

VOTC Feb. 19, 2017

## Darkness and Light

*John 8:12*

Hello again dear listeners;

Some years ago, an evangelist, active in preaching the gospel gave an account of a man-eating leopard in India which killed many people. That beast “*delivered his death-dealing blows in the darkness of night.*”<sup>1</sup>

He reminded his hearers ( and readers) of what the apostle Peter said about the devil in that book of the bible called 1 Peter, ch. 5. There we read this warning:

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...*

The bible is clear: that devil belongs to what are called “*the powers of this dark world.*” ( Ephesians 6: 12). Those powers are not some mythical Darth Vader characters. They are very real and very much alive. They are the frightening forces of evil, so of *spiritual darkness* . Those forces that can and do invade the lives of people to try and snatch them away and eventually to devour them just like that man-eater in the mountains of India.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. Wallace Schulz in “ From Darkness to Light” a message heard on The Lutheran Hour, Sept. 11, 1988

It is the devil himself who is the ruler or the prince of darkness. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is the Lord of life and light. The followers of Christ are called to offer resistance to the powers of darkness. They can't do this on their own but must, as the apostle Paul writes to what are called "*The saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:* ( Eph. 1: 1b) by being "strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. That means, putting on "*The full armour of God that strong protection which includes: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation.*" ( Eph. 6: 14-17).

Why all this spiritual weaponry? Because that devil is constantly on the prowl, looking for weaknesses in our personal lives, our families and our relationships. He would destroy Christian homes, lives, marriages and submerge them in darkness, evil, immorality, sin!

That devil has many on his side. Learned philosophers, even theologians, as well as a host of others scoff at the existence of Satan. That denial filters down into modern media.

And if there is no denial of the powers of darkness, you in fact see satanic symbols blatantly displayed indicating an embrace of these forces of darkness. Not a few movies, as well as rock music appear to be in league with the evil one.

Indeed, the bible tells us in no uncertain terms that this world in which sin and evil abounds is in fact under the power of the evil one.

Yet there is no need for despair. Yes, violence is rampant and terrorism is found in many places. God's laws are being turned upside down and the occult is gaining in popularity. But "*God is light and in*

*Him there is no darkness at all.”* The apostle John, a messenger of the Lord, testifies to that in his first letter ( ch. 1:5) Peter, another apostle whom there Lord Jesus caused to be an ambassador, to bring the message of Christ to the nations writes that Christ’s followers have been “*called out of darkness into His ( Christ’s) wonderful light.*” ( 1 Peter 2:10)

Those messengers who spoke these encouraging words had heard this message of light and life from the Master, Jesus Christ himself. They remembered what we find written in John 8: 12, Jesus, speaking to the people in his day, testifying, “ *I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*”

That testimony concerning light and life is not limited to the new Testament. The Israelites of old were taught to sing, “ *The Lord is my light and my salvation*” ( Psalm 27: 1) *God’s Word, His Law* ,said the psalmist ( in Psalm 119:105) “ *Is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*”

It is true, humanly speaking, both the present and the future look very dark indeed. Not a week goes by but we hear of another terrorist attack, Not just in the ‘hot spots’ of the globe, Iraq, Syria, as well as other Middle Eastern nations and capitals. No, even in the West, in countries of Europe and recently even at an airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in the U.S.A.

That would be bad enough if those attacks are the only ones with which people , and governments have to cope There is at the same time a great deal of terror and darkeners behind closed doors. I’m

thinking of the ever increasing incidences of marriage breakup, of large-scale unhappiness in families, and in the workplace. Pessimism concerning what's in store for communities in the future is rampant. The staggering debt though dismissed as "immaterial" by not a few yet weighs heavily on city planners, and government agencies.

Besides, many Christian churches are closing down and immorality is having many a field day.

Yet Jesus Christ remains the light of the world! He came to bring liberty to the captives and freedom to those imprisoned by the forces of Satan. His message is not one of doom and gloom. To be sure, would you and I have a perspective that is not subject to the ravages of sin and death and hell? Would there be light in your relationship to your wife, your children, your planning, in hope of a bright future?

You'll need to have faith. You and I will need to put our trust in Jesus Christ whose voice still rings out, "*Come to me all you who are burdened and fearful and I will give you rest.*" This faith is Christ Jesus' personal gift. It comes about in the same way it did when Jesus was on earth speaking to the crowds about him being the light of the world. ( John 8:12) It comes by hearing and heeding His Word! That Word testifies not only to Christ's birth but also his death on a cross. His sacrifice sufficient to pay for the sins of the world. A single sacrifice that rescues even those caught up in the darkness of sin and misery, of terror and shameful behavior.

Jesus Christ is the only effective force against demons and the devil and all the powers of darkness the latter is busy directing against God and those who are His. Christ's sacrifice, in which he suffered the

terrible loneliness of being forsaken by His Father was, and is, complete payment for the sins of all who believe in Him.

The bible calls this faith in action, “ *walking in the light*”. If you do that not only will you know where you’re going but you will have fellowship, communion, with those who are walking that same, safe path. When you’re joined to the fellowship of true believers you will have every reason for thanksgiving and joy, even in difficult circumstances.

With God’s Word as your roadmap, yes you will meet difficulties, perhaps even severe ones. For Satan, that dark invader, is fearfully angry with Christ and His church. Having lost that essential battle with Christ’s victory on Calvary he knows his time is short before he ends up in the lake of fire, .... from which there is no escape.

But when you entrust your life to Jesus Christ you will be blessed. Even if you and I have to go through what the bible calls “the valley of the shadow of death” we need not fear evil. For Jesus Christ is with us. His Holy Spirit is ever ready to show himself to be The Counselor, that mighty God who will one day spread His radiance all around. On a new earth where there will be no more darkness, only light.

Well then, put your trust in Jesus Christ and you will have “the light of life.” Not just for a day, a month, a year, but FOR EVER. Amen, and may the Lord be with you.

