

Light And Darkness

Each day as I read the words of these blessed scriptures, I'm reminded of just how wise our God is. He knows that while our minds can be very intellectually capable of discerning very big and important secular matters, when it comes to discerning matters of the "Spirit", we can fall so very short of real understanding.

But, thanks be to God, through the presence of His Holy Spirit in us, as we read these scriptures, He can help us to know and to understand things that we would not otherwise be able to know, sometimes using descriptive "parables", or perhaps an "allegory", or a "metaphor". And with those examples, His Spirit is able to minister to our spirit, giving us understanding that we would not otherwise have.

And that is so in this passage that we'll study in a few moments. Here, God gives us two common and ordinary words, "light" and "darkness". And He'll use these words to convey some very deep and very Spiritual truths about this world around us and also about this very special "God-Man", the Lord Jesus.

The "darkness" spoken about here is a metaphor describing the sinful conditions that the world, the flesh and the devil imbed themselves within, corrupting the lives and the souls of any and all of the people it touches.

And also, as we'll see in these words, God will use the word "Light" to convey a very special truth to us about how "Light" will overcome that pervasive "darkness". But also, and most importantly, we will see that the "Light" he speaks about is actually Himself, the Lord Jesus.

In the use of this word "Light", God is telling us that "Light" is part of the very essence of the Person of Jesus Christ, that Jesus doesn't just give us light. He is "Light" itself. In John chapter 8 Jesus said,

¹² . . . "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (John 8:12)

While yes, even when God explains these allegories and these metaphors to us, our understanding can still remain difficult and "small". But perhaps as we study these few words in this passage today, we'll move a little bit further in our knowledge and comprehension of this great gift from God of our Lord Jesus, the "True Light of the world".

Listen as I read these words given to us here in Luke chapter 11, beginning in verse 33. Here, in these words, God begins by using this word "light" as a "metaphor, but then moves on forward to give us an understanding about the Lord Jesus. Listen!

³³"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your* eye is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. ³⁶If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the* whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." (Luke 11:33-36)

One of the common graces that God gives to each of us to help us navigate our way through the many opportunities and the obstacles of our daily life is the simple ability to think, to rationalize, to look at a matter, a condition or a person and to make a rational assumption about them. And used rightly, human rationale truly can be a very good thing.

But it must be understood that human rationale is also filled with serious limitations and must not be allowed to be our "final answer" to every question of life.

Unfortunately for those within this great crowd that had gathered to see and to hear Jesus on this day, "human rationale" seem to be the guiding influence and a source of resistance to the truth that Jesus was offering to them.

For the most part, these were very religious people, some of them even knowing in great detail most all of the "jots and tittles" of the law. But as with most knowledge, knowing the words but not engaging oneself in the intimate meaning and intent of those words leaves knowledge hollow and ineffective.

And so it was with most of those people gathered there that day. As they observed and listened to Jesus, the eyes of their souls were darkened by their unbelief and they could not recognize the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior who had come to save them from their sin.

In the darkness of their “human rationale”, they saw only a man, a man with a strong and powerful message, yes, a man who could do miracles like they had never seen before. But still, even with the signs being clearly given to them, the “sign of Jonah” and the sign of the “Queen of the South”, the darkness within their souls was still too great an obstacle to overcome. In Jesus, they saw a man, and only a man.

This explanation that Jesus gives here, about the controlling nature of that “darkness”, and about our “eye” being the entranceway into our soul, is very descriptive and very clear in its meaning. There is a real and present darkness that resides within the depths of every human soul.

That darkness comes, in part, as a natural condition of our birth and no one is able to escape it. But much of it is also added in, even welcomed in later on through our eyes as we venture through the many encounters of daily life.

And again, please do keep in mind that this kind of “darkness” is not just the simple absence of light, no, the darkness that Jesus is speaking about here, actually has all the qualities, the attributes, of a living being, a predatory creature that seeks to take control over our souls and to hold us captive to its desires.

And the only relief, the only resistance that we can have against that darkness is to somehow allow light to enter in, because it is light and light alone that can dispel darkness.

As we look at the people and at the culture that surrounds us each day, we might not be able to see the darkness directly, but we can see and recognize its many patterns and effects. We see how it so obviously influences and controls the ways and behavior patterns of so many people, and especially, and sadly, some of our dearest loved ones. And it breaks our hearts.

But we must also be ever vigilant to remember that that same darkness also lives within each of us. It just cleverly conceals itself within those hidden crevices of our souls, only to rear its ugly head at the most inopportune times.

But again, that is who it is and what it does. Darkness blinds our eyes and confuses our senses.

And Jesus so aptly gives the warning here that this darkness knows no boundaries. Yes, it can blind the eyes of the lowly enslaved drug addict, but it can also just as easily blind the eyes of the most brilliant of our modern intellectuals.

That darkness has blinded the eyes of the most brilliant of astrophysicists and microbiologists into believing that our world is simply the result of some great and accidental explosion that took place somewhere in the cosmos allowing this world and all of its life to create itself through some process of evolution.

And also, on a more personal level, that same darkness blinds so many otherwise good husbands and wives into believing that a more pleasing love can be found in someone besides their spouse.

Again, this darkness that Jesus is speaking about has a life and a purpose all its own. It is all encompassing in its nature and it has at its core, all the many attributes of sin. And the predatory nature that sin has within it does not allow it to sit idle. It must obey its nature and always be pursuing us with the sole purpose to steal, kill and to destroy us. That simply is who evil is and what evil does.

And every weapon is available for its use. And it uses all of them very effectively, pride, arrogance, greed, sex, drugs, alcohol, worry, fear, violence and on and on.

And when we see all these many miseries taking place in ourselves and in our loved ones, too often, instead of reaching for the "Light", in our naïve foolishness, we find ourselves instead reaching deeper into the darkness to find our cure. We reach for medication, or rehab, or therapy, or counseling, or any of the other behavior modification type cures, hoping against hope that something will work.

But it seldom ever really does help. Not really. And again, it is because all of those things, their causes and their cures are all part of the same darkness, keeping us simply going around in a foolish circle.

As I've studied through these scriptures and the other scriptures that speak about this special kind of darkness, God has brought to my mind more and more of the clever ways that satan reaches out of that darkness to draw and to

entice unwitting souls into it. And unfortunately for us, we Christians are his favorite victims.

And again, one of the most common and opportune ways for that special darkness to gain access to our souls is as this scripture passage tells us, through the open avenue of our eyes as we open them to the available media, our television, the internet, even our news programming.

We are told in these scriptures that in the “last days” many will call evil “good” and good “evil”. And that very thing is taking place all around us each day. All throughout our media, we are being told over and over again that perverse behaviors, even involving our children should not only be accepted, but should also be embraced and encouraged.

So many of the behaviors of the “days of Noah” and the “days of Sodom and Gomorrah are taking place all around us each day. And we are not only being told to accept it, laws are being passed to require us to embrace it all.

And many of those men and women in political leadership that we have elected to represent us seem to be giving in to most every whim and desire presented to them from out of those evil realms of “darkness”.

But for us who have Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we must not join with those who are being led astray. Jesus is calling out to us from these scriptures, saying to anyone who has ears to hear, “I am the light of the world. I have come to dispel, to drive out all of that darkness that is around you and within you . . . if you will only allow me to do it.

As we read these words of our passage, we don't know all of the attributes of the darkness that prevailed within the minds of those men gathered there with Jesus on that day. While they might not have had the same kinds of influences that we have today, without doubt, their darkness then was as dark and as evil as our darkness is today.

We know that to be true because those people had the very “light of the world”, the person of Jesus Christ Himself standing right in front of them, but yet they were still filled with darkness.

They had watched Him do miracles and they had heard Him speak words and give “signs” that should have made sense to them. But their darkness was so dark that no amount of light could work its way down into their souls.

Why? Why would it be that way with them? It was because the “evil within the darkness” used the weapon of their “rationale” to make them blind to the truth that stood before them.

Their rationale would not allow them to see that Jesus was the true light that had come into the world to drive out the darkness within them.

Listen with me for a moment to some words from John chapter 3 concerning Jesus, who He is, and what He came to do. This portion begins with the familiar words of John 3:16, but listen also to the words that follow along after John 3:16.

16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (And listen carefully to these next words) 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (John 3:16-20)

Here, Jesus was saying to them that the “darkness” was all around them and within them. And He was saying to them that He was the “Light” that had been sent to dispel, to drive out that darkness within their souls and ours. And that He was there before them that day because,

³³“No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. (Luke 11:33)

Jesus was saying to them then, and to you and me now, “I am that light of the world, look unto me and all of the darkness that lives within you will be made light. Look unto me, and all of those ways of darkness that you have been so accustomed to accepting will be revealed for what they really are, sinful and

destructive. Look unto me and be changed". And look unto me as you hold out that lamp for others also to see.

But folks, listen! The simple truth is, it is only if and to the extent that each of us, those people then and you and I now, allow the light that Jesus offers to come into our souls to do its work, that anything of value can really begin to take place.

We cannot, we must not do as so many were doing in that crowd that day, simply following along as an observer. How many are doing that very same thing today, sitting in the church pews across our world, listening and observing, but nothing more.

We must step on further and allow the light of Christ to reach down deeply into our souls and to drive out the darkness that lives there.

It is then and only then that we can begin to really fulfill the purpose that God is calling us to be about, and that is for ourselves to be a light to the world. Listen to these words given to us in Matthew chapter 5.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.(Matthew 5:14-16)

When and as you and I begin to allow His light to radiate into our souls, it is then and only then that His same light will begin to shine on further out to others. And that is our calling, to "Go ye into all the world" and shine the light of the gospel so that others might see and themselves come to His Light!

I'll close with these words from 1 John 1,

⁵This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. (John 1:5-7)

Let's Pray.

