

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, December 29, 2020**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“The All-Inclusive Gift”**

**READING:** I John 1:1-4 – That which was from, the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

I hope and pray that your Christmas celebration was a blessed one whatever your circumstances. As I said last week, some of the merriment of Christmases past was bound to be missing this year for many of us. COVID restrictions and other factors made it harder for us to be merry, but no less able to rejoice in the blessedness, grace, and promise the coming of the Christ child gives to each of us.

I was doing some reminiscing about Christmases past. When I was about 6, my Uncle Rudy gave me an Old West town – complete with cowboys and Indians, horses, saddles, corral fencing, a spittoon, swinging doors on the saloon, wagons, horse troughs...well, you get the picture. It was an all-inclusive set. I spent hours having big gun battles with that gift.

A couple of weeks ago I mentioned the Tonka firetruck he gave me. It had hoses and a hydrant, ladders, a siren and lights. It was all-inclusive. Aunt Elsie one year gave me a “Johnny Eagle” for Christmas. The Johnny Eagle was a play gun that fired plastic bullets, had a grenade launcher, a bayonet, a compass, the trigger assembly would detach revealing a pistol! It had EVERYTHING! It was all-inclusive. That’s the same reason I love my Swiss Army knife. It has every tool I might need, all in one handy all-inclusive package!

Two Christmases ago I received a “Lead Sled”. A Lead Sled is an implement to use on a shooting stand for zeroing in rifles on a target range. It has a rest on which to put the rifle and then clamps that hold it firmly so when you fire it, it doesn’t kick against your shoulder and you can fine tune the sights without moving the weapon. Back in November I took it to the range with me, intending to use it for the first time. When I opened the box, I discovered that the Lead Sled has “some assembly required.” It was all in pieces! I have to put it together before it will do me any good. All the pieces are there. It will do just what it’s intended to do when I put all the pieces together. Its all-inclusive.

St. John is giving us a similar message in our text for today. When he talks about Jesus, he speaks of all the ways he and the other apostles experienced him. They SAW him with their eyes – he was no vision nor hallucination. They HEARD him speak and teach and preach for he did not teach as others did, but he spoke with authority. They TOUCHED him – in the Upper Room on Easter Sunday. He was not a ghost or a group hallucination or a fever dream.

Jesus was and is a truly human man who was born in Bethlehem, journeyed to Egypt, grew up in Nazareth, and was obedient to his parents. He had to learn to walk and to talk, to read and do his cyphers. He did his chores, ate, slept, bathed, worshipped, and did all the things you and I do. He was a real person, who lived at a real time in history and lived amongst real historical people. He was born in the time of Caesar Augustus, died on the cross in the reign of Tiberius Caesar. He was hunted as a baby by King Herod the Great and ridiculed by his son, King Herod Antipas. He was condemned to death by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

St. John wants his hearers, including us, to know that the Jesus he proclaims is not a figment of someone's imagination. He wants us to know that he and others were eyewitnesses of his ministry, his miracles, his passion, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and of his glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. We just celebrated his Nativity, and in spite of the world's attempts to hijack Christmas or to minimize it or to ignore it altogether, we can be certain and sure that it took place exactly as Scripture describes it and for the very purposes it sets forth. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He was an all-inclusive Savior who came for everyone, came to everyone, and died "...that everyone who believes in him should not die but have eternal life." He was the God/man who did it all for all of us. He was all-inclusive! Amen.

**PRAYER:**

**ANNOUNCEMENT(S):**

**NEW YEAR'S EVE Service: Thursday evening, 5:00 with Communion.**