

David Shantz, January 25, 2015

“There are none so seeing as those who acknowledge their blindness.”

Text: John 1: 1-5 , 8:1-12 and 9: 24-41

I understand that you have chosen as a theme leading up to Lent..... This Present Darkness. Verse from Eph. 6:12

What is the **present darkness** in our lives, in our communities and on a global scale?

Darkness is often associated with evil.

“And this is the condemnation: that Light is come into the world, and men loved **darkness** rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 3:19

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.” — Plato

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” Who said this?

— Martin Luther King Jr

Have you seen the movie Selma?

How many have read, Getting Home Before Dark, by Peter Dyck, Rebecca’s father?

Darkness comes to people of all ages. We need to be prepared as best we can for ourselves and we need to prepare to know how to help others when darkness comes their way.

A warning in Isaiah 5: 20

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

If we talk about darkness we need to remember that we understand in it relation to light.

That famous expression, “I have seen the light.”

One inmate said to me, “I have seen the light. “Oh,” I said, “that’s nice.” “Yes”, he said, “and the color is green. I have a parole hearing and they are going to release me.”

Two days later I saw him, so I asked “is the light green?” “No,” he said. “It is still stuck on red.” He was not released.

What is your emotional reaction to these two words.... Light and Darkness?

No doubt these two words remind you of experiences that may still have a serious influence on your decisions.

In John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

We read that darkness was hostile to the Light. It did not want to give up any territory to the Light.

The Light came and kept coming and coming. The powers of darkness could not prevent it, could not stop it. They do not want to admit defeat.

They have read the book of Revelations but they do not believe that they are defeated.

We can study how Christ interacted with the ever-present darkness in his life and learn from it. He knew all about the reality of the darkness that was ever present around Him.

And then came that moment when He said..... “When I was daily with you in the temple, you stretched forth no hands against Me; **but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**” Luke 22:53

We could do a detailed study from Christ’s birth through to His ascension into heaven and learn how Christ acted and reacted to the reality of the present darkness.

This morning I will primarily focus on the passage in John chapters 8 and 9.

Word study of the words darkness that are used in Eph 6: 12 and other verses.

Skotos and Skia

The various meanings of the words that are used in these texts are:

- to be obscure, to diminish , to blind, shadow, fill or filled with shade
- adumbrating: to give a shadowy indication or account of the event
- Umbrageous ... filled with shade

Umbrage *Umbrage* comes from the same source as *umbrella*, the Latin *umbra*, "shade, shadow." The umbrella was invented to keep you in shade, and when you take umbrage at something, you're casting a shadow over the person or thing responsible for the offense.

Clouds that cover the sun.

What is happening according to Eph. 6:12 is that there are "world rulers" seriously involved in the present darkness.

They are blocking the light, not totally, just enough to diminish its power and effectiveness.

They take umbrage – offense - at the suggestion that Christ is King of King of Kings and Lord of Lords so they cast a shadow and doubt over Him.

They cannot deny who Christ is but they are determined to cast doubt over His attributes, His divinity , His authority.

Simply cast a shadow of doubt over what He said and did. As it happened in the beginning, " Did God really say..."

John chapter 8 and John chapter 9 are two very interesting chapters.

In John 8 the leaders bring a woman before Jesus and in John 9 Jesus brings a man before the religious leaders.

"You have a question for me,.... OK, I have a question for you."

The chapter 8 begins with a terrible experience where religious leaders showed how dark and evil they could be.

Their confusion, and distortion of justice is revealed in the trap that the religious leaders set for Jesus with the woman.

“We caught her in adultery ... shall we stone her?”

Jesus replied “... He who is without sin cast the first stone ...” and after all her accusers left her Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.”

Condemnation ... judgment on the cross

Sin no more... ceremonial laws or moral laws

Jesus said ... “Hey you guys, your judgment is **umbrageous**. Filled with shadows and diminished.”

“You are **adumbrating** this event. Distorting it with half truths and selfish intentions.”

“Your explanation of what happened and your question is intentionally cruel.”

“You are accusing the woman but really it is Me you want to stone.”

After this event Jesus declares, “ I am the Light of the world. ”. 8:12

“Come to Me and walk in the light.”

“You are walking in darkness.”

By the end of the chapter the religious leaders become so angry with Jesus that they pick up stones and want to silence His voice once and for all.

Yes..... Jesus was their target all along.

He slips away.. but not far away, nor does He remain silent.

Chapter 9,.....Jesus is not afraid and He is not finished with exposing the real face of darkness.

But Jesus, “Why do you want to provoke the leaders?”

“At least do the miracle on another day other than on the Sabbath.”

He heals a man born blind. A total stranger.

He heals him on a Sabbath.

The disciples begin the conversation with a question. “Who sinned? This man or his parents?”

Jesus says, “Neither. God is going to do something very special here. I am the light of world. The world is blind, similar to this man and I have the answer for this blindness, this darkness.”

“I am the answer. I am the Light.”

He makes a special salve/ointment of spittle and ground, anoints the man’s eyes and tells him to go and wash in a public place, the pool of Siloam.

He goes, washes and sees.

We can only imagine the excitement.

I see I seeI see....

The family, neighbors, the religious leaders are all in a dither.

“Who did this..... ?”

The healed blind man becomes an evangelist. “I was blind but now I see. He told me to wash and I obeyed”

“Now I see. I do not know who he is I only know that I see.”

“Why are you so curious about Him ? Do you want to follow him?”

Parents are afraid of the religious leaders.... They could be expelled from the temple.

Religious leaders react to the event. Since it was done on the Sabbath, he must be a sinner, He worked on the Sabbath.

He cannot be of God.

But can sinners do miracles? Confusion

They are disciples of Moses.

Their only answer is to cast the healed blind man out.

Cast him out or cast stones either way, they had to get rid of this man.

The light was too bright for them.

“35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

36 He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”

37 Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.”

38 He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshiped him.

John 9: 35- 38

39 Jesus said, “**For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.**”

40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?”

41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

John 9: 39- 41

The story finishes with:

1. A former blind man seeing and worshiping Christ. Worship is the spontaneous result of healing, understanding, forgiveness and peace. Not a circus side show.

No Not to make money to see the seeing blind man.

We are not told the attitude of the woman who was forgiven by Christ. (John 8)

2. A statement from Christ that should make all of us desire to have our spiritual vision sight checked.

Has our spiritual vision become obscured by either popular opinion... anything goes ... God is Love ... or by a fear of contamination that we cast everyone away who is not like us?

Do we see as well as we ought to or do we see what we want to see?

3. A group of Pharisees who are beginning to feel uncomfortable. "Are we also blind?"

Does their question reflect the attitude of a candidate for some of salve that Jesus applied to the eyes of the blind man?

Are we willing to go for a check up?

Christ is the Light and all darkness is subject to Him. The present darkness does not care if we see as long as we do not see clearly.

Christ is the only qualified ophthalmologist who can evaluate and correct our spiritual vision.

We all need spiritual correction and it begins with acknowledging we need an appointment.