

Darkness

by William MacDonald

The sermon explores the theme of darkness in the Bible, highlighting its significance as a symbol of spiritual darkness, sin, and God's judgment, while also emphasizing God's light and presence in our lives.

Duration: 34:22

Scripture: Genesis 1:1

Topics: "Darkness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of darkness and its significance in the Bible. He refers to the creation story in Genesis, where God separates light from darkness and creates day and night. The preacher also mentions a recent event where there was a three-hour blackout, causing people to reflect on the subject of darkness. He then quotes from 2 Corinthians 4:6, which talks about God commanding light to shine out of darkness and giving the knowledge of His glory through Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes with a message of salvation, emphasizing that through faith in Jesus, one can be delivered from darkness and have eternal light.

Transcript

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Genesis chapter 1. Genesis chapter 1. And we'll read through the first 18 verses. Genesis 1, verses 1 through 18. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, Let there be light.

And there was light. God saw the light, that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness.

God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. And then God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Then God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind. Whose seed is in itself on the earth, and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day. Then God said, Let there be light in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night.

And let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years, and let them be for light in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and it was so. Then God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.

God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

I'd like to speak to you this morning on the subject of darkness. And I didn't have to bring an object lesson with me this morning because you had one yesterday when your lights went out. Darkness was the subject on everyone's lips.

All kinds of strange things happened yesterday. If you were working with your computer at the time, you could have had real problems, depending on the type of equipment that you had. The traffic lights weren't working, and you really had to inch your way across the intersection.

Darkness came upon great sections of this country, from Oregon to the Mexican border in California, Utah, Texas. You know, the Bible is a wonderful book. There are threads that go all the way through the Bible, and darkness is one of those threads.

You read about darkness here in the very second verse of the Bible, and would you believe that theme goes all the way through to the book of Revelation? That's true with a lot of other subjects. It's true with the subject of light. You have light here in Genesis 1, and you have light all the way through to Revelation.

It's true with the subject of water. It's true with the subject of trees. It's true with the subject of blood.

Someone has said, no matter where you cut the Bible, it bleeds. Well, that's true. It's absolutely true.

No matter where you cut the Bible, it bleeds, and that bloodline through the Bible, of course, is one of the most significant parts of the word of God. And I think when God causes darkness to come upon a section of our country, there must be some lessons in it for us. God is always trying to talk to people, and very few are willing to listen.

Well, let's just take a little trip through the Bible this morning and just take up a very few of the passages that deal with darkness. First of all, in the first verse of Genesis, you find God creating the heavens and the earth, and we believe that when he created them, he created them perfectly, perfectly, because everything that God does is perfect. But we also believe that something happened between Genesis 1-1

and Genesis 1-2.

Why? Why do you say that, Brother MacDonald? Because it says, the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Well, we don't believe that God made it that way. What happened? Well, we don't know what happened.

If we say we're speculating, but it's generally felt that this is when Satan was cast out of heaven and came down to earth, and the result was darkness covering the face of the deep. Not a very nice situation, was it? And something that God had to do something about. And God did.

Immediately, the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the deep. God could not allow that condition to exist very long, and then started the work of creation. Now, there's a problem here in Genesis 1. I'll just give you the problem, and you can give me the solution afterwards.

It says in verse 3, God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. But then you go on, there's a separation of light from darkness, and a day, the evening and the morning, were the first day.

But then you go over to verse 14. It says, Let there be light in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night. Let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.

Let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth. And it was so. God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the sun, the lesser light to rule the night, the moon.

He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth. Well, it's hard to understand, isn't it? First of all, He separates the light from the darkness in the first part of the chapter.

And then you come over here, and it says, God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth. Verse 17, verse 18, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. It's hard to realize how He could separate the light from the darkness and create day and night in the early verse. And then later on, He seems to do the same thing.

What is the answer to that question? I do not know. But I know this. I know this, that there are scientific secrets hidden in the first chapter of Genesis that no man has ever yet plumbed.

There's more here than any scientist or philosopher has ever been able to dig out. And no true finding of science will ever contradict a true interpretation of Genesis chapter one, or the rest of the Bible for that matter. Well, that's marvelous, isn't it? To think, first of all, of the creation enveloped in darkness, and then God spoke, Let there be light.

And what's light? Of course, we do know today that the sun is not the main source of light in the universe. There is light apart from the sun. We know that very distinctly.

And so that's probably what happened here in the first verses. And then later on, He put the sun and the moon up there to register the days and the nights. Well, that's the first intimation of darkness you have right at the very outset of the Bible.

But then you have a very interesting thing when you turn over to Exodus chapter 10. You remember how God wanted His people to leave Egypt, and the Pharaoh would not allow the people to leave Egypt. And so God started to send plagues upon that land.

And I'd like you to look in Exodus chapter 10. Verses 21 and 22, 23 even said, Then the Lord said to Moses, Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt. Just think of that.

Now, you know, we were plunged into darkness yesterday, weren't we? By that blackout, by the failure of the electrical system. But it wasn't total darkness. I mean, there was a certain amount of light coming from the heavens and the heavenly bodies.

And nobody really had to say, stay seated where they were when the lights went out, did they? This was different. This was a darkness which could be felt. And what that says to me, it was total darkness, total darkness.

I wonder, have you ever experienced total darkness? Well, there are some caves in the United States and in other countries, and they will take tourists down into these caves, down deep into the bowels of the earth, and they'll turn out the light. And that's total darkness. They will only turn out the lights for a few seconds.

You know why? Because if they do it more than that, the people are apt to go mad. They're afraid of the emotional impact on people if they were left there in that total darkness. Well, this is what happened in Egypt.

It was a terrible thing. Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt. So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.

Friend, that's scary. I don't know how long your light was out. I think mine went out around 3.30, and it maybe came back at 8 or 9 o'clock last night.

Candles were very useful. Flashlights were very useful. However, my smoke alarm is powered by electricity, so it's a good thing my apartment didn't go on fire, because the smoke alarm wouldn't have gone on.

Powered by electricity. Notice what it says in verse 23. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days.

It sounds as if they had to stay seated wherever they were when the lights went out, not for three hours, but three solid days. This was the judgment of God on the people of Egypt, but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. That's marvelous.

You cannot explain this plague by any naturalistic means, whatever. It was a discriminating darkness. This darkness knew an Egyptian home from a Jewish home.

Is that wonderful? Modernists and liberals like to explain away the miracles of the Bible, but they inevitably fail in their explanations. You cannot explain this away by any natural means, whatever. The fact of the matter is the houses of Egypt had darkness.

It could be felt. People couldn't see one another. They couldn't see where they were going, and it was best for them just to stay seated or in bed or wherever they happened to be at that moment.

And some of those situations could have been very embarrassing and very trying to say the least. And of course, this had its desired effect. I love that expression.

The children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Dear friends, unsaved homes today are in darkness, spiritual darkness, and there's light in the dwellings of those who know the Lord and trust him as their Savior. Just before I came up here, I was thinking about a passage in Job that has to do with darkness, which had turned to Job chapter 38.

This is when God is talking with Job. It's at the end of Job, all his trials, the principle of which were the three friends. And God is saying to Job in these last chapters, beginning with chapter 38 is, Job, you've been finding fault with me and the way I run the universe.

Well, why don't you put on the robes of royalty? Why don't you wear the crown of king and you run the universe and see what kind of a job you can do? That's really what God is saying to him. God is saying, look, Job, you've been sputtering against me. You've been finding fault with me.

I want you to know I can be trusted. No matter what the circumstances of life may be, I can be trusted. Then he says in verse 12 of chapter 38, have you commanded the morning since your days began? That's beautiful, isn't it? Did you ever go out from your house, Job, and say, OK, Don, time to come now.

And the dawn comes. That would make Job feel pretty small, wouldn't it? Imagine commanding the dawn. That's what that's what it's saying.

Have you caused the dawn to know its place that it might take hold of the ends of the earth? That's a picture of the sun rising in the east and just coming up, lighting the sky until pretty soon the whole right to the horizon. It's all lighted up that it might take hold of the and the wicked be shaken out of it. Well, that's an interesting, very beautiful poetic language.

What it's saying is that men love darkness because their deeds are evil. When do you think the Oakland Police Department is busiest? Well, it's busiest at night because that's when men like to commit their crimes. They like to be hidden in committing their crimes.

And what this is saying is that when the dawn comes, it's like God shaking the wicked out. It removes them from their place of activity, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth and the wicked be shaken out of it. Marvelous, isn't it? Here's your thread of darkness going right through the book of Job.

And then I think it's beautiful in Psalm 139. When the psalmist is thinking about darkness, he's saying, where can I go from your presence? Where could I go so that the Lord couldn't see me? Let's say total darkness, darkness that can be felt. Psalm 139, verses 11 and 12.

If I say, surely the darkness shall fall on me, even the night shall be light around me. As far as God is concerned, as far as God is concerned, no difference between darkness and light as far as his eyesight is concerned. Isn't that wonderful? If I say, surely the darkness shall fall on me, even the night shall be light about me.

I can't hide from his presence. Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from you, but the night shines as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to you, which means you can't hide from God.

That's what it means. It means that God sees everything we do. He knows everything we think.

He hears everything we say. All things are open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. So as far as God is concerned, there's no such a thing as darkness.

As far as his eyesight is concerned, he sees it all. Perhaps the most solemn mention of darkness in the Bible is found in Matthew 27 and verse 45. Matthew 27 and verse 45.

And you, of course, know that this has to do with the crucifixion of our wonderful savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 27, verse 45. Says now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, there was darkness over all the land.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Lamas, the backs and I, that is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That's interesting, isn't it? The savior is dying upon that cross of shame and God covers the earth with darkness. And different. I believe it wasn't darkness like last night.

Like yesterday afternoon, I believe it was deep, deep darkness. And I'd like to ask each of you to think, no. Why? Why? The poet seemed to have an answer that satisfied him.

He said, well, might the sun in darkness hide his face from shining in. When Christ, the mighty maker died for man, his creatures sin. But I ponder that question.

Why? What was the purpose of those three hours of darkness? Well, of course, they were the three hours when the Lord Jesus was bearing the sins of the world and his body there on the tree. The darkness could have been a mercy as far as mankind was concerned. It could have been God hiding the unbearable from human sight.

It could have been. It could have been that that those people. Standing before the cross.

Looking at the creator. Dying for their sins. It could have been that would have driven them insane.

Could have been. I'm not saying that's the explanation. Could be an explanation.

That's really amazing, isn't it? Three hours of darkness on this earth of ours. Second Corinthians, four, six. This is a very favorite verse of mine.

They're all favorite verses. I don't know why I say that. But Second Corinthians.

Four, six. It says, for it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness. Who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What is that verse saying? Well, there's a lot of precious things in that verse. First of all, the God who caused light to shine out of the same God that we read about in Genesis chapter one, who said, let there be light. Ah, Paul is saying, I see a spiritual application of that.

What happened in Genesis is what happens in our hearts when we're converted. That's what happens in our hearts when we're saved. That same God who caused light to shine out of darkness back there in Genesis.

He himself has shown in our hearts. That's interesting. I like that.

It doesn't say he caused light to shine in our hearts. He's shown in our hearts. That's much more personal than what happened back in Genesis, isn't it? For it is the God who caused light to shine out of darkness.

He has shown in our hearts. Why? Well, it goes on to explain why to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Darby, I think, has an improvement on this translation.

He says he has shown in our hearts for the outshining, for the outshining of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He's shown in our hearts so that from our lives, it will shine out to others. What the verse is saying is that God never intended us to be the terminals of our blessing of the blessing.

He expected us to be channels. He shines in so that the light might shine out from us to others. That's a wonderful thing, isn't it? And that's what happens when we witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's exactly what happens. The light shines out through us to others. Now, first, John, chapter one, five to six, we learn here that light is physical in a way.

But it also has a spiritual meaning connected with it. First, John, chapter one, five and six, it says this is the message which we have heard from him and declared to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. We say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness.

We lie and do not practice the truth here. Light and darkness are used in a figurative way when it says that God is light. It means he's pure, means he's absolutely holy.

It means there's no sin or stain of defilement in him. Whatever absolute purity. God is light.

It's not a definition of God. It's telling what God is like in him. There's no darkness at all.

What does that mean? It means there's nothing hidden in God. Nothing unworthy that's hidden in him. Everything is out in the open with God.

And that's the way it has to be with those who profess to be his people has to be out in the open with him. I must not have any sin concealed in my life if I'm going to walk in fellowship with God. I must be pure.

I must be holy. How can two walk together except they be agreed? Notice, even as we're coming to the end of the Bible, darkness is figuring prominently in the scriptures. We say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness.

We lie and do not practice the truth. Darkness there means moral impurity. It means sin of any kind.

But how how grateful we can be for a verse in the Bible like John, Chapter eight and verse twelve. John, Chapter eight and verse twelve. And here you have the lovely Lord Jesus says, Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world.

He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. You know, that's wonderful. People argue today.

Was Jesus really God? Was Jesus really the son of God? I want to tell you, friends, if you take these words and put them on the lips of anybody else, they're absolutely foolish. Supposing I stood here this

morning and said to you. I am the light of the world.

You follow me and you won't walk in darkness, but have the light of life. Well, I think somebody would rush out to the phone in the hallway there and call for the ambulance to take me to the psychiatric ward. Because I would I'd be lunatic.

But, you know, they fit perfectly in the lips of the Lord Jesus, don't they? I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness. But shall have the light of life.

And many here in the room this morning have proved that to be absolutely true. We walked in darkness when we were unsafe. We didn't know what way to go.

Life was a dreariness to us and nothing could satisfy our hearts. And then the Lord Jesus came and it was just like the light going on. Conversion is like that.

It's like the light going on in the life of the person who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ. Just two more passages. Revelation 22 and 5. This is a verse that's precious to people, really precious to people.

Why? Well, I think we'll see why. It's speaking about our heavenly home. It says, and there shall be no night there.

No blackouts there. No failure of the power system there. No, it'll never happen.

There'll be no night there. They need no lamp nor light of the sun for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

That's marvelous, isn't it? You think of night. I think of night now. I think of.

I think of dear friends on beds of illness, suffering great pain. And they look at the clock by their bed and they say, when is the morning going to come? Night is the hardest time when you're really suffering. When you're really so ill, you can't even pray for yourself.

And you just long for the first gleam of the morning light. Friends, there won't be any night there. Never have to go through that trial in heaven.

There is no night there. Christ is the light. They need no lamp nor light of the sun for the Lord God gives them light.

They shall reign forever and ever. It's a wonderful thing to be a Christian. It's a wonderful thing to be saved by the grace of God.

Takes darkness out of your life here. Takes darkness out of your life in eternity as well. But one final verse in Jude.

Verse 13 of Jude. Verse 13 of Jude. It says, speaking about apostates, speaking about evil men in the latter days, days such as we live in right now.

It says raging waves of the sea foaming up their own shame, wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. I want to tell you, friends, that's a terribly solemn passage. The blackness of darkness forever.

Imagine being in a situation where you see nothing forever and ever and ever and ever. It's solemn. Recently, in the San Francisco Chronicle, Herb Kane, columnist who is now afflicted with cancer, he wrote the following.

He said that he he was talking to his old friend Mel Belli. Mel Belli was a famous attorney. They call him the king of torts.

And they were commiserating upon their mutual sufferings and illnesses. And Mel Belli said to Herb Kane. Herb, you know, eternity is a long, long time.

Heavens, he said. Just think of it. Eternity is forever, he said.

And he said, of course, I don't expect to go to heaven. And Herb Kane wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle. I looked into eyes that were usually twinkling and I saw terror.

Shortly after that, Mel Belli died. His wife said just toward the end, he quit talking about eternity. And all he would say to her is, Nancy, why does it take so long to die? I looked into those eyes that were normally twinkling and all I saw was terror.

And this is an unsaved man saying it. Difference is a solemn thing, the blackness of darkness forever. I don't want to go to hell, do you? Well, nobody has to go to hell.

The Lord Jesus died to deliver mankind. All we have to do is come in simple, trusting faith, repenting of our sins and bowing the knee, trusting him as Lord and Savior. There'll be no darkness for us.

There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes to gather his loved ones home. So if you're here today and you've never really put your faith and trust in the Savior, that's the message. Let yesterday's darkness be a lesson to you.

Let it be an object lesson to you. That was a dim foretaste of what eternity without Christ is like. Shall we pray? Father, we think this morning of how full the Bible is of almost any subject that we can think about.

And we thank you for this little object lesson we had yesterday when the lights went out. We think of that place in the life of a man, woman, boy or girl where the lights go out on the road to hell. Where it's impossible to renew a person to repentance, seeing he crucified to himself afresh the Son of God and puts him to an open shame.

And we pray in love today for any in our midst who may still be unsaved. With no hope beyond, no harbor waiting where their storm tossed vessel they might steer, we pray, Lord, that they will look to the light of the world, the Lord Jesus. Follow him and never walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

We ask it in his worthy name and for his sake. Amen.

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