

Sunday's Sermon

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

250 Fox Hill Road ■ Hampton, Virginia 23669

January 5, 2025

The Reverend David E. Fox

Second Sunday of Christmas (Year C)

John 1:1-18

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Jack Sheldon, was a voice that many of you in the 70s, 80s, and early 90s grew up listening to, though you may not yet realize it. He sang the song *I'm Just a Bill*, from School House Rock. School House Rock was full of songs like *I'm Just a Bill* that taught us various things. *I'm Just a Bill* taught many of us that before a law can become a law it is a bill and remains a bill until it is approved on Capitol Hill. Many songs are designed to help us learn fundamentals and to remember. For instance:

(Sing) ABCs to "P"

Teaches us about letters and their placements. I bet many of you will sing, in your head, the alphabet song to know what comes after "K" or what comes before "U."

(Sing) 5 Little Turkeys

"Five little turkeys standing in a row. (Hold up 5 fingers)

First little turkey said, I don't want to grow. (Hold up 1 finger)

Second little turkey said, Why do you say that? (Hold up 2 fingers)

Third little turkey said, I want to get fat. (Hold up 3 fingers)

This song teaches children to count to five and helps them with the words 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th.

(Sing) Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (Stop before "eyes, and ears")

What a fun song this was, and in our singing and in our action, we quickly learned our parts of the body.

These songs all have one thing in common...they teach us something. Songs are revealing.

Songs continue to reveal things to us as we get past pre-school. Sometimes we like a song just because it has a good beat – for instance that's why I love Paul Simon's *You Can Call Me Al*. It's great for just bobbing your head; and you can't help but smile at its nonsense lyrics. But the songs that truly reside deep within us are those that reveal to us some sort of truth. Sometimes that truth is about ourselves; or the truth about where we live, hence why so many folks in rural areas find solace in country music songs. A song that resonates within me, not of the country genre, is *Lean On Me* (Sing). This song I fell in love with while at a Teens Encounter Christ weekend. What this song revealed was that my new brothers and sisters in Christ were there and would be there to share my burdens when I needed them the most. Every time I hear that song, I am transcended back almost twenty years to Camp Loy White, filled with teenagers, family, and friends. There's no doubt that you, too, have songs that will do that for you. Songs teach us and reveal truths to us.

Let's move into talking about our Gospel reading, shall we? In the opening of John's Gospel, we have what is known as the prologue of the Gospel. And you've heard me say before that any time you are reading John, you are constantly drawn back into the first chapter of John and the last chapter of John.

This chapter is John's version of the Christmas story. Odd – I know, but there is more to Christmas than the pageantry of angels, shepherds, a baby, and animals rolling around in the straw. Here we are on the twelfth day of Christmas, and the Second Sunday of Christmas, hearing the Christmas story without 7lb. 6oz little baby Jesus. Stoffregen says, "Christmas does mean a baby in a manger, but in the face of that infant, there is the outpouring of God's love for all humanity." What is so powerful about this Christmas story is that it reveals some fundamental truths – like a song would. In fact, if you did not know, the opening of John's Gospel is said to be a hymn of the early church. It has a musical approach and is something that would have resonated inside every one of John's listeners as they sang this song over and over, as they learned the fundamentals of Christ and as it continued to reveal truths to them.

I'm quite certain that the music of the song was very basic. In my mind's eye, I think of Worf the Klingon from Star Trek the Next Generation and Star Trek Deep Space Nine, singing his songs of his home world. Very basic in style, but were meaningful to him because of what they revealed about history.

As the early Christians sang these opening lines they knew that Jesus was the *Logos* or the Word – honestly it is much deeper than that as my copy of Theological Dictionary of the New Testament goes for 11 pages about the meaning of *Logos*, and there are other dictionaries said to go for more than 60 pages on the one word – essentially the meaning is that Jesus is revealing God to the universe in which God created. The early church learned through these words that Jesus and God were inseparable. That Jesus was before time began with God, revealing that there has never been a point in history that the second person of the Trinity did not live.

This hymn revealed to the early church that Christ created all things into being. This is a powerful truth in that it meant that he created the Red Sea, that Israel would walk through; he created the whale in which Jonah would inhabit for three days; he created the water in which he asked the woman at the well to give him to quench his thirst from his parched throat created by the desert heat that mid-day; he created the tree in which Zacchaeus would climb up in; Jesus created the ingredients for the fine oil that would be poured all over his feet and then washed with the hair of the very woman who extravagantly poured it on his feet; He created the trees that were used to build his cross, where he would die for the sake of the world; and the hillside that would house his body for the three days that he was dead. Oh, what powerful truths this song is revealing to God's people.

This song reveals that the world is indeed a dark place. It is filled with hardships and calamities; with wars and death; with grief and sorrow. But no matter how bad things get, the darkness in our lives will never overcome the Light that is Jesus the Christ that lives within us. That's a part of the song that we need to sing over and over. "... 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." "...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."

I don't know how they sang this song, but I do believe that we have been taught a song that helps us with that part we need to hear over and over throughout our lives. It is a song that reveals a great truth about Jesus, who is our light. Can anyone think of what that song might be?

Ah, yes, *This Little Light of Mine*. On this Christmas, may we be reminded of all the many truths that John 1 reveals to us through song – and may we never forget that Christ has been around since before time began, that the Son, the second person of the Trinity, created all of the universe with the other two persons of our Triune God, and that Jesus is our Light.

(Sing) This Little Light of Mine.