

TEDDY TALK WITH MARTIN UMC FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Just some random thoughts

Light and Dark in Christ Presence

Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the Lord's glory has shone upon you. Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations, the Lord will shine upon you.

Isaiah 60:1-3

Jesus spoke to the people again, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

Last week, I ended the Talk with a special message to George Hawkinson. It read: "Thank you George. You made me believe my 'light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around (me) will be as bright as noon.'" The random thoughts in this series of Talks focuses on contrasting and/or complimentary words to emphasize a "Christ Presence" in our daily routines and in our lives.

Sometimes darkness is preferred over and above the bright light of day. Having a candlelight dinner in a darkened room has a special appeal and romance. Going to see a movie at the theatre only works if the theatre is dark. Some people can't sleep unless curtains block out all light and their bedroom is completely dark.

Sometimes the phrase "in the dark" might be used to indicate that we are confused, bamboozled, unclear, perplexed. An example. Someone tells a story, and at the end of the story everyone burst into uncontrolled laughter. Everyone, that is, except you. For the life of you, you can't see what was so funny. You are baffled. Why does everyone think the story to be so humorous? We might say you are "in the dark." Only when someone explains it or throws some light on the punch line do you finally get it.

In the Bible and in literature darkness is often associated with evil and death. Under the cover of darkness many crimes are committed. Darkness can refer to people whose circumstances in life are anything but bright, positive, or optimistic. This kind of darkness differs from one person to the next. The darkness may be poverty, hunger, homelessness, or the hopelessness of a mother as she watches her child's life slowly fade away because of a lack of basic food, clean water, and health care.

Sometimes it is reasonable to know people in our community living in darkness who don't even realize it. There is an old story about a desert nomad who woke up in the middle of the night feeling very hungry. He lit a candle and began eating dates from a bowl beside his bed. He took a bite from one and saw a worm in it; so, he threw it out of the tent. He bit into the second date, found another worm, and threw it away also. Reasoning that he wouldn't have any dates left to eat if he continued, he blew out the candle and quickly ate the rest of the dates.

Occasionally people prefer the darkness, because in the light they see too much and simply continue in their old ways. They don't like having a light shine on them that will show their relationship with God is in serious trouble. John's gospel says, "This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (John 3:19).

The Old Testament text from Isaiah reminds us that a new light has come from the Lord. It is shining on all people. This new light chases away all shadows and darkness. The closer this light comes to them, the more they will see the darkness in their lives and the more they will feel its warmth and comfort.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness" (John 8:12). Jesus is the real light, the genuine light who changes things. He is forgiveness. He is hope. He is encouragement. He is love, and more importantly, He is what humankind needs to lighten personal darkness.

Wherever there is darkness in our nation or in the world at large, Christ has commanded us to let our light shine before men. We are directed to use whatever means we have at our disposal to relieve the suffering of others and drive out the darkness that shrouds the lives of so many. We are to let the light of Christ shine through us so that the darkness of despair and hopelessness might be dispelled.

Peace always

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