

Darkness and Light

Joe Slater

I remember while touring a cave when the guide turned out the lights. Now that was dark! Scripture often uses darkness as a metaphor for sin, while light stands for righteousness. For example, Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (5:8).

If you are a Christian, this passage reminds you that you, too, were once darkness. Too easily we forget the awful state from which Jesus delivered us. This forgetfulness accounts, at least in part, for our failure to grow and develop as we should (see 2 Peter 1:9). Some of us have a rather colorful past, to put it mildly. Others might think, "I really wasn't so bad." Regardless, we were darkness. How many sins did it take to get Adam and Eve expelled from Eden? One unforgiven sin will also make you "darkness as far as God is concerned. If that sounds extreme, it is only because we understand neither the perfect holiness of God nor the shameful sordidness of sin.

As a Christian, you are now light in the Lord. Jesus' blood has washed your sins away, so you are clean before God. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). You are now light rather than darkness. Certainly your behavior ought to have improved greatly compared to what it was beforehand. But that isn't what makes you "light." Rather, you are light because you are "in the Lord." Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12). You are "in the Lord" because, prompted by your faith in Him, you were "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3). It was then that you "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Because we are light, Paul tells us to walk (i.e. live, behave) as children of light. That's where the improved conduct comes into play. We ought to behave in a way that is compatible with what we are! As Paul wrote, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2). While we'll never be sinlessly perfect in this earthly life, we ought to strive to become more and more like Jesus.

So remember what you were before becoming a Christian: Darkness! And remember what you are now by the grace of God: Light in the Lord. Act accordingly!

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Copper or Gold?

The story is told of a beggar who asked for alms from Alexander the Great as he passed by. The poor, wretched man had no claim upon the ruler, no right, in fact, even to lift a solicitous hand. Yet the king threw him several gold coins.

A courtier, astonished at his generosity, commented: "Sir, copper coins would adequately meet a beggar's need." Alexander responded in a royal fashion: "Truly, copper coins would suit a beggar's need; but gold coins suit Alexander's giving."

Just a thought – when we give each Sunday, does our offering suit a beggar, or does it rather suit the King in whose service we are privileged to be?

"Truly I say unto you, that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God; but she of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had" (Luke 21:3, 4).

--via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart

A Slip of the Tongue

"Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue Keeps his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 21:23).

"Raise your right hand and repeat after me" was the phrase the contestants were attempting to guess on the popular game show, Wheel of Fortune.

The contestant had fourteen thousand dollars. He wanted to buy a vowel thus asked for a "y" then quickly said "I mean I". A mere slip of the tongue caused him to lose his turn and, subsequently, fourteen thousand dollars.

Just a small slip of the tongue can cause a lot of problems, ill feelings, heartaches etc. I am sure that most of us, at one time or another, have had it happen to us only to quickly turn away with great embarrassment, and genuine regret, wishing that we had held our tongue or, at least, given thought to what we were about to say. But, as we know, even as the proverbial bell cannot be unring, neither can spoken words be unsaid.

This is why God's word, which is always wise and true, continually admonishes us to guard our tongues.

"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (Proverbs 12:18).

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