Baptist, who points toward Jesus, just as Jesus then points to God's reign. So what's important in that is that John, and the writer, John and John the Baptist, moves us out of the center of the story and puts Jesus there instead. It's important to note that we point to the light of Jesus, which dispels darkness. We don't dispel the darkness. We point to the one who does that. So some questions we might ask ourselves then are

**Karin Peter 06:09**

Okay, wait, wait, wait before we get to the questions. [Yep], something came to mind when you were talking. Actually, two things came to mind, Blake and one thing was up in verse 12, where it said, "to all who received him and believed in his name," I think we've talked about this before, but when, when that phrase is used, believed in his name, they're not talking about how we use that currently, currently we we just idolize the name of Jesus, right? Jesus Christ, we idolize it, and we don't want people to use it in a blasphemous manner. But when we talk about believing in the name, now we just, that's it. That's all there is to that. Whereas in this particular text, it meant, when you take the name of someone upon you, you're saying, I will walk the same walk as that person. I will do the same deeds as that person. I will make the same choices to take the name of someone on you as totally different than how we understand it now. And I just, I know we've talked about it before, but I'm hoping our readers won't just kind of gloss over that, but they'll, they'll remember that that's what we're talking about here in this one.

**Blake Smith 07:19**

Yeah, that's a really great point, because it is so much more deep than just, "oh, here's this name. We're going to hold it in high esteem and not use it as a as a throw away, or, you know, as some..." right...

**Karin Peter 07:35**

Oh, that's a great connection. It's become quite trite in Christian language now. And the other thing is, we're talking about John the Baptist, who points to Jesus. So, John the gospel writer points to John the Baptist. John points to Jesus. Jesus points to God's reign. And in my brain, I was like, Oh, yeah. And then the opposite of that is that God sends Jesus. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, and then the Holy Spirit sends the church into mission. So, you have this, this pointing towards God's reign, and then you have

God's reign pointing back through Jesus, and the Holy Spirit towards the church sent in mission. And it reminded me of how Community of Christ, we talk about the inward and the outward journey. And it was just that kind of a feeling like when we go up the worshipper's path into the sanctuary and then leave out on the world Plaza. It was kind of this image. That image came to mind when I was listening to you talk about that. Well, that was brand new. My coffee kicked in. I think there for a minute. Well, when we first started to talk about, I thought, "oh, there was a lot of finger pointing going on here," but in a good way. Okay, so what were the questions? I'm sorry.

**Blake Smith** 08:58

That's alright. So, our questions might be, What does my faith journey point to? Speaking of pointing. And, How do I bear the divine light into the world? Because, as you said, you know we point ultimately toward God, but then God sends. So, it comes back towards us to be those vessels in the world that are making this happen.

**Karin Peter** 09:28

Yeah, it's really interesting when we start talking about light, and we can get, you know, especially in our modern Western culture, we can, we can actually veer off into Gnosticism without even realizing that's what we're doing. So, we're not talking about little divine spark within us. We're talking about being bearers of light, like having a bowl of light that you're bearing into the world and sharing with people. It's very [Absolutely] yeah, so thinking about that and how we can experience it. And tomorrow is the day of Epiphany, which will be special Project Zion podcast for the day of Epiphany. But let's just rest here on this last eve of Christmas, on Epiphany Eve, and as we do so, around your evening meal table, or however you take sustenance in the evening, light a candle and just kind of prepare for the unveiling of the light of God to all people that takes place tomorrow. So, Christmas, the light comes into the world, but only certain people are aware of what has happened on Epiphany, we celebrate that that light is for everybody. So on the eve of that happening, let's rest in this last evening of Christmas.

**Blake Smith** 10:44

Alright? Well, you know what I'm going to have to do it. Our blessing is very...

**Karin Peter** 10:51

I wondered how you would do this.

**Blake Smith** 10:52

You know what I'm going to do. That's right. [I do.] Our blessing is very appropriately, This little light of mine. So if you're in your car listening to this, or wherever you are, just join in. Let's do this blessing together, [Blake singing] This little light of mine. I'm going to let it shine This little light of mine. I'm going to let it shine This little light of mine. I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine. Alright, enough of that.

**Karin Peter** 11:25

You did, you did your Southern Heritage good there, brother.

**Blake Smith** 11:28

I did. and we're not going to sing the other verses, but we are glad you joined us here today, and we hope that you'll join us next time at Coffee to Go for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.