

Melva's Corner

DARKNESS YIELDS TO LIGHT!

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(Mark 14:36)

Central Truth: The power of God gets the last word, and to surrender yourself to God in the midst of your dark night of the soul is the single way to participate in His triumph.

Some of us get up early and feel we do our best work in the morning; experience has taught us that early morning is when we are fresh and can be most productive.

The other day I was talking with a friend who is recovering from a physical injury. "I don't need as much medicine in the morning," she said. "Sleep heals and refreshes me. I wake up strong and ready for rehab. But in the late afternoon – especially on the days when they have worked me really hard – I really hurt and have to have something for pain. Then I sleep well again. And I know the morning will come, when I will feel strong again."

Sadness, discouragement, and melancholy seem to intensify in the darkness. There are studies, in fact, which support the thesis that depression and suicide are greater in wintertime and in regions where there is less sunlight. Diseases such as Alzheimer's have a "sundown syndrome" that sees patients suffer more profound disorientation as darkness comes on.

But every day has a night. Every period of light is followed by darkness. Or must we think in those terms? **Might we not choose to emphasize instead that every nighttime gives way to dawn? That darkness must yield to light? If we grant that thesis for a moment, we can understand one of the motifs in the Gospel of John.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him (1:1-10).

As surely as Jesus was the light, the light of the world, the true light that gives light to everyone, the Prince of Darkness was threatened by Him and determined to defeat Him. Forty days of relentless temptation, unbelief and opposition from within His own family, childish immaturity on the part of His closest associates, betrayal from His inner circle – all these and more were meant to extinguish the light and leave the world forever shrouded in the darkness of sin and wretchedness and death.

In the final dark night of the soul of Jesus, everything was at stake in Gethsemane. For Him. For heaven. And for all of us. Here is how the struggle ended. Here is how He survived and triumphed over the darkness. Here is how sin and death gave way to redemption and life, grace and light.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and [Jesus] said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And He said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” And going a little farther, He threw Himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want” (Mark 14:32-36).

The decisive, final, and definitive defeat of Satan and darkness came with that decision to embrace not what He wanted but what the Father wanted – for Him to embrace not death but surrender, not defeat but sacrifice, not resignation but obedience, not His doom but our redemption. With that decision to surrender His will to the Father’s, He set His heart toward the cross. With that decision to surrender to the Father, He set the perfect example for us.

Before the bright morning of resurrection, Jesus had to endure

that awful night. He had to embrace the cross. Before our light could dawn, He had to wrestle with all the terrors of darkness.

Some of you are terrified by the dark night of pain, uncertainty, failure, temptation, abandonment, poverty, sin, and death. You are remembering daylight hours when things were better, life was simpler, and hope was real. But you have it backwards! Darkness does not conquer light, death cannot swallow up life, and no failure need be final! The power of God gets the last word, and to surrender yourself to God in the midst of your dark night of the soul is the single way to participate in His triumph. Before morning can come, your dark night must be conquered via the only possible means – the obedience of faith, the surrender of your will.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Heb. 5:7-9).

So can you pray His prayer: “Not what I want, but what you want”? Can you embrace God’s frequent answer to our uncertainty: Can you learn what Christ learned through His obedience to the Father: the glories of morning will always come.

Scriptural References:

“Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want” (Mark 14:36).