

“Nobodies Become Somebodies”

Message by DD Adams

Providence United Methodist Church

2nd SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Leadership Sunday

January 5, 2014

The gospel lesson for today is taken from the first chapter of John, verses 1 through 18. I'll be reading from the New Revised Standard Version. 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 overcome 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 of 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 God the

only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. This is God's word for God's people. Thanks be to God.

Let us pray. Holy God, who shines light and life into our very being, shine on us today as we open the door of our heart to receive. Make us children that hear and listen. Grant us understanding as our mind is illuminated and our heart is made different as we turn them to you. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

This portion of Scripture mentions how the baby Jesus, the Christ child, the Son of God was not recognized by his own people. He was rejected and then crucified. We've done the same before we received Christ into our hearts, *but not all reject Christ*. Verse 12 states, "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God . . ." We receive, believe in his name, and we're born of God. A person believes in the person of Christ and that he is who he says he is—the Son of God. It's a faith or trust with confidence. No matter where we've come from, no matter what we've done, no matter what our reputation, God accepts us. The world may see us as a nobody, and we may feel like a nobody, *but God . . . sees us . . . as a somebody*. We are children of God.

We become children of God not by becoming a member of a denomination, or being proficient in religious understanding, or doing excellent work or research that receives the praises of others, or being morally upright, or being brought up in a Christian school, and much less having a respected descent. No, . . . one *becomes* a child of God by grace through faith that places us into the family of God. It's Christ that has obtained this for us and not through anything we've done.

We become children of God not through an act of our own self-will, but through an acknowledgement to God of our need and weakness. But faith opens the door for *all people* irrespective of position or economic status. In the blink of an eye, in a split second, in the turning of one's heart toward God we become transformed into somebodies. How valuable we are to God as God's children. It

doesn't matter how others see us or even how we may evaluate ourselves. God loves us, and right now, right this very moment, *we are enough* in God's eyes.

We are born of God not born of the will of a man and woman and not by any human initiative. All human decision is powerless, but with God's power spiritual rebirth takes place. We are nobodies in this world who have *become* somebodies through the grace of God. Knowing this, we move out into the world in a brand new year. I challenge you, as a child of God, become more aware of the presence of God. The word of God became flesh, but is now among us as the Holy Spirit and lives among us. God is Emmanuel, "God with us."

As a church in this community and as a witness we receive "grace upon grace." Throughout our entire lives Christ walks beside us, and we receive an *uninterrupted succession of one blessing after another*. For becoming a child of God has infinite gifts of which most are never opened. Let's open up these gifts in the New Year. It's the gift that keeps on giving. Let us with joy and thanksgiving give praise to God today for experiencing the living presence of Christ among us as we partake of Holy Communion. Let us receive power to go into the world and proclaim the goodness of God and to receive power by God to live a holy and upright life.

Let us pray. Holy God who is the light of the world, becomes a light in us for the world, and shines in the darkness; you have brought us from darkness to light and out of death and into life, compel us this New Year to acknowledge your constant presence with us. Let us open the infinite gifts and privileges of knowing you as we become a beacon of blessing to our community and beyond. Kindle the light of knowing you within us that it would not grow dim. In the name of the True Light, Jesus, your Son. Amen.