

Text: Isaiah 9:2-4

Theme: Sitting in Darkness/Walking in Light

January 22, 2017

How many of you have ever experienced darkness as in you can't see your hand in front on your face, darkness as in the bottom of Mammoth Cave? We talk and act like we know all about darkness, but until you experience it, you don't know how dark dark really is. In our text, Isaiah speaks of a stark contrast, of people in darkness and people in the light. It's that spiritual contrast which we consider as we focus on our text today.

I. Because of the Light of the World, we are people walking in the light. A. But, at one time, we were sitting in the dark. 1. We were sitting in the dark because we didn't know what we were missing. Suppose you were born in the bottom of a deep cave and spent thirty years without ever leaving that cave. Would you be interested in finding light? Would you ever know or care about light? Would you know what light was if you saw it? Like the people in our text, we were once sitting in the spiritual darkness, putting our hands in front of us and stepping very carefully spiritually speaking because it was dark and we had no concept that life could be any different.

2. We were sitting in the dark because we had no interest in the light. Go back to our cave image. Suppose you saw light, but that's all you saw, just a glimpse of light. Would it motivate you to do anything if you had no idea what would be different if you could stand in the light? Like us, the people in our text, had no interest in the light. They weren't searching for spiritual light nor were they longing for it. It meant nothing because their lives were wrapped up in a life of darkness. Before the Light stepped into our lives, we were those people living in spiritual darkness. We had no interest in the Light even though it could change our lives forever.

3. We were sitting in the dark because it was all we knew. Like spending the first thirty years of life in absolute darkness, darkness would be all we knew on our own. Like those in our text, we'd be walking aimlessly in the dark because we didn't know any better. From a spiritual standpoint, all we knew on our own was darkness. All we knew was what we could see which was nothing! Our Catechism describes us accurately as blind, dead, and enemies of God. Not a wonderful place to be, but before the Light arrived, we were dark, living in the dark, and surrounded by nothing but darkness. Left to ourselves, darkness was the only place we could have spent life.

B. It was into our spiritual darkness that Christ stepped. 1. He stepped in at our Baptism. The event seems so simple when you witness it, doesn't it? A bit of water and few words and there you have it. If we were still people of the darkness, that's all there would be. But as people of the Light, we believe that the Holy Spirit connected the power of the Word, amazing power, power that we can't even begin to grasp to the water and with that connection, we were transformed from darkness into the light. Like stepping out of that cave after thirty years, our lives were dramatically transformed as He worked faith in that spectacular event.

2. He stepped in to empower us through His forgiveness. If you were living in poverty and someone suddenly gave you ten million dollars, how would your life change? With ten million dollars, you'd have the power to step out of poverty, to live

life in a dramatically different way. As we received the gift of faith through the Light of the World, we were empowered to forgive. Is there any greater power available anywhere, any other power that does what the assurance of forgiveness does to our lives? Guilt gone. Reliving our past mistakes - unnecessary. Free to start over again - priceless. A transformation like no other - that's the power we experience through His forgiveness.

3. He stepped in and changed the course of our future. We recognize the words, "Once we were people of darkness, but now we are the people of light." Because of Christ, our past has been rewritten, but even more wonderful, our present and future have been rewritten in a miraculous way. Once we were, but now we are. Once we were dead in sin, but now we are alive in Christ. Once we were wandering in the dark, but now we are walking boldly in the Light. Once our lives had no purpose, no meaning, but now we have a future and life has a plan because God declares, "I know the plans I have for you." It's true because He changed the course of our future.

C. Since Christ has stepped in, how do we walk in the Light? 1. We walk in the light by continually following our Light. Step back into New Testament times. You look up from mending your nets and there you see Jesus. Looking you in the eye, He says, "Come, follow Me." Would you have continued your netting mending or jumped up and followed? Today, Jesus still invites us to follow, to leave the mundane, the insignificant by comparison, and to follow Him by faith, by gathering here where He meets us. Following is being a continual student, a disciple who finds himself or herself covered in the dust from their Master's footsteps.

2. We walk in the Light by utilizing the power of God. It sounds wonderful, even fantastic, doesn't it? Wouldn't it be so awesome if we could tap into the power of God, if we could have even a tiny bit of that power at our fingertips? In this moment, because you are walking in the Light by faith, Jesus says, "As My child, I will utilize My power for your benefit. Even better, I will offer you bits and pieces of My power as you need that power and as you ask in faith fully believing that I have the power to give you that power." Within you by faith is power outside of you. It's waiting for you. He's waiting for you to ask and to believe.

3. We walk in the Light by being people of joy. Joy and rejoicing, that's the theme that follows the darkness to light transformation in our text. Because they are now in the Light, rejoicing is what they do. What would change at your workplace, while standing in line at County Market, while going about your day to day activities if every person chose to rejoice? Maybe we can't create that event, but is there anything stopping us from creating that event within our hearts and allowing it to spill over into our lives? Once we were in the dark; now we are in the light. Joy and rejoicing - they're a perfect fit, a perfect response.

4. We may not have experienced total, can't see your hand in front on your face darkness in the past week, but this we know - Once we were sitting in the dark, but now, thanks to our great God, we are living, we are really living life in the Light. Amen.