“1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

Have you ever paused to consider how remarkable this event is? I think I have often just kind of read through these word, “And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.” with little thought as to how amazing this marvelous, miraculous mystery really is.

God drastically underplays how dramatic the creation of light actually is. I suppose for Omnipotent— all powerful God it is not as impressive a thing as it is to us. The creator simply says- and it was. But for you and me not to be wowed by this wonder is all but inconceivable when you pause to consider how remarkable this event is.

I had an old Hebrew professor at the Seminary that some of us suspected was actually an eye witness the events of creation. He would tell us, “Men. In the beginning the earth was אכלת שמים תחת that is formless emptiness. And gloomy darkness that is void of all light engulfed creation.” It is hard for us to imagine a darkness like this. If you close your eyes really tightly, light still seeps in. And even if you manage to find a cave so deep underground that no light can penetrate you know that light still shines above you. It is hard for us to imagine a darkness so inclusive, so absolute.

It is harder for us to imagine that from this darkness an unseen voice is heard saying, “יָשָׁר בָלַע” let there be light. And suddenly, piercing the darkness, light came screaming out of the mouth of God at 186,000 miles per second, filling the formless emptiness with its brightness. God said, and there was. Out of nothing God had created something. Out of darkness God had created light.

It is good for us to pause and consider the all powerful God who said let there be light. Perhaps it is even more fitting for us to do so today. For today we have gathered together to celebrate the Transfiguration of Christ. We have gathered together to celebrate the light of God who came to shine among us. And we have gathered together to celebrate the light of God that still shines.

In the beginning when the earth was formless and empty was not the only time God said let there be light. From the moment mankind rebelled against God in the garden a spiritual darkness penetrated creation. Sin blinded the hearts of those who built the tower of Babble, as it blinded those who perished in the flood, as it blinded the idolatrous tribes of Israel. God had promised that he would send a Messiah. Like a light shining in the darkness God’s promise had given hope to the faithful.

Three of the faithful saw that light shining on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured. Our Gospel lesson told us Jesus’ “clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.”

In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus is described as shining like the sun. In Luke’s Gospel Jesus is described as lightening. For a brief moment Peter, James, and John beheld the brilliance of God’s light. They, better than most would understand the magnitude of the miracle when God said, “let there be light.” For they had seen that light shining among them. In the gospel of John we can read, “In the beginning was the Word... (and) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The light that shined at creation shone in Jesus. Jesus said of himself, “I have come into the world as a light,” “I am the light of the world.”

But Satan had done a great deal to conceal that light. Because of the spiritual darkness that filled the earth men who looked at the true man Jesus could not see that he was also true God they could not see the light. They could not see that the promised Messiah shone among them. They could not see his radiant perfection; they could not understand his illuminating teaching, and they did not believe the brilliance of his death on the cross. In spiritual blindness humanity crucified the light of the world. The light shined in the darkness but the darkness did not understand it. But despite Satan’s best efforts to keep this light concealed

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1 Gen 1:1-3
2 Mk 9:3
3 Jn 1:1,14
4 Jn 12:46
5 Jn 9:5
6 Jn 1:5
from the hearts of men, God would pierce the darkness once more. Once again God would say, let there be light.

There is a place that is just as dark as the sin filled world that surrounded the Mountain upon which Jesus was transfigured. It is a place that is equal in gloomy darkness and just as void of light as the darkness that engulfed the empty and formless pre-light creation. This dark place is the heart of unbelieving man.

A man like Saint Paul understood this darkness well. Paul did all that he could to oppose the light of the world. Those who walked in the light, he imprisoned or cast his vote to have them killed. Not only was he in darkness but he was obsessed with concealing the light from others. Paul’s soul was as dark as spiritually blind humanity that crucified the light of the world, it was as void of light as pre-light creation.

Paul understood darkness well. And so do you. And so do I. We are not all that different than Paul. Different culture. Different time. But the same darkness. God describes the darkness in you and me in Romans 8:7 by saying, “the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.” Your soul was as dark as spiritually blind humanity and as void of light as pre-light creation. If given the chance you would have crucified the light of the world and you would have concealed that light from others. Your soul was as dark as spiritually blind humanity that crucified the light of the world, it was as void of light as pre-light creation.

Such darkness once filled Paul. Such darkness once filled you. That is until God said, Let there be light. For Paul it was as he was on the road to Damascus when he saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around him. For you, well it probably was not that spectacular. You probably were not bathed in light like Paul. You probably were not blinded by the appearance of the light of the world. Most likely God created light in you through the preaching and teaching of His Word or the administration of the sacrament of baptism. But that does not mean it was not a wonder that should wow you. That does not mean that it was a remarkable event.

6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. God said let there be light and suddenly piercing the darkness of your unbelief light came screaming from the Word of God filling you with His brilliance. God said, and there is. Out of nothing God has created something. Out of darkness God has created light. Where once there was unbelief there now is faith. Jesus stands upon your once sin blinded soul shining as the light of the world.

Dear friends never fail to be wowed by the wonder that God’s light is shining in you. “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light”7 God has made His light shine in you for a reason. Listen to what Jesus, the light of the world says about you in Matthew 5:14-16. He says, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Dear children of light. Show your wonder by letting your light shine in everything you do. You do not have to stumble around in the darkness of sin. You do not have to grope your way through life always questioning if you are doing the right thing and headed in the right direction. You are a child of the light and you live in the light. God has made His light shine in you. You have the power and ability to live a life that pleases God. Your worship is pleasing to God. Your faithfulness to your work and duties in the home are pleasing to God. Your love for one another is pleasing to God. You are a child of the light. God’s light shines in you. Let the light of Jesus shine in everything you do. So that the God who said let there be light be praised because of you.

God has caused his light to shine in some dramatic ways. Light pierced the dark and gloomy void of pre-light creation. On the mountain of transfiguration, light shone brilliantly amidst a spiritually blind people. And just as dramatic, just as brilliant, God’s light shines in you. Today we gather together to praise God who said, “Let there be light.” Amen

1 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Transfiguration February 19th 2012
2 Eph 5:8