

SERMON by Joann Bredenberg  
The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany- 2/8/2026  
at Christ Church Quaker Farms, Oxford, CT

*DEAR GOD, MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE, PLEASE LEAD ME IN SPREADING YOUR TEACHINGS  
BY GUIDING MY WORDS IN THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE. THANK YOU*

WELCOME TO THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY, FROM GREEK WORD "EPIPHANINEIN", REVEAL, AN ENLIGHTMENT, A SUDDEN REVELATION OR INSIGHT...

THEREFORE, THE REVELATION OF CHRIST TO THE PEOPLE ON EARTH.

THE REVELATION TO THE 3 KINGS THAT JESUS IS GOD'S SON!!! THE ENLIGHTMENT OF SHARING GOD'S LOVE!

THERE IS A CONSISTENT THEME OF REVELATION, ENLIGHTMENT THROUGH THE PSALM, THE READING FROM ISAIAH, PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS, AND MATTHEW'S RECORDING OF JESUS'S TEACHINGS. THEY ARE ALL ENLIGHTENING, AN EPIPHANY!

THE PSALM REMINDS US TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY AND NOT LET THE WORLD SHAKE US, NOT TO STUMBLE INTO THE GAP, TO KEEP OUR HEART ON THE RIGHT PATH, FOLLOW THE COMMANDMENTS, TO "DO GOOD" FOR OTHERS, AND PUT OUR TRUST IN THE LORD. SEE THE LIGHT! WE JUST SANG THAT THE LORD IS OUR "SHELTER, TOWER OF REFUGE AND STRENGTH". YES, WE MUST PUT OUR TRUST IN THE LORD. "SHOUT TO THE LORD, ALL THE EARTH LET US SING" ...WELL?

ISAIAH ENCOURAGES US TO "SHOUT OUT, DO NOT HOLD BACK", TO STOP SERVING OUR OWN INTEREST! REMINDS ME OF THE GENERAL CONFSSION PRAYER TO "FORGIVE US FOR WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND WHAT WE HAVE LEFT UNDONE" ...THAT GETS ME EVERY TIME!

HAVE FAITH! YES, KEEP OUR CHIN UP TO GOD! WE ARE TO LET OUR CHRISTIAN LIGHT SHINE BY HELPING OTHERS, LOVING OTHERS, AND UNDERSTAND THAT THE LORD WILL BE THERE TO HELP AND GUIDE US, WE JUST HAVE TO CALL FOR HIM, AND HE WILL SAY "HERE I AM"! THE LORD WILL GUIDE US CONTINUALLY.

HIS HOLY SPIRIT WILL SURROUND US WITH SUPPORT---IF WE LET HIM!

PAUL IS APPEALING TO THE CHURCH OF THE CORINTHIANS IN A VERY HUMBLING WAY. THEY HAVE FALLEN BACK INTO THEIR OLD CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE ROMAN WAYS. MOST LIKELY, THIS EVOLVED OUT OF THEIR MEETING IN MEMBER'S HOMES, AND, OF COURSE, THOSE WERE THE LARGER HOMES.

AS A RESULT, IT EVOLVED THAT THE MEMBERS OF MEANS ASSUMED LEADERSHIP ROLES, FORGETTING THAT THE MEMBERS WITHOUT WEALTH CERTAINLY ARE JUST AS ADEPT AT CONTRIBUTING THEIR SKILLS AND INSPIRATION SPREADING JESUS'S WORDS, AND SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED. THEY HAD FORGOTTEN THAT THEY ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD, AND EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD, LOVING EACH OTHER AS GOD LOVES US. PAUL IS EMPHASIZING THEY ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY, THEIR FAITH MUST NOT REST ON HUMAN WISDOM, BUT ON THE SPIRIT, THE POWER, THE WISDOM OF GOD.

WE ALL HAVE GOD'S SPIRIT WITHIN US, LEADING US, LET IT SHINE! THEREFORE, WE MUST SHED THE OLD WAYS AND WORK TOGETHER FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, SPREADING THE WORD,

SHINING THE LIGHT, AS ONE BODY, ONE FAMILY, EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD. THIS IS TRUE TODAY, TOO. DON'T IGNORE THE PERSON SITTING QUIETLY. "LIFT HIGH THE CROSS, THE LOVE OF CHRIST PROCLAIM".

AND NOW MATTHEW'S RECORDING OF JESUS'S MESSAGE OF LOVE, WHICH WAS JUST AFTER CHRIST DELIVERED THE BEATITUDES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. HE IS TELLING US WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, WE ARE EXAMPLES, WE ARE HIS MESSENGERS, AND WE MUST NOT LET THAT LIGHT GO OUT NOR BE HIDDEN, FOR WE MUST SPREAD THE LIGHT OF THE LORD'S LOVE TO OTHERS, BY THE WAY WE LIVE, THROUGH GOOD WORKS, AND TO GIVE GLORY TO OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. REMEMBER THAT SUNDAY SCHOOL SONG?

"LET THE SUNSHINE IN, FACES WITH A GRIN, OPEN UP YOU HEART AND LET THE SUNSHINE IN!"

WE MUST BE AWARE THAT THAT LIGHT IS THE LIGHT OF CHRIST WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US TO SHARE, IT IS WITHIN US, AND IT FEELS TERRIFIC WHEN WE SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. TO QUOTE CHARLES JAMES COOK: "WHEN WE ARE SALT AND LIGHT FOR OTHERS, WE ARE MORE LIKELY TO FULFILL THE LAW AS JESUS SUGGESTED: TO LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART, MIND, AND SOUL, AND OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES."

JESUS STATES THAT HE DID NOT COME TO EARTH TO ABOLISH THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS, BUT TO FULFILL GOD'S LAW AND THE PROPHECIES.

YES, "CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS...THE WONDROUS NAME OF LOVE"

AMEN +