

## UNTO THE DARKNESS WHERE GOD IS

Text: Exodus 20:21: "And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."

I Kings 8:10-12; II Samuel 22:10-12

For decades the phrase from Exodus 20:21 has captured my imagination: "...unto the darkness where God was." To this day, this phrase has the power to eliminate the fear of unknown. We are in a dark time on this July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, 2020. I find it hard to believe that there were citizens of this country that were actually discussing not celebrating our Independence Day. Across this land chaos is unrestrained.

On Tuesday, March 5, 1946 Sir Winston Churchill gave a speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. It was one of the most famous speeches given in the Twentieth Century. It has been called "The Iron Curtain Speech," so named from his words, "...an iron curtain has descended across the Continent." This was referring to Europe's division of capitalistic freedom and communistic slavery. Churchill said, "A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future or what are the limits if any to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies." Now, in the summer of 2020, one day after July 4<sup>th</sup>, a shadow has fallen with the threat of health from COVID-19 and uninhibited rebellion against authority.

John Winthrop gave a moving speech in 1630 to the brave, future Massachusetts Bay colonists from the pulpit of Southampton, England's Holyrood Church. In this speech he made reference to the vision of America as "...a City on a Hill." It has been quoted from Presidents Kennedy to Obama. President Reagan used it often in his eight years of presidency. One of the best references was in his farewell speech to the nation. He said, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world."

The original words came from the Sermon on the Mount spoken by our Lord and Savior. Matthew 5:14, 15: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." God intends for His people to be that bright and shining light - even in the present darkness. Let's talk about darkness.

### 1. GOD DELCARES THE DARKNESS GOOD.

Genesis 1:2-5, 18. Genesis 1:31: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Isaiah 45:3: "And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel."

Since nothing good had ever come out of Nazareth, therefore, nothing good ever will come out of Nazareth. That is a dark view of history. John 1:46: "And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." The best possible thing that could have ever happened in the history of the world had come to pass. But notice the response in John 1:4, 5: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

## 2. DARKNESS IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF SOMETHING GREAT.

Genesis 1:2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." It was in the darkness of creation that the Holy Spirit like a parent hovers over the budding creation in love and favor.

Genesis 15:12: "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." Here we observe God initiating the great Abrahamic covenant by putting Abraham in the dark.

Psalms 139:12-14: "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." In this portion of Scripture, God operates in the early moments of your personal creation. He does some of His finest work in the dark!

## 3. DARKNESS CAN BE SCARY.

Genesis 15:12: "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him."

Exodus 10:21: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt."

As a little boy afraid of the dark, which I was, I found comfort when permitted to lay between my parents on those darkest of nights. As a pastor, I have been by the bedside of patients in the hospital who have received the grimmest of diagnoses and prognoses. One of the statements made by the person receiving the news goes something like this: "Well, I know it doesn't sound good, but I am glad I finally know; it is the 'not knowing' that has really gotten me down." The "not knowing," can be terrifying, but thank God, we have an all-knowing God who provides comfort in the "known" and the "not known."

## 4. GOD GUIDES THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

Daniel 2:22: "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him."

Isaiah 42:16: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before

them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.”

Psalm 139:11, 12: “If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

#### 5. OUR VERY REDEMPTION CAME IN THE DARKNESS!

Luke 23:44: “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.” It was in this darkness that the penalty of our sins were deposited in their horrible entirety on the person of the only perfect One who ever lived, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

#### 6. THE DARKEST NIGHT PRECEDES THE ETERNAL LIGHT.

Acts 2:20: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” Darkness will literally cover the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, just before Jesus returns in glory. In this instance it will indeed be the darkest before the dawn.

Malachi 4:2: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings....”

#### CONCLUSION: TRUST GOD IN THE DARK.

I Corinthians 4:5: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”

II Corinthians 4:6: “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.”

-Pastor Pope-