

Darkness. Have you ever been in a place so dark that you could not see your hand in front of your face? In basic training, we my squad was on patrol one night and I had the pleasure of being on point which is the first person in the patrol. My job was to see the enemy first who was hiding in the darkness before the enemy saw us. The night we were doing this exercise was a horrible night because it was also raining so the woods of Fort Leonard Wood were completely dark. But even in the darkness, I could still see. There was still a little light shining from somewhere that helped me to see.

The summer after we moved here, we went back to Lubbock and picked up Tori's best friend before going on to Carlsbad Caverns. We were in a cave a hundred feet below ground as part of a tour. At one point of the tour, they told us that they were going to turn off the lights and instructed us to get comfortable because once the lights were turned off, we were not supposed to move so that we would not get hurt. Once the lights were turned off, I can honestly say that I have never been in a place that was so dark. It was a darkness that overcame you.

Darkness is a metaphor that is often used in the Bible to describe the brokenness and sinfulness of the world. There are many times in our lives where we live in darkness; where the brokenness of our lives seems to be overpowering. There is an unloved child who acts out desperately trying to get the attention of anyone who might care. There is the darkness when you yell at your child for spilling a drink at supper even though you have also spilled something and nobody has yelled at you. There is a darkness surrounding a couple who are struggling in their marriage. There is a darkness that overcomes you when your priorities are all messed up.

For some people, the darkness is overpowering and has the ability to cripple us causing us to freeze. But in the midst of the darkness there is hope because there is a light that shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

The darkness, the brokenness in our lives takes away our hope. It reminds us that we are worthless and not worthy of God's presence in our lives. The darkness tells us that we don't deserve anything good to happen to us. It reminds us that we don't deserve God's forgiveness or even the promise of eternal life.

But even when we have all the negative statements that the darkness says to us, we still have hope. We have hope because of Jesus the Christ. Jesus is the light that came into the world and the darkness could not overcome it. Jesus shone in the darkness of this world.

Christ gave us His life so that we could live life in all its fullness without the worry of the darkness. Jesus is talking about a spiritually vibrant life where joy is a normal part of your

day. A life where you enjoy the relationships of friends. A life that increasingly experiences Christ. A life that is increasingly becoming like Christ.

All of this is possible because the light came into the world. As John tells about the light coming into the world, I find it interesting that he felt the need to say that John the Baptist was not the light. John the Baptist knew that he wasn't the light, but there were people who did wonder.

Jesus alone is the light of the world. Now that is good news because when it comes to light, you and I are like John the Baptist not Jesus. In case you have not figured it out yet, you are not the light. I am not the light. Mary the mother of Jesus is not the light. There is only one light and it is Jesus the Christ.

We, like John the Baptist, can testify or be a witness of the true light. It's sort of like the sun and the moon. The moon has no light of its own. It simply reflects the light of the sun. And the moon reflects the sun most brightly in the darkness of night. So we too are witnesses or mirrors of the true light.

As we reflect the light of Christ, we become a witness of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist performed no miracles or signs; he just proclaimed Jesus. So like John we get the joy of being the human agent through which the Word is proclaimed.

Matthew said, "Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Our life expressed in good deeds brings notice to the light of God's glory.