

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness on them has light shined... for to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:2,6

Lights, lights, lights... they are everywhere! Typically, lights become a bit more noticeable in November and December each year. Yes, the time has come and many streets are lined with little lights called Christmas lights! Indeed, many of the decorations are simply breathtaking, bringing about feelings of wonder, amazement and the décor seems to get the "holiday spirit" within us churning.



However, as Christians we really should be asking ourselves why all the Christmas lights, Christmas trees, and Christmas decorations. Modern culture has us thinking that it is all about family, good fellowship and nothing more than that. And so, for many folks the decorations and strings of lights simply represent a mood of celebration.

As Lutherans, I think it is quite fitting for us to reflect on a story about Dr. Luther. Around the year 1500, Dr. Luther was supposedly walking through a snow covered field one late Christmas Eve contemplating his next sermon theme. While walking he noticed a bunch of snow covered evergreen trees shimmering in the moonlight. This observation reminded Luther of the birth of Jesus Christ and how the Lord's light shines through even in the darkest moments of humanity. Dr. Luther then went on to cut a tree, bring it home and decorate it with candles.

Now, whether this story is completely accurate is rather insignificant. This account serves as reminder to us that "Jesus is the reason for the season!" It reminds us that Christmas isn't about the nicest decorated home or the biggest tree. Rather, it's **ALL about Jesus**. We might then suggest, that when we decorate our homes with lights, it helps to tell the story; to tell of the incarnation of Jesus; who is the greatest and brightest light. Furthermore, we might suggest that these little lights witness to the world that Jesus is the light that continues to shine in a very dark world. We, who have walked in darkness have seen a great light! To us a child is born, to us a SON IS GIVEN! Jesus, who is true God, took flesh to redeem a people who wandered in darkness. We are among the Redeemed and love to tell the story!

All kinds of lights will be shining in our eyes this Advent and Christmas season. However, there is really only one light that shines through and affects our lives. This light causes us to stop and wonder in the midst of all the hustle and bustle. Jesus truly is light to a dark, dark world! May he come to you this year and illuminate your heart and mind so that you may diligently witness His love. May you daily focus on him and not all the other "little lights" of the season!

Peace and Joy,

Pastor Hal +