

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

December 13, 2020

SPEAKER

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SERIES

God With Us

PART

3

TITLE

In The Darkness

SCRIPTURE

John 1:9-14



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On the mountains and in the valleys, in our highs and in our lows, God is with us.

We are so glad that you have joined us, and as each of us are here in a year that at sometimes is very, very dark, all of us being so unique, it's interesting how for each one of us, there is something that's true about all of us, and that is that when it's dark outside, we like to have light. There's something about darkness that's frightening. Shadows and noises seem to be more threatening when it's dark outside. And what's interesting is that we even use the word and borrow the word dark or darkness and we use it in some of the harshest things and life experiences on the earth. When we feel betrayed, we say, "I feel like I was left in the dark." When there's the presence of evil, we say, "I don't know what was happening, but it just felt so dark." When we feel truly in despair, we say, "I feel like I'm in a pit that's dark."

And when we look around the world and we see fallenness and brokenness all around us, it's natural for us to look around and say, "I don't understand, but it just seems like everything is so dark." Why is everything so dark? Well, only the story of the Bible gives an answer to that question. And what's interesting is this amazing story of the Bible, it begins in a setting that's actually dark. It says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." And it says that, "Darkness was over the surface of the deep." And then God looked into this darkness and he spoke and he said, "Let there be light," and suddenly there was light. God began in that moment to create a world, an earth where we could live.

Once he created this earth, he then created us, male and female, in his image with the ability to have a relationship with him, to be able to speak to him and hear from him. He wanted to be with us and he wanted to protect our ability to be with us, and so he gave us instructions with only one restriction, and yet we looked at that one restriction as being too overbearing. And the Bible says that each one of us has sinned against God. It says that we disconnected from him, and just like a Christmas tree that is unplugged, the lights went out and suddenly we began to experience darkness in different areas of our life. In our heart, we felt fear, insecurity, guilt, and shame. In our relationships, we felt the darkness of strife and selfishness. And eventually each one of us, each one of us would be forced to feel the darkness of death.

It's true that this was deeply offensive to God. We should never leave that out of the story, is that God had great pain and he speaks of his pain when we rebel against him. His wrath was ignited and yet his love endured. It's remarkable that in that moment that God chose to do something that is really unimaginable, and that is that he gave us a promise that he would send a savior who would bring light into the world and who would bring us back to be with him. Isaiah chapter nine, this prophet spoke and he said, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." And then he tells us specifically where that light would come from. And he says, "Unto us, a child is born. And to us, a son is given." Every one of us find comfort when we're with a friend, next to a friend, when it's dark outside. And God in his grace, even though he was the one who was offended, he sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to stand near us, to be with us in order to help alleviate the fear of darkness.

And God's word, it's so remarkable. It says that he was given a name and that name was Jesus, which means savior. And the reason we're told in Matthew chapter one is that Jesus Christ would save his people from their sins. And when you look at how he would save his people from their sins, in the Bible, it's truly the most remarkable part of the entire true story. It says that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man, that Jesus came from heaven to the earth. He was born of a woman, and yet he was conceived of the Holy Spirit. That means that he was able to sympathize with God and man, and he was able to mediate between God and man. The Bible says that he reached out and he took our hand and he received our sin. With the other hand, it says that he reached out and he took the father's hand and received the wrath of God that was directed towards us.

Jesus, who lived on this earth without any sin whatsoever, he took our sin and he took the father's wrath. He absorbed it and he took that sin and he died for it on a cross. It says that he was buried in the grave for three days, but on the third day, he rose from the dead. And then he extended to us an invitation that still stands for us today, and that is that if we would simply believe and look to him in faith that we would be saved. He says to us, "Be honest with yourself. You have never in your entire life lived as you ought. You have been weak and unpredicted and selfish and sinful. And so I came to this earth in order to live, how you could have lived and should have lived but haven't." You, see Jesus then says, "But if you would trust in me and the life that I have lived, the sinless life that I have lived. Now, you believe that I rose from the dead."

He says, "I'll take away all of your sin and I'll give you my righteousness as an exchange. And I will be with you not only in this world, but the next." You see, to be with Jesus, to be with him is to be connected to everything that is true about him. And so if you are here today and you are thinking as you're watching and you're thinking, "I desperately need wisdom," well, the Bible says that Jesus Christ is the wonderful counselor. If you're in need of somebody who is strong to help you, the Bible says that Jesus is the mighty God. If you are in need of somebody to give you unconditional love, the Bible says that Jesus is an everlasting father to us. If you're in need of peace, the Bible says he's the Prince of Peace. If you're in need of a protector or a defender, the Bible says that he is the good shepherd of our soul.

If you are in need, if you're in need of a friend, the Bible says that he's a friend of sinners. And if you happen to be in need of a friend who is faithful, faithful to you and true to his word, well, the Bible calls him faithful and true. But there's an oddity to darkness, and that is that we're in the darkness sometimes it obscures our ability to see remarkable, amazing things such as Jesus. You see, when Jesus came to this earth, we're told in John chapter one, it says that, "The light was in the world, and yet the world did not know him and his own people did not receive him." They had an inability, they looked at Jesus and were even waiting for the Christ, and yet they simply could not see the worth and the relevance of Jesus Christ. They couldn't see his supremacy. And the reality is this still happens today. Every time somebody hears the Gospel, as you have just heard, we're told in the Bible that there's really only three responses.

Some people hear this good news and the invitation Jesus gives to us to be forgiven of our sin and the response in their heart is simply apathy. They simply do not think that it matters that Jesus lived. Other people, they hear this message and instead of apathy, they get angry, for they look at Jesus and his exclusive claims that he is the way, the truth, and the life that apart from him there is no way to the father and their heart erupts in anger. But then there are others. There are others who see in Jesus Christ all that they ever need. They see in Jesus Christ a light that pierces through the darkness. They see in Jesus Christ the only way to come to the father, to receive eternal life, to be freed from guilt and shame, from fear and insecurity. And the Bible says the third response is that for those who see him is to believe upon him. It's to worship him.

In fact, John chapter one verse 12 says it this way, "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." You see, we receive him by simply welcoming him and everything that is true about him into our life. Not as a house guest, but as the King of our life. And to believe in him simply means, it simply means that we put our full trust in him, in his claims to be God, and his accomplishment and dying for our sin and rising in victory from the grave. We want to give you the opportunity right now to trust Christ, to receive him, to welcome him, and to believe and put your faith in him. If you are watching and you already know Christ, I want to ask you to bow your head right now where you're at and simply begin praying those who are also watching, who are considering trusting Christ. Pray that God would open their eyes and incline their hearts to lean towards Christ and believe.

But if you are here and you're listening and you've never trusted Christ, but today you believe, you would admit that you're a sinner, that you believe in Christ, and you see that because he rose from the dead that he's the Lord, he's the King, that I want to invite you to trust him now. We do this simply by speaking to him, by praying to him, I invite you to use your own words, but you could bow your head with me now and you could pray a prayer like this. Father in heaven, I believe. I admit to you that I am a sinner, that I have lived in darkness, that I have contributed to the chaos in the world. I admit that I cannot save myself and yet I believe in Jesus. I believe that Jesus is your son. I believe that he came to this earth. I believe he lived the life that I could never live and have not lived. I believe he lived without sin and yet he took my sin.

I believe that he died on a cross. I believe that he was buried in a grave and I believe that he rose from the dead. And because he rose from the dead, I confess him as Lord and King of my life. Would you forgive me of my sin? Would you give me your righteousness? And would you bring me to be with you not only in this world, but the next? We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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