

John 1:1-18 – Christmas 2
Jan 3, 2021

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas!

Today is the 10th day of Christmas. We have two more to go, so I hope you are still enjoying the twinkling lights on your Christmas tree as we remember that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can take away.

If you are my friend on FaceBook, you'll know that I like to take pictures – probably too many pictures, but I'm a visual person, that's why I love art galleries so much. I like to look at things.

Often I'll take pictures so that I can ruminate on whatever caught my eye later. Sometimes I don't have time to admire the view for very long and most of the time the scene changes quickly, especially when it comes to the lighting. Even inside of museums the light can change based on where people are standing and if there is natural light or not.

On New Year's Day, I was on my way home from my parents' house. It was about 8:30pm when I drove by downtown Denver. As I came around the curve south of the football stadium, I saw one of the most beautiful sights of Denver.

It was really clear on New Year's Day and the moon was sitting right above the buildings. It was gorgeous. I wished I had my phone handy. I even debated getting off on 8th Avenue to try and get a shot, but instead I decided to just remember it in my head where I can still see it over and over again without the use of a device.

But, I almost missed the sight, because there was a race going on in my midst between a wrecker, an SUV, and a sedan. I was so mad at their reckless driving that I almost missed the beauty over to my left. The light was shining in the darkness, but I was so focused on anger, that I nearly missed it.

Isn't that just about typical? We get caught up in the ugly and we miss the beauty. If we only look up and out, we can see that there is something else going on. There is beauty in the midst of the ugly and the light is shining in the midst of it.

Did you know that you can't take a picture of light? I mean you can, but there is nothing interesting to see. It's just blurry whiteness. The beauty comes from how the light is reflected – how the light bounces off of other things.

The moon is not the sun, but it reflects the sun and that's what makes it beautiful.

A light bulb on its own isn't that pretty, but the way it reflects off of other things makes those things beautiful, just like the moon dancing off of the buildings in downtown Denver.

And so, God enters human form, in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. He is like the lantern who holds the light, which reflects off of all of us.

Because we puny humans cannot handle the brightness of God on our own, God has to come to us in a way that we can handle, and so the light becomes flesh and lives with us and we reflect that light today out into the world.

Now, 2020 was kind of an ugly year on a lot of levels, but there was also beauty in the midst of it. The light was reflecting into the darkness.

If you haven't already done so, you may want to reflect on 2020 and note those places that seemed ugly, but where you were able to find beauty. Like my drive on I25. If I hadn't looked over to the left, I would have missed the beauty in the midst of road rage.

And the cool thing was that when I did look over my shoulder and see the light of the moon reflecting on Denver along with all of the lights inside the buildings, it released me from my own anger and I was able to relax and give thanks instead of cursing the darkness found in totally irresponsible drivers.

If you have yet to make your 2021 resolutions, perhaps you will think about making it a daily practice to look for the light. Where is the light being reflected in each situation?

Resolution, after all, when it comes to photography, has to do with light and how light reveals the details. The right amount of light makes things more clear. So, how might you reflect God's light into a situation in order to make it more clear?

When Jesus came, the people didn't recognize him. Not because he wasn't recognizable, but because they weren't looking. They were too busy dealing with aggressive drivers to see the light shining right over their shoulders. But, if we step back from stressful situations and look, we will see Christ in our midst.

If you are a photographer like me, or a better one like Abby, perhaps you can make a resolution for 2021 to look for the light everywhere you go, so that whatever you are looking at you can see the details more clearly - in God's light – in the light of love, peace, mercy, and grace.

God is born to us. He lives among us and heals us, and on the cross he dies for us. All of this he does out of pure love for us. There is no wrath in him at all, instead he takes the world's wrath and transforms it into life, which is the light for all people. A light that illuminates and transforms anger and fear it into joy and peace.

Today is the first Sunday of 2021. It is the second Sunday of Christmas.

Today we remember that the light shines in the darkness – in the past, the present, and the future. No matter what has happened, is happening now, or will happen in the future, God is with us shining the light of salvation for all people, which we are blessed to reflect out into the world.

In Jesus Christ, there is no darkness at all.

Thanks be to God. Amen.