

“This Little Light of Mine” ~ April 3, 2011
I Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5: 8-14; John 9:1-5; Psalm 23

Most of us know the little, somewhat repetitive children’s song “This Little Light of Mine, I’m gonna let it shine, this little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine, this little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.” The third verse sings: “Jesus gave it to me, I’m gonna let it shine, Jesus gave it to me, I’m gonna let it shine, Jesus gave it to me, I’m gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”

God pointed to David through Samuel as the next king of Israel. In David God saw the bright light of hope and promise shining through. David had his ups and downs but he is still remembered as one of the best kings Israel ever had.

Light is an important symbol in our faith. During our worship service one of our children, or adults, brings in the light which represents Jesus, the light of the world, lights the candles on the communion table and, in effect, leaves Jesus with us during our service. At the end of worship, the light is carried out before us into the world and we follow behind. This should remind us, every week, that we are to bear the light of the “good news” of our faith out into the world.

At our Christmas Eve service we all share the light from the Christ Candle and we dedicate ourselves to being beacons of light in our world of darkness and despair.

It has been said that “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.” That’s true. When we find ourselves enduring long dark nights of the soul, we might light a candle or two and discover the serenity the light piercing the darkness may bring. That light reminds us that the sun will come up tomorrow and that we have another day to make things new again and to set things right. Dwelling in the darkness should never be the lot of a Christian.

Jesus told his early followers that as long as he was in the world he was “the light of the world.” In this morning’s reading from Ephesians, Paul reminds those early followers of the importance of continuing to bear the light Jesus had handed off to them. Paul tells them the fruit of the light is all that is good and pure and true. Of course, it is, because the light has been shed on all of humanity by the presence of Jesus. To share that light we need to remember what it was he taught us of love and caring and respect for others. We need to recall what he told us of the value of forgiveness and how many times we need to remove others from the hook of our judgment—not just once, but many times. We need to remember the hope he brought to human hearts—a hope that was not extinguished by his death but that was enhanced. The light has come into the world and the darkness will never overcome it for those who believe.

Some might try to extinguish it through their unfortunate words, actions and deeds. They might try to plant seeds of hatred and distrust, but, if we continue to do good, as we move through life in our little corners of the world, we light a path for those who look up to us and who follow us. Those sparks we shoot out are powerful and they will overcome the darkness. Not one of us is alone in this life, we have one another.

We need to remember that we choose to view the world in the way in which we view it. We can decide to look around with suspicion and fear and determine to keep others at arm’s length or we can become more open to those around us and move forward together. Those of us, who have lived a bit, know there will be pitfalls in our lives. But, we also know that we cannot allow

them to get us down for more than a short while. We cannot take the bright light that is within each of us and decide to put it under a bushel basket and hide it from the world. It is interesting to note that when we choose to remain in the darkness, we attract others who like to dwell there, also. If we choose to let the light of love shine through us, we find that we attract others who have the strength and courage to do the same.

As we continue to move through Lent toward the dawning light of Easter we need to remember to keep our little lights shining brightly for others to see.

-- *Amen*