

Sermon 2009 Christmas Day
Text: Hebrews 1:1-6
Theme: "Radiant Son"

The coming of the baby in a manger was more than just a baby in a manger and that is why the sky was torn apart with light as the hosts of heaven proclaimed his birth. Last night we heard the angel's song to the shepherds and today the most faithful Christians around the world gather again on this second highest feast day of the Church to ask – what does it all mean? For us it is not a pleasant mix of baby's in mangers and dancing snowmen but rather an crucial truth that must be proclaimed.

That baby was the very Son of God and therefore;

"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." The radiance of God contained within human flesh. That's like a nuclear missile in your coat closet. Now sometimes I worry that the stuff in our coat closet will finally expand to such proportions that the door will just pop off the hinges, but I would be really concerned if I had a bomb in the closet.

Yet we treat the incarnation as though it is an everyday occurrence. This is what we mean when we speak of loving and fearing God. We love him because he has done everything for us and he still cares for us, protects us, provides for us and, most of all, because he first loved us. But we are cautious because we recognize that loving God is like kissing a porcupine. How do you kiss a porcupine? Very carefully! God is all powerful, all seeing, all knowing, eternal, unchanging, all loving, just, holy, righteous...God is a nuclear missile in the coat closet.

This is the tension with which we live because while we are ever-cautious of his power, we need him. The sinful nature does not like having a God that is all powerful. We want access to the power cord so that we can kick it out of the wall if God gets out of hand. But he comes to us as he is, not as we want him to be. He comes to us as a baby in a manger, as a prophet teaching in the temple, as king on a cross, as a priest offering the final sacrifice for sin and as bread and wine through which he strengthens our faith and empowers us to cling to him regardless

of our fear. We are filled with the Radiant Son and it is out of our control.

But his radiance burns bright and hot. Sometimes we wonder if our poor humble flesh can hold this power and glory as our flesh burns white hot and sin is melted away from us. As the Radiant Son within us heats up, we begin to change. We wonder what will happen as the power is unleashed within us and we realize that we are out of control and cannot predict the outcome. Then we look down and we see the shackles of sin with which Satan bound us melting away and we are freed.

Of course we are. Satan could not hold the Son. Neither can he hold the one within whom the Son dwells. The Lord has bared his holy arm and all the earth has seen the salvation of our God. Your best present is given today. Your death sentence is paid by another. Now you are free from sin, free from bondage, free from the tyranny of evil. Never believe Satan's lie that you are not. Never live your life in fear as though you are unsure of your eternal election. Merry Christmas! The Son has set you free and you are free indeed. Amen.