

Christmas 2, 2010  
Good Hope Lutheran Church  
John 1.1 – 3, 14

Again from the Gospel of John, this is how chapter 1 starts out:  
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Lord be with you. And let us pray:  
Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Word of God made flesh, you were there before the beginning and you shall endure long after the end. You are with us now, in love and in power, to forgive us and guide us and direct us, this day and every day. Be for us all that you have promised, and make us into what you desire; Lord Jesus it is in your name alone that we pray, AMEN.

Let me begin this morning by talking about computers. This won't take long because I really don't know much about computers; to be honest. I can send e-mails and play Free Cell and that's about it, but let's talk about the silly things anyway, let's suppose. Let's suppose that you were sitting at a computer, merrily typing away on the key board, entering all kinds of data. All kinds of information, you were typing away and putting it all into the computer's memory. Well, you could hit the print button, and have the computer simply burp the information right back at you, but that's really not very helpful. I mean if all you wanted was information on paper, you don't need a computer for that, an old fashioned typewriter would be enough. No, what the computer can do, besides *storing* information, is to *sort* it. Ok? Sorting information, in other words you could enter all this data into the

computer's memory, then have someone like Jacob or Sean or Chris come along and *program* the computer, get it to separate information into whatever categories you want. Sort the information computer, and show me the names of young people currently in college. Sort the information computer, and show me stores in which I can find a certain product, on sale at a certain price. Whatever. It's not just storing information, it's the ability to *sort* information, to categorize it and link it together in new hopefully helpful ways—that's what you get in a computer.

Ok, fine, now think of your own mind, as the computer. Your mind, your heart—every day, information is entered via the great “Keyboard of Life,” so to speak. Every experience you have, including this one right now—the sights the sounds the feelings the impressions, it all gets recorded. It all gets stored some place in your memory—here. Here. Stored, saved, fine, how do you sort it? How do you separate the information, how do link it back together again, how does your heart and mind prioritize the experiences of your life and make sense of them all; how do you then use them? In short, what kind of a “program” are you running, anyway.

One very common “program” that people use is entitled, What's in it for me? What's in it for me, if I had a patent on this one I'd be richer than Bill Gates, all the experiences in life—*all* the experiences in life, graded and

sorted and utilized based on what I get from them personally. And if something *doesn't* get me anything—if someone *isn't* useful to me somehow—there's an automatic delete key, file 'em in the trash. What matters—all that matters—is me. So if there's an experience that will make *me* money. If there's a person I can use to make *me* happy. If there's a trick I can use to make *me* look good, *that* gets remembered, that gets sorted and saved, right here you are. A very common albeit selfish “program” we run all the time—what's in it for me.

Another program we run, similar to the previous one maybe—How can I get back at you? How can I get back at you, this “program” allows me to remember people I'm mad at, and why I'm mad at them, and what their vulnerable points are so I can hurt them the same way they hurt me, and you know? Kind of interesting. Husbands and wives use this program on each other all the time. What fun that must be. So do kids in the lunchroom at school, and people working in the same office building—How can I get back at you, man all the juicy little details we can pull out. All the mean little ideas, they're all right there when you run this program, guaranteed!

And so on, there are others, all available to you in one great big download known as Sin. Sin is the way I have of taking life, and making it all about me. Sin is the way we have of sorting and grading people, using some and

simply deleting others, all because we're just looking out for #1. Sin is the way we have of picking and choosing responses to others, never based on what this person may need but always and only on what I think I want, sin is a very selfish program, but very popular—just look at all the people who use it, all the time. Us too?

Now when the Gospel describes Jesus as The Word—“in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and blood and dwelt among us”—when the Gospel describes Jesus as The Word, you should know this is a term taken over from Greek philosophy. Guys in togas who knew even less about computers than I do—so to bring the term up to date. When the Gospel says that Jesus is The Word. What it's saying. Jesus is the Meaning of Life. No fooling! Jesus is, the Meaning of Life! Jesus is, the program God gives us to make sense, of life. Jesus, His cross, His empty tomb, that's what God has now given us to understand the world; it's how we are to interpret life and life's experiences; indeed, it's how we are to *live* life! Everything now looked at through Jesus Christ, everything now seen, through His cross and empty tomb.

So, how do I handle today? How should I react to you? What do I do about my own selfish wants when they put me in conflict with you? What about

my anger, or my resentment, what about my death, how do I handle that one? Let God download the Jesus program, let God plant Christ, here. Here. Let God now teach you to look at life and death and everything in between through Christ, His cross, His empty tomb, every moment—through Him. Every moment, *for* Him. Jesus is forgiveness for your sin—the patch you might say, fixing what you’ve done wrong, but enough with the computer analogy—Jesus is God forgiving you your past sin, yes indeed; but more. Jesus is the meaning of life, today. He is a new way of life for tomorrow, a new way of responding to the people around you, based on His love and mercy this time, not your greed or petty anger. Listen: The one who designed the “computer,” knows the best program to run. The One who created the world, knows what life means. The One who died and rose again can make sense of your life too, and guide you through it, to a Kingdom still to come. Let Him. Let Him, and may this be the day. In the name of Jesus Christ, AMEN.