



Treasures of Darkness

By: Calvin Evans

Job 12:22 - "He discovereth deep things out of darkness..." **Isaiah 45:3** - "I will give thee the treasures of darkness..."

How can there be treasures in darkness? Darkness speaks of dread, fear and sin. Usually, darkness assumes a negative outlook. Darkness is when beasts go on the prowl and when the murderer strikes his or her victim. Man has invented every kind of light possible to help him function in the darkness.

In the very beginning of the Bible, we are told about darkness, "Darkness was upon the face of the deep... God divided the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:2,4). Jesus tell us about a place of outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (see Matthew 8:12). Jude states, "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (verse 6). Sin is often pictured as darkness. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

When I was a boy growing up, there was no such thing as television and very few radios. I would often stay overnight with my Grandpa Evans. He would gather us children around and tell ghost stories. Believe me, nobody could tell scary stories like my Grandpa Evans. He would finish one of his frightening stories and offer any of us children a dime to take a pencil, go out into the dark and mark an "X" on the barn door. Let me tell you he did not have to pay out many dimes.

To call darkness a treasure seems almost a paradox. How can this be? During those times we are walking in a dark place, is when we draw closer to God. David's prayer was this, "...Thou hast visited me in the night..." (Psalm 17:3). Again, the Bible says, "... In the night his song shall be with me..." (Psalm 42:8). It was in the darkness of midnight when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God (see Acts 16:25). Let's look at some treasures of darkness:

I. The Treasure of Revelation

Darkness shows us things we would never be aware of otherwise. David prayed and said, "...The darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalm 139:12).

I read about a Christian college which had this humorous event take place. The students gathered for lunch. At the beginning of the line there was a large box of delicious looking apples with a sign, "Take only one, God is watching." At the end of the line there was a large box of cookies and someone had written a sign, "Take all the cookies you want, God is watching the apples." The fact is God can watch the apples and cookies at the same time. He also can watch us in both daylight and darkness, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

Napoleon once stated, "The stars are all the proof I want of the existence of God." Did you ever see a star on a bright, sunny day? It takes darkness to reveal the stars! Are you aware that God knows exactly how many stars exist? Did you know He has made and named everyone of them (read Psalm 147:4). Jesus referred to Himself as being the Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16).

In darkness, Jesus hung on the cross for three hours forsaken by the Father. Why? So that He would not be forsaken during our times of darkness. Micah said, "When I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light to me" (Micah 7:8).

God took John Bunyan into the dark room of Bedford Prison for 12 years but out of that came the book, "Pilgrim's Progress" which continues to bless and change lives throughout the world. God allowed Fanny J. Crosby to go into the dark room of blindness. But over the walls of her prison house of darkness more than 8,000 songs continue to give Christians new hope and courage around the world. (1)

George A. Young was an obscure preacher and carpenter who spent a lifetime humbly serving God in small country churches. Often there was only enough money for a meager existence. But Young and his wife were faithful and never wavered in their loyalty to God and His service. Finally, through much sacrifice, the George Young Family was able to move into their own small home, which they had built themselves. There was a group of hoodlums in the area who disliked the preacher's Gospel message. While Young was away holding meetings, they set fire to his house, leaving nothing but a heap of ashes. But God gave George Young a song of praise in his darkness of persecution. He wrote:

"In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet, God leads His dear children along; Where the water's cool flow bathes the weary one's feet, God leads His dear children along. Some through the water, some thru the flood, some through the fire, but all thru the blood. Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song. In the night season and all the day long." (2)

II. The Treasure of Understanding

Sometimes it is during our walk in darkness that we discover the treasure of understanding. Proverbs 3:5 says to "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding." Again Proverbs 3:13, "Happy is the man... that getteth understanding." Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Daniel 2:22 says, "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." You cannot understand light until you understand darkness. You cannot understand love until you understand hate. You cannot understand right until you understand wrong. You cannot understand good until you understand evil. How can we ever know the victory of deliverance until we have known the darkness of defeat? Or the victory of healing until we have known the darkness of sickness and pain? Or the victory of salvation until we have known the darkness of sin? How can we know the triumph of joy until we have walked in the dark valley of sorrow? How can we experience the glory of gladness until we have fought through the angry storms of grief?

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The Apostle Paul writes in II Corinthians 4:3-10, *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”*

Notice how satan will try to blind us, but God will shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What does this mean? It simply means God no longer speaks to man as He did in olden times. He no longer speaks to man as He did to Moses from a burning bush. Or when He thundered the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai through the fire and smoke as the whole mount quaked greatly. God now speaks through His son. Jesus said in John 14:9 *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father...”* God now has a face. It is the face of Jesus.

III. The Treasure of Blessing

Notice wherever Jesus traveled, He brought blessings and joy to the people. His first miracle was at a joyful wedding in Cana. As He touched and changed the lives of those He met, He would leave them with a new hope and a new joy of living.

The theme of His sermon on the mount was how to live a happy life in an unhappy world. Can you imagine the blessing in Jarius’ house when Jesus said to the 12 year old daughter, *“Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.”* She arose from her death bed and Jesus placed her back into the arms of her father and mother.

Can you picture the funeral procession Jesus, and the multitudes traveling with Him, met at the city gate of Nain? The dead man was the only son of a widowed mother. A great crowd was following her. But Jesus reached out and touched the bed and said, *“Young man, I say unto thee, arise.”* The dead man sat up and began to speak and Jesus delivered him to his mother and the multitude glorified God. You talk about a happy crowd!

How would you like to have been standing in the crowd at Bethany that day when Jesus called for His dear friend (who had been dead four days), *“Lazarus, come forth.”* Praise God the Bible says, *“And he that was dead, came forth...”* (John 11:44).

In the 16th chapter of Matthew, Jesus began to forewarn the disciples of the darkness he must face. How He must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things of the elders, chief priests and scribes. He told them that He would be killed and be raised again the third day. The disciples rebuked Him because they did not understand. Peter said, *“Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee”* (verse 22). But Jesus rebuked Peter and said, *“Get thee behind me Satan.”*

It was not long until the disciples would see the time to which Jesus was referring: the darkness of the betrayal, the arrest, the awful scourging, the mocking, the crown of thorns, and finally the awful darkness of the cross when Jesus cried out, *“My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me”* (Matthew 27:46)?

Although the disciples had been pre-warned, they were not prepared for the things they would see. Oh, how dark! They were looking for a messiah who would sit upon a throne. Instead, His throne disappeared into a tomb. Instead of occupying a throne, He occupied a tomb. His kingdom had shrunk into the narrow dimensions of a grave. Isaiah said, *“He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied”* (53:11). We don’t leave Him in the darkness of a grave. He is risen! Hallelujah! He’s alive! He died for our sins but rose again for our justification.

A well known preacher tells the story of an outstanding family in his church. His faithful wife was taken from him after a brief illness. He was left with one daughter, three or four years of age. After a brief graveside service, some from the church tried to get him to go home with them. But he refused and said, *“I must go home with this little one.”* He told later what happened. Nothing is more heartbreaking than a little child crying for her mother who is never coming back again. How hard it was for the little girl to fall asleep. She would try but soon would start up her sobbing again. *“Why, papa thought you were asleep, baby?”* She said, *“Papa, I did try, but I could not go to sleep.”* Then she said, *“Papa did you ever know it to be so dark? Why, papa, I can’t even see you, it is so dark.”* Sobbing louder she said, *“But, papa, you love me, if I don’t see you, don’t you papa?”* Do you know what the father did? He took her gently in his arms and rocked her until she finally fell asleep. And when she was asleep, he took his baby’s cry to God and said, *“Father, it is as dark as midnight. I cannot see you at all. But you love me, if it is dark, don’t you? I will trust you, though you slay me. With my baby and my grief, and my utter desolation, I will turn my case over to you.”* And then the darkness was like unto the morning! (3)

I know this message is reaching out to someone who is going through some form of darkness. It may be the darkness of adversity. It may be an alcohol or a drug problem. It could be the darkness of a physical illness, a nervous breakdown, the sudden loss of a loved one, a financial loss or a thousand other things. I urge you to turn to Jesus today who said, *“He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

Notes:

1. Adapted from Robert G. Lee, *God’s Answer to Man’s Questions* (Florida: Christ for the World Publishers, 1962) p. 86.
2. Kenneth W. Osbeck, *Amazing Grace* (Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1990) p.24
3. George Truett, *A Quest for Souls* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1917) p.25.