

## Title: “Hello, Darkness my Old Friend”

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1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5; Matthew 1:18-25

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**Lesson:** *God brings into light that which creation wants left in the dark and he uses all for His good. Let us humble ourselves before God and seek His will, trusting that His ways are greater than ours.*

### Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

“Hello darkness my old friend. I’ve come to talk with you again.” These are the opening lines of a song by Simon and Garfunkel. It’s a song saturated with the sins of consumerism and material possessions. The lyrics speak of neon gods and words of prophets, advertisements, that are written on the subway walls. And all of the imagery that this song invokes in the minds of the listeners are presented against the backdrop of darkness, silent darkness.

And this song is not unique, it’s not an anomaly. Other songs, movies, books, TV shows, they all seem to cloak sin under a thick blanket of night, protecting what happens from being exposed to light. The dark is the place where sin seems to grow. In the shadows of the world, in the shadows of our lives. It seems to thrive there. We seek the cover of the night and the security that it offers us to hide from the world, and even from ourselves those activities that we know we should not be participating in, those sins that we know we should not be committing. We search for a way to justify our actions, looking to the darkness to be our judge and our protector from the light.

And it’s not just society that makes this connection between sin and darkness; the bible makes the same claim:

Matthew 6:23: But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

John 3:19: This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

Ephesians 5:11: Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

Live not in the darkness, the bible says. Expose the deeds done in the night. But sometimes it is not that simple, at least from our vantage point. Take Joseph in our reading as one example.

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ<sup>[a]</sup> took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed<sup>[b]</sup> to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be

with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

From *his* view, she too acted in darkness. She had walked in the night, had sinned, and her sin would be exposed. Joseph was righteous, followed the Jewish Law, and so divorcing her quietly would force him to keep the cover over her unfaithfulness, over her sinfulness. He was in a difficult position. He was facing a choice of his own: enter into the darkness himself and try to protect Mary or stay in the light and expose her.

<sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Into the cover of night, while he was sleeping, an angel spoke to Joseph. He described the situation not from earth's perspective, not from Joseph's, but from heaven's. He described the view from God's perspective and made clear that what transpired was not under the blanket of darkness and sin but was *in fact* under the brightness of light and holiness. Into this cover of night God sent an angel of the Lord to meet Joseph, to speak to him, and to bring him out of the darkness and into the light, into God's light of truth.

And nine months later, Jesus was born. Under the blanket of night, he came. And heaven's angles followed - filling the night sky with God's light, announcing to the world that the Light, the True Light had come. Into the darkness of this earth, where sin roamed freely ruling the night unchecked, Jesus came. He came *into* this world during the night as a symbol of what he would accomplish for all of God's creation. Darkness entered the world through sin, but it would be defeated by Christ's light, through his death and resurrection thirty some years later.

We have spent the last few weeks focusing on the lineage of Jesus. We have looked at Rahab, Bathsheba, and David, and tonight we focused on David. A man who was trying to live in the light, but the circumstances of the world tugged at him, trying to pull him into the dark. And throughout the genealogy that we read in the first chapter of Matthew, all of the descendants of Jesus lived part of their life in the dark - some more than others. Some started out righteous but later succumbed to the enticement of the night. Others lived their lives in the dark but were led by God

into the light. Regardless of their individual lives, one thing was constant: Jesus came *through* them, *through their dark* or maybe we could say *in spite of their dark* to be the light in this world.

John 12:46 <sup>46</sup> I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

We look out of the windows of the church and we look out into the world and we see dark. It exists in every corner of the world; it exists in our homes; it exists in our hearts. We strive to illuminate it with our own light. We try to evict the dark on our own. But our attempts are made in the dark, they are made under that protective cover so that no one else will know what we are struggling with, what we are fighting. We tend to believe that if we can just solve our sin problems then we can live in the light. But tonight Jesus speaks to us and tells us that we are wrong. Living in the light doesn't mean first discarding all that pulls us into the dark. Living in the light means calling out to Jesus from where we stand. It means exposing to Him what has enticed us away from him. It means calling out to him *from the dark*. Jesus already knows how you ended up there, he's just waiting for you to know it, too. He's waiting for you to realize that you can't do it on your own, that you can't find the light without him. He's waiting for you to realize that *there is no light in you*. HE IS THE LIGHT. He is what destroys the darkness, exposes the sin, and then offers you forgiveness and reconciliation. He is the light that *comes to you*. He comes to you *while* you are in the darkness. He seeks and finds *you*. You don't move from dark to light, he *removes* dark and makes *you* light. He lives in you and you live in him. This Christmas we bring light into all areas of our lives as a reminder of this truth. We light candles and decorate trees. All of this to proclaim to all that Christ came into this world to be our light.

Hello darkness my old friend. I'll never talk with you again. My God has come conquering. And he has found me in my wandering. And that darkness, he's destroyed with the wooden cross and with the blood he lost. And this my song of salvation.

Please pray with me.

(Isaiah 60:19-20)

"No longer will you have the sun for light by day,  
Nor for brightness will the moon give you light;  
But you will have the Lord for an everlasting light,  
And your God for your glory.  
"Your sun will no longer set,  
Nor will your moon wane,  
For you will have the Lord for an everlasting light