

**DARKNESS TO LIGHT**  
*“Magnitude of Darkness” John 1*  
December 3, 2023

**INTRO.:** Welcome to the beginning of our Advent series, **DARKNESS TO LIGHT**. This morning we will examine the **MAGNITUDE OF DARKNESS**, next Sunday Pastor Paul will look at the theme, **DAWN APPEARS**, then Pastor John on the third Sunday, **FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT**, and the two themes for Christmas Eve morning and Christmas Eve evening will be **HE IS MY LIGHT** and **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**. This series will conclude on December 31<sup>st</sup> with the theme, **HIDE IT UNDER A BUSHEL**. I have been looking forward to this series and ask that you please pray for God to speak through His Word to each one of us.

How do we describe the magnitude of darkness? What do you think of when you hear the word, *darkness*? When I think of darkness, one of the things I think of is being in a cave. While serving as youth pastor in upstate New York, a fellow pastor invited us up to his church in the Adirondak Mountains to go spelunking (fancy word for exploring caves). He was a registered guide for these particular caves, and he took us through some awesome caves located on the top of a mountain. One cave we entered in one place and came out somewhere else on the mountain. Some caves you could stand up in and others you crawled through portions of the cave. We were lowered by a rope through a small opening in another cave. Without light these caves were very dark. But this was nothing like what 33 Chilean miners experienced when they were trapped 2,000 feet below the surface for 69 days when the copper and gold mine, they were working in collapsed on August 5, 2010. They didn't know if they would ever see daylight again. Many, facing the possibility of imminent death, began to take stock of their lives and asked a fellow miner, who was a Christian, to pray for them. Very few people have ever faced total darkness. Even when it is nighttime, rarely, if ever, is it totally dark. You may have stars, the moon, streetlights, and other sources of light.

In the Bible, darkness represents sin and evil. It also is described as part of the judgment of God on those who fail to come to Him for forgiveness of their sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This morning we will look at how:

**DARKNESS IS PERVASIVE**

**DARKNESS IS PREFERRED**

**DARKNESS IS PERPETUATED**

The last thing we will look at is how:

**LIGHT IS MIRACULOUS** since without that **DARKNESS IS PERMANENT**.

**DARKNESS IS PERVASIVE**

What do I mean by this? Darkness in the Bible has reference to sin and judgment. What do we know about sin?

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Psalm 53:2–3** God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. **3** Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

This doesn't mean that people can't do good things but that we're all sinners by nature and by action. You can see this immediately be a problem after the sin of Adam and Eve. Things began to go downhill in a hurry. Just look at what is recorded in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 4:8-9 is the account of the first murder: Cain killing his brother Abel and lying to God about where Cain was

Genesis 6:5-8 we have the prediction of the world-wide flood.

**Genesis 6:5–8** The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. **6** The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. **7** So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." **8** But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

**Genesis 11** is the account of the Tower of Babel where mankind decided to build a tower to the heavens to make a name for themselves, bypassing God in the process. So, God confused their languages.

**Genesis 11:8–9** So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. **9** That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

**Genesis 18-19:** Sodom & Gomorrah, a place of rampant sexual immorality. God says that He will destroy the place but Abraham pleads with God to spare it if 10 righteous people are in the city. There weren't even 10.

You see men taking multiple wives and all the problems that come from that. Further on in the Old Testament, in Exodus 32, while Moses is getting the ten commandments from God, the people below the mountain, led by Aaron, make a golden calf to worship.

**Exodus 32:9–10** “I have seen these people,” the LORD said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. **10** Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

In the book of Judges, Israel went through periods of disobedience, judgment from God, repentance on their part, followed by rest given by God. They repeated this over and over again.

**Judges 2:11–13** Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. **12** They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger **13** because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

The conclusion: **Judges 21:25 (NASB95)** — In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

We are promised that the darkness of sin will continue:

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

The Bible has this to say about the last days:

**2 Timothy 3:1–5** But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

Darkness is not only pervasive:

### **DARKNESS IS PREFERRED**

Why do people do evil things in the dark? Because they prefer to hide what they're doing. In studying for this message I reread the account of Moses and how God sent the plague of darkness so that Pharaoh would let the Israelites (God's people) go after they had been enslaved.

**Exodus 10:21–23 (NIV84)** — **21** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt—darkness that can be felt.” **22** So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. **23** No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

It was so dark that it could be felt. Yet, Pharaoh does not let the people go. He doesn't repent, and even tells Moses to leave.

**Exodus 10:28–29** Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.” **29** “Just as you say,” Moses replied, “I will never appear before you again.”

The Apostle John, in the gospel he authored provides both a promise and a warning. Almost everyone is familiar with the promise but how many are familiar with the warning?

**John 3:16–17 (NKJV)** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

That is a tremendous promise but here is the warning:

**John 3:18 (NKJV)** “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Why would anyone not heed the warning and cling to the promise? John even answers that question.

**John 3:19–20 (NKJV)** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

When a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, not only are they seeking forgiveness of their sins but are giving leadership/ownership of their lives over to God. You and I are no longer the boss and we now have a guide book. Most people are not headed in that direction.

**Matthew 7:13–14** “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Darkness is pervasive (since the first sin in the garden of Eden), darkness is preferred, and:

### **DARKNESS IS PERPETUATED**

Darkness is ongoing because we have an enemy who wants it to continue. Look at what the Apostle Paul has to say about this truth.

**2 Corinthians 4:3–4** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Do you believe there is an enemy of the gospel? There is a spiritual battle going on and Satan isn't backing off. God is far greater, and we need to continue to pray for those we know who have not come to faith in Christ. **DON'T GIVE UP!!!**

The Apostle Paul, after speaking of the spiritual war that we are in says this:

**Ephesians 6:18–20** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. **19** Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Am I sharing with other believers the names of people I am sharing the gospel with that they can be praying for me and them? Pray that the gospel would be communicated clearly and effectively. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work. Pray for conviction of sin and a realization of the need of the Savior. Keep on keeping on! God is FAR GREATER than Satan and his demons.

By now you may be sitting here wondering why you came to this service or tuned in on the radio or online. This pastor seems so negative and all this stuff about darkness is depressing. Let me tell you the best is coming. Yes darkness is pervasive, darkness is preferred, and darkness is perpetuated but know this:

### **LIGHT IS MIRACULOUS**

I go back to the creation story in Genesis 1 where we see the earth created.

**Genesis 1:1–2** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

What had to happen for light to appear?

**Genesis 1:3–5** And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

God spoke and it happened! We see this idea of light and darkness throughout Scripture. In Exodus 10 when Egypt was under complete darkness, a darkness so intense that it could be felt:

**Exodus 10:23** No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

Wouldn't you call this miraculous?

After leaving Egypt, the Israelites were chased by the Egyptian army. Israel was faced with a dead end, a no win situation, the Red Sea in front of them and the Egyptian army behind them. In the night before the Red Sea was parted we read:

**Exodus 14:19–20** Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, **20** coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

Egypt was once again in darkness while Israel was in the light. Apart from Jesus every one of us is in darkness, separated from God for eternity. Somebody has to pay for our sin!! There are only two choices: either we pay for our sins, being separated from God for eternity in darkness, pain, and agony OR we turn to Jesus Christ, repent of our sin, and accept His payment on the cross for our sins.

### **LIGHT IS MIRACULOUS ; WITHOUT JESUS DARKNESS IS PERMANENT**

There are many popular ideas about hell and judgment today that are not biblical. What does the Bible say?

**Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV)** — **27** And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

When speaking of the judgment the Bible describes it as forever, weeping and gnashing of teeth, agony, lake of fire and total darkness. Hell is not going to be a place where one gets to be with their friends. This will not be a place that anyone will get out of after a certain amount of time. This is why the Apostle Paul says:

**2 Corinthians 6:2** For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

There is another picture of light and darkness in the Bible. We have the scene of the Angel of the Lord appearing along with other heavenly beings.

**Luke 2:8–14** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” **13** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Contrast that with what happens when Jesus dies on the cross, taking the penalty for our sins.

**Matthew 27:45–46** From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Think about what a miracle it is that Jesus, the Light of the world, came to earth as a baby. God, in flesh, leaving glory to live, die and raise again for our sin. In the Old Testament, Moses couldn’t look at God or he would be consumed. This light, Jesus, came to provide abundant life and eternal life. The beginning of the gospel of John declares this truth.

**John 1:1–5 (NKJV)** — **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

The darkness of sin could not overcome the light: Jesus Christ. Praise be to God for the miracle of the Light of the world and the light of the gospel!! Let’s read these last verses together as we begin the celebration of this Advent season.

**Colossians 1:9-14** For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We celebrated the truth of these words in observing communion earlier in this service.

## **SO WHAT???**

I can't imagine what it was like being trapped 2,000 feet below the surface of the earth (almost ½ mile), in darkness, not knowing if I would ever see physical light again. When that was happening many of those trapped were seeking the forgiveness of God. During Advent we're reminded that apart from Jesus we are in darkness, separated from God. Praise God for the arrival of Jesus!

Have I come to know the Light of the world?

What am I going to do to make sure this season is about Jesus first and foremost?

Who am I praying for to come to know the Light of the world?

Who am I asking to pray for this person as well and to pray I would have the boldness and words in sharing the gospel?