



Thy Strong Word

Saturday, 11/9 at 4:00 | Sunday, 11/10 at 9:00

Bethlehem's 115th Anniversary (Observed) – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: This coming Wednesday, *November 13*, will mark the 115th anniversary of Bethlehem's *first Divine Service* in her *first building*, which was located on the northeast corner of State Road and Pleasant Valley Road.

Buildings are important, *especially as the colder weather has arrived*; however, let's always keep things in the proper perspective: The Father, His Word, His Son, and the Spirit – *all of which are eternal*, are FAR MORE IMPORTANT than buildings – *all of which are temporal*.

Since God's Holy Word has been and remains VERY IMPORANT for us here at Bethlehem, *we focus today on the popular hymn: **Thy Strong Word!*** It was written by Martin H. Franzmann (1907-1976) in 1961, *when he was a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*. As we go through each stanza, *notice how the ♦stanza topic, ♦Bible passage, and ♦words fit together*.

1. **God's Work of Creation:** A pertinent passage: ^{NAS} **Genesis 1:1-3** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light."

- a. **Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; At Thy speaking it was done.** // When only God existed, the Father worked through the Son to create *time, heavens, earth, and light!*
 - b. **For created light we thank Thee, While Thine ordered seasons run. Alleluia, alleluia!** // Let us thank God for the blessing of daylight, *and let us be confident that He will continue it day-by-day until Jesus returns!*
 - c. **Praise to Thee who light dost send! Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!** // Those words are the refrain in stanzas 1-4. *Let us praise our Father in heaven!*
2. **Peoples' Fall into Sin:** A pertinent passage: ^{ESV} **Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6** "...the LORD God commanded the man, saying, '...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' ... when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."
- a. **Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness, Dark as night and deep as death,** // The fall into sin brought a 180 degree shift from *light to darkness AND life to death!*
 - b. **Broke the light of Thy salvation, Breathed Thine own life-breathing breath. Alleluia, alleluia!** // Since all people were dead in their sins, the very Son of God ♣put on flesh, ♣breathed our air, ♣walked in our shoes, ♣lived without sin, ♣received our punishment, and ♣won our salvation!
3. **God Saving Work through His Word:** A pertinent passage: ^{ESV} **1 Peter 1:23** "...you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God..."
- a. **Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous; Bright with Thine own holiness,** // As God worked through His

powerful Word to create all things, so God worked through that same Word to make us *right in His sight through Jesus!*

- b. **Glorious now, we press toward glory, And our lives our hopes confess. Alleluia, alleluia!** // In this life God SEES us as holy, *but in the life to come we will be ACTUALLY holy*. Now, as we await our transfer to paradise, *may our lives declare our assurance of the blessings yet to come!*

4. **Jesus' Winning through His Dying:** A pertinent passage:
^{ESV} **John 19:30** "When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished,' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

- a. **From the cross Thy wisdom shining, Breaketh forth in conqu'ring might;** // Normally death means defeat, but, *for Jesus*, His suffering was His conquering, while His death was His victory over sin, death, and the devil!
- b. **From the cross forever beameth, All Thy bright redeeming light. Alleluia, alleluia!** // Before Jesus died on a cross, it was a symbol of excruciating pain and death, *but NOW it shines forth God's saving love!*

5. **Believers Praying for Help to Proclaim:** A pertinent passage:
^{NAS} **1 Peter 2:9** "...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..."

- a. **Give us lips to sing Thy glory, Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,** // Even though we all deserved eternal punishment, God, in His mercy, *punished Jesus in our place!*
- b. **Throats that shout the hope that fills us, Mouths to speak Thy holy name. Alleluia, alleluia!** // Hope – *as used in the Bible* – is being certain of God's yet-to-be-

fulfilled promises. Since God is holy, *He will certainly do what He said!*

- c. **May the light which Thou dost send, Fill our songs with alleluias, Alleluias without end!** // Since, by God's grace, we are now heaven-bound, let us ♣praise the LORD and ♣tell others about the excellent things He has done!
6. **Believers Praising the Holy Trinity:** A pertinent passage:
^{ESV} **Revelation 7:9-10** "...a great multitude that no one could number... standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes... and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"
- a. **God the Father, light-creator, To Thee laud and honor be.** // Since God the Father worked through the Son to create a perfect, sinless world, *let us praise Him!*
- b. **To Thee, Light of Light begotten, Praise be sung eternally.** // Since God the Son is the True Light, begotten of the Father from eternity, *let us praise Him!*
- c. **Holy Spirit, light-revealer, Glory, glory be to Thee.** // Since the H.S. works through the Bible to show us ♣who Jesus is and ♣what Jesus has done, *let us praise Him!*
- d. **Mortals, angels, now and ever, Praise the holy Trinity!** // For all who *know God*, they are blessed now and forever, *so let them praise the F, the S, and the H.S.!!!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, Your Word is so strong to create and save; *for the countless blessings You have showered upon people in connection with Bethlehem, we give you thanks!* Now, going forward, *please keep us true to Your Strong Word!!*

This Week's Challenge: Knowing more about the awesome power of God's Word, *read it, think about it, apply it, and share it every day!*

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