



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

Beginnings are special. The school year has just begun, and students and teachers alike are starting to get settled into routines. Autumn officially began this week – though Texans may hardly notice! Far too many people are looking at new beginnings following the destruction of the our recent hurricanes, a different, sad beginning.

Beginnings are special. They bring mystery and they bring hope. A “groundbreaking” may come with elaborate drawings and designs, but the completed project will still surprise us. Part of good planning calls for a willingness to change and adjust as time passes. And completing something somehow leads us to constantly finding new beginnings. As Isaiah reminds us, God is constantly doing new things in our midst.

**Consider
the Source
John 1:1-18**

John’s gospel starts us out “in the beginning.” We are reminded of Genesis and the suggestion of God’s blueprint for creation. Now we are about to find a “midcourse correction” as God continues to call us back into God’s fellowship. God’s first word in Genesis was “let there be light” yet somehow darkness still lingers. Indeed, it seems the world revels in darkness!

Now the light is reintroduced to the world’s darkness. This light has been present from the very first of creation, but we still need to have our attention drawn to it. It’s a fresh, new beginning for the way we relate to our Creator. Now rather than rules and laws, we have a model, a living example of the “truth and grace” which are what God longs for from us.

Now we are to listen as John the Baptist points us toward that light, and the Gospel unfolds God’s revised plan for creation.

Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence

A Family Affair

Read John 1:1-18. Unlike Matthew and Luke, the gospel of John does not begin with Jesus, born as a baby to Mary and Joseph. Instead, John refers to “the Word” who was with God from the beginning and then came to live among us. God loved us so much that he sent his son to live on earth. Jesus demonstrated how to live in relationship with God and one another. Even though Jesus no longer lives on earth, as a human, we learn about him through God’s Word, the Scripture. Through the Word, Jesus teaches us many things, including how we can share God’s love with others, even those that can be hard to love.

Sharing God’s love can be our response to his gift to us. Talk about how your family can respond to God’s gift by the way you live. Some ideas may be to show love to your sibling after a disagreement, bake cookies for a neighbor that you may not even know or calling a grandparent to tell them that you love them.

Dear God, thank you for loving us and for sending your son to show us your love. Please be with us as we strive to show your love to others each day. Amen.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children’s Ministry

Monday: John 1:1-5, 9

The recent eclipse of the sun reminded us of our connection to light. All the accounts of the temperature falling during totality, of animals becoming disoriented, and of the mystical feelings of those watching tell us that light is important.

- Have you ever been in a cave when all the lighting is extinguished? Any small light (cellphones would pop out today!) becomes a hopeful sign.
- Today’s world often seems dark and frightening. What hopeful lights can you find around you?

Tuesday: John 1:10-11

John notes that “the world did not know him.” We are all too familiar with the truth that we tend to only see what we are looking for, what we want to see. Jesus challenges so many of our traditions that he becomes nearly invisible!

- How can we examine our neighborhood/world to see what we are overlooking?
- Are there needs we choose to ignore?

Wednesday: John 1:6-8

This passage also takes note of John the Baptist, who is important as one who points out Jesus as the true light of the world. We constantly need those who steer us toward what is truly valuable in our midst.

- Who are those today who are calling us to notice God’s work in the world, and inviting us to follow Jesus in a new and deeper way?
- Do you have anyone in your life lifting up Jesus for you?

Thursday: John 1:12-13

In today’s world, “mentoring” is a byword. We look for “role models” to imitate. The example of a living person speaks far louder than words. John tells us we need such a human picture of God’s love and grace – and that we have it: Jesus!

- What part of Jesus’ model are you learning to imitate (“be like”) today, this week? This year?

Friday: John 1:17-18

Before we realize it, the school year just begun will end, and we will celebrate “commencements.” That is a loaded word suggesting that while one stage of life is completed, we are about to experience a new beginning, starting fresh. That’s something Jesus encourages us to experience!

- What new beginnings will you receive from Jesus, from God this week? Look for all the new ways we are invited to be disciples!