

The Light Shining in the Darkness



2022 - This print was given to me years ago for my birthday. My husband and our three sons surprised me with this gift after I mentioned one day how much I loved it. The scene itself is beautiful, but I was mainly drawn by the light that shines in the dark through the windows of the church and the surrounding homes, as well as the full moon that reflects off the white snowy road... For all these years, this frame has been hanging on a wall in my office, and I've never grown tired of looking at it. As a matter of fact, a few weeks ago, my eyes lingered on it a little longer than usual, and as I did, it reminded me of a sermon on light and darkness I had heard at church the previous Sunday. The desire then to know more about what the Bible says on this subject prompted me to do a brief search. I was truly amazed to find scripture upon scripture on light and darkness, so I chose only a few here. Nevertheless, I pray that through these scriptures, God will touch our hearts in a very special way.

As we begin in the Old Testament, we read in the first chapter of Genesis about God's creation of the universe. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning - the first day." (vv. 1-5)

A few verses down, it goes on to say, "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' And it was so. God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the fourth day." (vv. 14-19)

What God did at creation was to call into existence what had not existed. That's the undeniable power of God! Moses even declared to the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 10:14, "To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it." Can we fathom this with our human intellect? Surely not! It is only in believing in the existence of God, and in His Word that we can.

Continuing in the Old Testament, we read the extraordinary story of how God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians. As they were walking in the wilderness, Exodus 13:21-22 says, "The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." This is such a great reminder of God's promise to be always with us during our journey on this earth, isn't it?

In the book of Psalms and Proverbs we find many scriptures as well. For example, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Ps. 27:1a) “You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.” (Ps. 18:28) “Your word is a lamp for my feet, and a light on my path.” (Ps. 119:105) “Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.” (Ps. 4:6) “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18) “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.” (Prov. 6:23). These books are wonderful! The Psalms give us such great insight on how to communicate with God through every situation of life, how to interact with Him, and how to worship Him. As for the Proverbs, they teach us that God is the true source of all wisdom, as well as give us directives for living happy, godly lives.

I remember a time when our family was going through very difficult challenges. So much so that oftentimes I would wake up in the middle of the night, unable to go back to sleep because of worry and fear. I would then get out of bed, open my Bible in the book of Psalms and read...read...and read, until I would find peace. I would pour out my heart to God, cry and plead with Him, like the author did. But in the end, I would praise, worship and thank God for His love, compassion and faithfulness, like the author did as well. I would then go back to bed, and sleep like a baby... That’s the power of God’s Word in our lives, isn’t it?

Now, moving on to the New Testament, we read about the most radiant light that has ever shined in this world: Jesus Christ Himself. In 2 Corinthians 4:6 it says, “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.” In John 8:12 we read, “When 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.” 1 John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.”

I think the most inspiring words Jesus Himself said to all believers about light are found in His Sermon on the Mount. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16) Jesus begins by saying, “You are the light of the world.” Wow! Do we fully grasp the meaning of these words? If we do, then we ought to live our lives in such a way that His light shines through us. We’re to be this light to the world around us, which means to our family members and friends; co-workers and neighbors; our brothers and sisters in the faith, and to the people God puts on our path. And when we do, they’ll see it in our words, actions and behavior; in our relationships, and in our love for them. In essence, in all aspects of our lives. And Jesus Himself is calling *all* of His followers to be this light.

The apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:8-10 exhorts us to do the same. He said, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth), and find out what pleases the Lord.” And to be able to do this, we need to come to the source of it all: God, and His Word; under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, in the book of Revelation, we find these beautiful verses in chapter 21 about the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It says, “It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal” (v. 11). And “The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.” (v. 23) Chapter 22 continues... “There will be no more night. They [God’s servants] will not need the light of a

lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.” (v. 5)

The apostle John had been exiled on the Island of Patmos for his testimony of Christ when he received this supernatural revelation. He said, “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you, and with your fellow prophets, and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!” (vv. 8-9) How can we not bow down before such a sovereign, all-powerful, loving God, and worship Him? We are promised, as His servants, to reside with Him in this Holy City. Amazing, isn’t it? So, when the going gets tough here on earth, and our lives are in shambles, we need to remind ourselves that it is temporary. A bright, eternal future lies ahead for us. So, let’s keep the faith, everyone! And what is faith? Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

As I’m writing this letter, I’m reminded of a song little children usually learn in Sunday School: “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine!” Perhaps we were one of those children who sang it at the top of our lungs, even if we were too young to understand what it really meant. Yet, we were so willing to let our little light shine, weren’t we? Now that we’re grown-ups, are we still singing this song in our hearts? Are we shining this light that the Bible talks about? Am I? I realize it might not always be the case in my own life... However, when I earnestly pray each morning for God to guide me, and show me His will for the day, there’s no doubt that His light will shine through me some way or another.

Oh, Heavenly Father, I hope we do realize the importance of being this light in the world as you’re asking us to be. If we’re not, I pray that you put a fervent desire in our hearts to be one. Teach us how to let the light of Jesus shine through us, and give us the boldness to do so. Help us to be a candle whose soft glow will show your infinite love, mercy and grace to the people who don’t know you, and will bring comfort to those in need. And as we shine your light, may your glory be manifested in all. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for answering my prayer for I know this is your will for all believers in your Son, Jesus. Amen.

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