

The Powerful Darkness Luke 22:47-53

In the Book of Ephesians, our Lord speaks about a special kind of “darkness”, a “darkness” that is like no other. Similar yes to the ordinary darkness that we experience, but still altogether different. A kind of “darkness” that is strangely powerful, with a sinister ability to veil the eyes of the hearts and the minds of anyone within it, preventing them from seeing and perceiving many of the sin-filled activities and behaviors that are taking place there.

It's a “darkness” that many, many people live within sometimes their entire lifetime, without ever knowing that it's taking place.

It is a kind of “darkness” that veils our inner senses, preventing us from seeing and from sensing those things that are beyond our common eyesight, things like attitudes and behaviors both within ourselves and within other people, attitudes and behaviors that are not “right” and not “good”, a darkness that has a mysterious power that can draw us into its own perspectives regarding those things that are taking place.

And unfortunately, without the presence of the Holy Spirit within us to warn us away from that “darkness”, we will find ourselves joining in with it in its ways and behaviors. That “darkness” is that sinful condition that our Lord warns us away from in His words given in 1 John 2 where He says to us,

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

And this special kind of “darkness” is the “darkness” that Jesus spoke to His disciples about there in those last few minutes there in the Garden of Gethsemane as the soldiers came to take Him away to be crucified. A special kind of “darkness” that we, you and I, must be ever so careful to not be captivated by.

Listen to the words of the passage we'll study today. Here beginning in verse 47 of Luke chapter 22,

⁴⁷ While he (the Lord Jesus) was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew

near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" ⁴⁹ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke 22:47-53)

May we begin our study today by saying to us again that, yes, this "darkness" that Jesus spoke about here in these words is ever-present and it is all around each of us. And it is "powerful", deceptively powerful. Well-hidden within the confines of this sinful world and within the personalities and plans of those who control it, "dark hours" and "dark purposes" both within the visible and the invisible realms of it.

And may I also remind us that these scriptures warn us that within that invisible realm of darkness resides a "prince", an evil and very powerful "prince" who commands a force whose only intent it is to "kill, to steal and to destroy". And he is ever in pursuit of his wicked wiles and schemes.

Here, as Jesus observed Judas and the temple guards coming into the Garden of Gethsemane, He knew that His "dark hour" of suffering had finally come. He had spoken about this hour to His disciples on many occasions, but none of them had understood His meaning.

And during those times of warning, Jesus had deliberately left further explanation unsaid because He knew that the disciples were not yet prepared to hear and to comprehend the meaning of the dilemma that the "cross" would bring to them.

And there in the garden, as the hour, and the dilemma were upon them, they were still not ready. But Jesus was! He was fully prepared for all that He would need to endure.

You will recall that only a few moments earlier, He had been deep in prayer with God the Father, struggling with the soon-coming suffering of it all, especially the weight and the power of the sin that He would take upon Himself.

And remember also how His suffering had been so powerful that His human body was unable to contain the misery of it all, causing Him to sweat great drops of blood. And that how, as He suffered, He had been ministered to by an angel from heaven. Those words in verse 43,

⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. (Luke 22:43)

Oh dear Christian, we need always to be reminded that God does this very same thing for you and for me far more often than we might realize. We're told in the Book of Hebrews that He sends His angels to minister to those of us who have His salvation. And especially in our own dark hours of suffering!

Accounts of those times and circumstances when angels ministered to men, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, and on and on, are recorded all throughout the words of these scriptures. And God gave us those accounts so that we might know with a certainty that He is always fully aware of the needs of His beloved children. And that, as Jesus tells us here in these words, Legions of angels are always at His beckon call to give His children aid, comfort, guidance and protection.

Here, the angels ministered to Jesus in His dark and difficult hours, and I am confident that angels are all around each of us all of the time ministering to us. We are simply "unaware" of their presence.

Returning to the focus of our scriptures today . . . may I say again that, yes, dark and difficult hours will surely come to each of us out of this same "darkness" that Jesus spoke about here in our scripture text. The old prophet Job, put it simply by saying that "life is but a few days and full of troubles".

The days on this earth were indeed few for the Lord Jesus, and they were "filled with troubles". Isaiah said of the Lord Jesus that, "He was a man of sorrows and full of grief".

But again, Jesus was not caught unawares by the onslaught of his sufferings. He knew exactly from "whence such things come". They come out of what He

calls here, the “darkness”, that place where the “prince of darkness” and the “sons of disobedience” reside and flourish.

Here in these words, Jesus gives us a quick and simple confirmation. Listen to His words as His tormentors approached Him there in the Garden. Verse 52,

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.” (Luke 22:52-53)

And note again those last words, “But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

In John 3:19-20 Jesus said

¹⁹ “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

And we are told in these scriptures that the enemies of our soul are a combined effort of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Here, in these words, we see two of those enemies beginning their attack upon Jesus. He said . . . this is your hour (the chief priest and elders and officers of the temple), and the power of darkness (satan and his demons).”

May I say again that the “darkness” that Jesus spoke about here is that special place in the invisible realms of existence where evil is able to freely roam about and to flourish.

It is described as darkness for many reasons, but especially so that you and I might understand that we will most often not be able to see into it and to recognize the evil that resides there.

And the “power” that Jesus speaks about residing within that “darkness” has been given its own special influence and dominance, and will surely join with all who are willing to carry out misery, pain and suffering upon others who resist it.

And that is what we find taking place here, men joining with the powers of darkness, coming into the garden to arrest the Lord Jesus and to take Him away to be crucified.

Again those words . . . this is your hour (the chief priest and elders and officers of the temple), and the power of darkness (satan and his demons)."

I must tell you that I can fully imagine those men walking into the garden, with invisible hordes of demons swirling all about them, the demons fuming and snarling and provoking the chief priests on to "hatred and evil works".

Would the chief priests have realized that the demons were swirling all about them and urging them on? Probably not at all! Just as we don't recognize them as they swirl all about us each day, urging us on to do the sinful things that we do.

But nonetheless, that is what the power of darkness does and that was what the power of darkness was doing that day. Jesus plainly told us so!

And He gave us these words so that when evil comes to you and to me, cloaked within its darkness, that we will not be caught unaware and it slip up on us and capture our hearts before we are able to mount proper defenses.

Knowing then that those dark days will surely come to us, what are the proper defenses that you and I need to have in place?

What are the defenses that will protect us and keep us from falling victim to the evil schemes within that darkness?

Our answer is to first look at the Lord Jesus and at His response. Jesus was never taken in or fooled by the darkness! He was always able to see into that darkness and be fully aware of everything within it.

You will recall that He was able to look into the face of Peter and see also the face of satan. And He could see the demons within the demoniac in the tombs, and also within the little boy that He healed. Darkness was never darkness to Jesus.

Why? And how could that be so? It is because Jesus Himself is light. He is not just a source of light. Jesus is the light!

In John 8:12, 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)

The answer for you and me is surely within these words. In Christ, you and I will have the "light of life".

You have heard it said often, even by the unbelieving world, that darkness can never overcome light. Darkness is simply an absence of light.

So then, as light begins to enter into a person, or place, or circumstance, that light quickly and easily dispels the darkness.

The answer for you and me, our "help" in our days of darkness begins here, with the Lord Jesus? It is as you and I have His "true light" abiding within us, that the darkness and its powers are quickly dispelled.

Those words of the Lord Jesus again,

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)

And as Jesus comes to live within us, He will not only be a light for us to see into the darkness, He will also enable us to show His light on forward so that others might also see.

In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said,

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor 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. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

This is a perfect picture of "grace". We are never to keep God's provision just for our own use, but rather, we are to "pass it on" to others.

And then next, as Christ comes to live and abide within us, we are to also “put Him on” as a covering, much in the same way that we would put a garment of covering upon us.

That covering is described for us, in detail, as being “the full armor of God.” Listen to these words in Ephesians 6:10-18.

¹⁰ . . . be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

As you and I would seek to prepare ourselves for the onslaught of the powers of darkness that will surely come to us, this is our answer, and really, our only answer.

Because, as these words clearly tell us, that darkness is filled with all sorts of evil and powerful demonic forces, and left to our own devices, we will surely be defeated.

And may I add one other most important element into this equation, and that is “humility”. It will take a great deal of humility and submission on our part if we are to be adequately prepared for the dark hours that will come to us.

We dare not hope in or seek answers from the ideas and concepts of men, not our own or those of other people. Rather, we are to depend entirely upon the power, the strength and the guidance of God alone.

And may I also add that we dare not simply try to ignore the forces within the darkness, as so many, even devoutly believing evangelical Christians, so want to do. Those powers of darkness are relentless and they have only one agenda, and that is to, "join with them, or suffer their wrath."

As believing Christians, you and I are truly without excuse if we allow ourselves to remain unprepared! We have the light of Christ abiding within us. And He will show us truth and will reveal to us the evil that resides within the darkness.

If we will simply "put on the full armor of God", we will have every protection that we could ever need when that darkness begins to swirl its evil ways all about us each day.

So then, dear ones, be prepared for the darkness by putting on the Lord Jesus as a covering armor, and He will protect you from the evil that will surely come.

His words again John 8:12, 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."

And then also given in Ephesians chapter 6,

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Pray with me.

