

"THE BRIGHT NEW FINDING!" – FEBRUARY 7, 2021
THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
ISAIAH 40:21-31; 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-23; MARK 1:29-39
Promises for your pocket or purse - Take notes and carry them with you.

Have you ever been in the dark? You looked and could not find the light switch? It was not where you thought it was? You think, who moved it? Have you ever been alone in the dark? You thought someone was with you? Maybe you thought you could make it through the dark on your own, then you realized you were lost, in despair? How did it feel when you found the light or turned it on, or when you saw you were not alone after all? Our lives are not different from the first disciples. Today we hear again of illness and despair. We hear about searching. We hear, too, about Jesus' faithfulness to his calling - "for that is what I came to do." Jesus came so we would not be alone, to be The Bright New Light in our darkness, so our search for hope, grace and light would be over!

Count the letter "I," upper and lower case, in the following sentence:

Why am I forever searching for The One who is for all eternity faithfully searching for me, finding me first, saving me first, in The Bright New Light?

(There are 14 "i"s in the question above, 5 in line 1, 9 in line 2 - the reason for the simple exercise, is that often, when we go searching, we miss what is right in front of us! May we forever see The Christ, The Spirit, right in front of us!)

1. Do you ever find yourself reaching for some light? Are you afraid of the dark? Isaiah 40:21; Mark 1:35 'In the morning, while still dark...'
 - A. Our world at times is very dark. It is sad, unknown, heavy, hard to understand, unjust, unfair.
 - B. We feel left in the dark as we face questions, doubts. We worry: 'How good do I have to be?' 'Why do we love Jesus, and still make mistakes?' 'Will we get to see God when we die?' Even though we see, we hear, we are still unsure.
 - C. We go searching and hunting for the light of Christ. Mark 1:35-37
 - i. We can feel like he has deserted us.
 - ii. We need his light to heal us and to fix us.
 - iii. We look for The Bright New Light to save us from the dark, the demons, evil, and all that persists around us.

iv. "... those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings, as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31
Hope is right in front of us, in The One who finds us!

2. To be in the dark and searching is bad enough. To be in the dark, and to feel all alone is even worse. 1 Corinthians 9:19,23; Mark 1:31,33-34,38-39
 - A. Have you ever been alone in the dark? So alone, and so dark, you are not sure which direction you are going?
 - B. As bad as the dark can feel, it always feels better to have someone else with us. We are not the only ones in the dark.
 - C. God gives us each other, to search with, to serve, to share the story, and to follow with, side by side.
 - D. For the sake of the gospel, we may need to go into the dark, to tell those in the dark, to serve those in the dark, to invite, stand firm, uphold justice, as we find Who is always right in front of us!

3. When we are in the dark, no matter how alone we feel, we can trust The Bright New Light we reach for and search for will shine on us.
 - A. Trust God has already given us all the light we need to fill every corner of our life. Mark 1:30-31 - Jesus came to Simon's mother-in-law in her time of need. Our Lord comes to us, too!
 - B. Whatever need you have, look for Jesus to fill it. Whatever you are desperate for, trust the Lord will satisfy it.
 - C. Isaiah 40:25 - Nothing on earth can compare to God and his light. Nothing is equal to God and God's light.
 - D. Mark 1:35 - In the morning, while it was still dark - Jesus prayed. In the morning, while it was still dark - Jesus rose again, Easter morning, for you and for the world. Jesus is The Bright New Light, our hope, our strength. In Christ, celebrate and hold fast: The search for The Bright New Light is over!