



SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 9:2; Genesis 7 & 10; John 11:10

The Bible uses the imagery of Light and Darkness to describe the forces of good and evil in this world. God is describes as pure light...

1 John 1:5

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:
God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

And the enemy is described in terms of darkness...

Ephesians 6:12

¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

God is described as the only source of light in heaven, while hell is described as eternal (outer) darkness. I think more than any other image for eternal punishment, the idea of an eternity separated from God, from goodness, from God's light is what scares me.

And that's what this world was, before Jesus.

Spiritually speaking, before Jesus came into the world this was...

A WORLD WITHOUT LIGHT

The prophet Isaiah describes the world before Christ...

Isaiah 9:2

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

DARKNESS HIDES THE DANGER AHEAD

The world before Jesus was full of darkness. Isaiah says there was a "deep darkness."

The phrase from the Hebrew means, "shade of death," or "shadow of death."

In other words, the world was a spiritually dangerous place. People were living in deep darkness... in the shade of death.

Proverbs 4:18-19

¹⁸The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. ¹⁹But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

We understand that darkness hides the danger ahead. Proverbs says that in the deep darkness you do not know what makes you stumble. Like walking toward a culvert in the dark.

Jesus said it this way...

John 11:10

¹⁰It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.

Without light there is danger.

GOD WORKS THROUGH DARKNESS

There are times when God has used the darkness to move us toward his ways. Exodus. Moses goes to the king or Pharaoh of Egypt and by God's direction tells the Pharaoh to let God's people, the Israelites, out of the slavery in which Pharaoh had held them for centuries.

Exodus 7:1-5

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. ²You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. ³But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in Egypt, ⁴he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. ⁵And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it."

And God does send calamity upon the land of Egypt in the form of 10 Plagues.

The plague sent just before the final plague was darkness.

Exodus 10:21-23

²¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be felt." ²²So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. ²³No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

God uses darkness to achieve His intended good.

God worked through darkness during the time of Moses to bring about the good that He wanted.

DARKNESS REVEALS OUR NEED FOR LIGHT

John 8:12

¹²When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

How would we know we needed light if it were not for the darkness. God moves us in His direction sometimes through allowing darkness.

Sometimes God allows darkness around us to move us in the right direction. (maybe he should use fireballs... more obvious) What we cannot do is allow the darkness to overtake us.

We must consistently move toward Jesus, the Light of the World. Stay in his glow.

In this world there is darkness. Sometimes God uses that darkness to move us where he wants us. Sometimes we get stuck in the dark.

When I was a kid I was more afraid of the dark than I am now. There's still apprehension, but somehow we all get a little used to the dark. We are more aware of what's there.

And sometimes we get stuck there and begin to like it.

The only way to confront the dark is with the light.

Isaiah 9:2 & 6

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The story of Christmas is the story of LIGHT! Jesus came into this dark place to be the Light of the World.

It is our job to bring LIGHT into darkness.

Love Unleashed. One of the first things we did was send \$10,000 to Haiti

This is bringing LIGHT to a dark place.

But what about in our everyday lives? How do we help others see and understand the LIGHT?

Several times throughout the Bible, God is described by the simple phrase, "God is...."

God is LOVE

God is HOLY

God is LIGHT

As we take the message of Christmas, the message that Jesus is the Light to those around us we must communicate who God is...

Confront hurt with the fact that God is **LOVE**,
confront sin with the fact that God is **HOLY**,
confront darkness with the fact that God is **LIGHT**.

Remember there are people who are still in the dark. Our job is to show others the LIGHT of God.

DARKNESS HIDES DANGER.

SOMETIMES GOD USES DARKNESS.

DARKNESS REVEALS OUR NEED FOR LIGHT.

Wouldn't it be better if we walked with people and shined the light on the path where we should go?

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, Alabama.

Her father, Arthur Keller, was an editor and also had fought in the Confederate Army. Her mother, Kate Keller, stayed home with Helen.

When Helen was 19 months old, she was very sick and developed a severe fever. She survived her illness and her fever which left her deaf and blind. When Helen was seven years old, her parents got a suggestion from Alexander Graham Bell and contacted a school for blind to find a teacher for Helen.

Anne Sullivan was hired to help Helen. Anne helped by teaching Helen letters, how to behave, and how to talk. Anne showed Helen what letters were and what things were. One example, Anne taught Helen the word water by using a water pump. Anne wanted Helen to fill up a pitcher. When Helen felt the water running on her hands Anne taught her the letters W-A-T-E-R.

Anne also taught her how to have good behavior. For example, Helen was eating everyone's food off their plates with her hands. Anne pushed her to sit down and use

her fork. Anne kept Helen's arms to herself. Anne taught Helen how to talk by placing Helen's hands on the lips and throat so Helen could feel the sounds.

Helen's accomplishments were going to college, reading and writing in Braille, and writing her own book. Helen went to Radcliffe College. Radcliffe didn't want her to attend. Helen didn't care about their thoughts so she attended there anyway

She graduated in 1904 and learned five different languages. She was the first deaf-blind person to receive BA degree.

Walking with a friend in the
dark is better than walking
alone in the light.

–Helen Keller

Jesus came to be that friend who would walk with us in the dark. Until we could learn to walk in His light.

Small Group Questions.

1. When the holidays hit, what are some emotions that you experience? Why?
2. Do you find that you are effected emotionally in the winter months?
3. Read Proverbs 4:18-19 and John 11:10 - Discuss and compare these two passages. How is this lived out in our lives today?
4. What are some good things that God has shown you in the darker times?
5. How has God molded you through those times?
6. Could we fully appreciate God's grace without the dark?
7. Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light. –Helen Keller. What are your thoughts about this quote?
8. How can you be the light that illuminates someone else's dark path?
9. Close in prayer for one another about how to be light in their community.