

# Darkness

Darkness reigns this time of year. The sun doesn't get up until about 8:00 AM, dusk sets in just after 4:00 PM, and it is pitch black by 5:30PM. Eight hours of daylight simply is not enough. It is cold and lifeless outside. Our earth yearns for the sun to drive away the darkness so that warmth and life can return and free it from the bondage of winter.

This darkness can influence our daily lives. This time of year many report feeling: irritable; tired; overly sensitive; sleepy; cravings for sweet food; and depression. The world-famous Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minnesota, defines the impact of the lack of light as, "Seasonal Affective Disorder," or "**SAD**." They define SAD as a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons with symptoms starting in the fall and continuing into the winter months, sapping our energy and making us feel moody. Like our earth we yearn for the sun to drive away the darkness so that warmth and life can return and free us from our bondage to winter.

This darkness is reflected in the mood of our times. Whenever I turn on the TV or radio, I am inundated with details of yet another terrorist attack, natural disaster, economic downturn, and/or crime of every description. Many of the political debates that rage around us have turned personal and ugly and have hit historic lows. We yearn for some light to drive away this darkness so that warmth and life can return and free us from the bondage of this winter of our discontent.

It is cold and dark this time of year because our northern hemisphere is tilted away from the sun, the very source of light, heat and life. I believe that our lives seem cold and dark and our world is mired in darkness because we have increasingly tilted away from God, the very source of light, love and life.

God placed our earth in its precise relation to our sun in order to ensure that every year our hemisphere eventually tilts toward the sun, thereby breaking the stranglehold of winter darkness so that new life breaks forth in the spring. The increased sunshine ensures that our collective moods improve. In the same way, God has given us a powerful light that can shine on the darkness of our individual lives and our world, our Lord Jesus Christ, the very source of light, love and life.

The light of Jesus Christ shines, and we are enlightened, every time we encounter God's Word in the Holy Bible. This light shines on the darkness of the world and enlightens us. The Bible's enlightenment does not provide specific answers for all of our questions about world affairs and our personal affairs. The Bible declares that world affairs, our daily lives and many aspects of the life of faith in God, are full of mysteries or secrets which are beyond our capacity to understand. The Bible reveals that our world is embroiled in a struggle between good and evil, and God, who is the source of all good, is in control of this struggle. The Bible declares that each day our world is moving ever closer to a destiny, and to a destination, a never-ending spring and summer for some and a never-ending winter for others.

This movement of time and history is likened to the birth of a child, (Matthew 24:4-8). The ebb and flow of world affairs, the darkness and light experienced in daily life, are likened to the contractions of childbirth. As the birth of the child comes closer, the contractions, the pain and darkness, come closer together and are more intense. Do you feel these contractions? Then, at just the right time, the child is born. Jesus will come again and judge all humanity. Some will live in paradise with Him forever, and others will live in darkness forever.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is brightest and most illuminating light that emanates from the Word of God. The Gospel first reveals our darkness, just how tilted away we are from God, the source of love and life. The Gospel reveals our sins and failures. They are like clouds that keep the light

of Christ from shining on us. The Gospel promises that Jesus' innocent suffering and death, dispel and destroy the clouds of sin that hang over us. God's word promises that Jesus' teachings will cause us to tilt in a new direction, toward the light of Christ. We are promised that our winter of discontent will give way to love, warmth and new life. Jesus' glorious resurrection from the dead opens to all who believe, everlasting life in heaven with God.

Are you in the dark? Do you want to see the light? Do you want a new slant on life? Jesus promises: *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12) *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6) Come and see. His light shines on Sunday mornings at 9:00 and 10:30 (Sunday school at 10:45); with Healing Service on the last Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM.

In Christ

Pastor Ed Skutshek