

Men Loved Darkness

SS/HN 6/06/04 am

Reading: I Thessalonians 5, I John 2

Study: John 3:19-22

Psalms: 112:1-4, 112:5-8, 27:1-4, 56:9-13

Years ago I was camping at the beach – I was on a beach mission. One night we organized for the children to go down to the beach. We took our torches and started walking along the beach. As we shone the light onto the sand what did we see? It was quite different to being there in the daytime. We saw these ugly creatures with bulging eyes running about on the sand. And they could not run straight but went sideways all the time. These crabs ran to hide in their holes as soon as the light shone on them. They hated the light.

I suppose if I was as ugly as a crab I would want to hide to. I would not want to be seen in the light. Sin makes us very ugly. It makes our hearts hate the light, and hate the truth. Light is very threatening to the sinner.

Remember when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, when they sinned. Where did God find them after they sinned? They were hiding among the trees of the garden. Previously they loved to meet with the Lord in the garden. Sin made them ugly (or naked) and they wanted to hide from the Lord.

Our text goes further to say that not only do they hate the light but that they actually love the darkness. *Men loved darkness rather than the light.* Why do they love the darkness? *Because their deeds were evil.*

The light has come into the world. The light is available for those who desire to walk in the light. The light is shining brightly but No – men prefer to stay in the dark because their sinful hearts love to sin.

This is the condemnation. This is the judgment or the verdict. The word for condemnation is different in vs.19 to the previous verses. The word is *krisis* from which we get 'discrimination' meaning to separate – and that is what we clearly see in these verses. Light and dark. There are those who love the dark, and those who love the light.

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world. He sent him into the world as the Light of the world. He sent him into a dark and fallen world. This is the judgment. Some will come to the light but others will prefer the darkness.

We were asking last time why it is that people do not accept the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ that is spoken of in John 3:16. *Whosoever believes in Him should not perish* but have eternal life. Why do people prefer to perish? The first reason is that they do not realize they are *condemned already*. They think that they are born neutral and if they don't do anything too bad they will be saved. They don't believe in original sin. It is not only those outside the church, but many inside the church today do not believe in original sin.

We looked at the Shorter Catechism Q.18 and found this truth explained. '...the corruption of his whole nature commonly called original sin'. That answer goes on to say 'together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it'. This is the aspect we find in the text before us today. Not only are we born with a sinful nature, but we actually sin. Actual transgressions proceed from our sinful nature.

We used the picture of someone on death row. We are all born on death row. Many do not realize or accept this. They do not accept that the tiny baby has a sinful heart. They think that it is the environment that makes them bad. With a better understanding of psychology and a more positive environment all children will be good. But is that so. See how parents are shocked when their 'perfect' child tells lies, steals or deliberately disobeys them. Maybe they reflect and say hey I was like that. Yes because each one of us was born in sin – and as a result are condemned already as we face the holy God.

The light has come and shine brightly upon death row. An amnesty has been declared. The cry goes out to those on death row – come out! You are free! The prison doors are flung open and they are free to go. But what happens?

Many stay inside. The light would expose their evil deeds. They loved the life of wickedness; they loved the sins of the flesh. They could satisfy the cravings of their sinful nature inside. Besides their friends were there on the inside – their fellow partakes in wickedness.

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed. Note that they 'practice evil' but in the next verse they 'do the truth'. The idea of practice is that no fruit results. It is worthless exercise which brings no lasting result. Whereas to do something is to bring forth fruit. To be busy in the truth is to have lasting results to the glory of God.

J.C. Ryle says that 'the application of this verse must be made with caution. In many unconverted persons its truth is as plain as noon day. They love sin and hate true religion. But there are many unconverted persons who profess to like the gospel and to hear it with pleasure yet remain unconverted'. They love the light outwardly but do not love it with all their heart. There is something they secretly love more than Christ.

Indeed as we look at I John 2 what is the darkness which we are warned of? Is it stealing, is it adultery, is it telling lies, is it being a drunkard? *He who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness* (I John 2:11). Some people love to hate – just as they hate to love. But hatred blinds the eyes. Hatred leads to anger. Jesus said *whoever is angry with his brother...shall be in danger of judgment*. Is the church any different to the world in this regard? Sometimes it seems that no one hates quite the same as Christians, and especially Presbyterians.

Remember the Lord sees more than the outside. He sees into the heart. He sees you sitting here today but he also know your thoughts. He knows where you mind is. Do you truly love the light you appear to?

How do you know if you love the light? I John 2:6 *He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.* That is to walk in the light is to walk as Jesus did. It is to believe in him and to follow him. Did Jesus walk a road of hatred and anger, or a road of grace and love? See

the previous verse (I John 2:5) *Whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*

He who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be seen, that they have been done in God. This is the final verse in this passage. The true thing to do is because it is true that we are on death row and that judgment is certain. We are sinners, we don't want to come into the light and have our deeds exposed. It is too painful, too shameful. But God had offered an amnesty, he has offered forgiveness and cleansing in the blood of Christ. He will not put to shame those who come to the light. He will cover their nakedness, he will cloth them in the righteous of Jesus Christ.

Having come to the light we must walk in the light. We must continue in the light. If this light of the gospel of Jesus Christ has shone into your heart then walk in the light. Do not turn back to the darkness from which you came.

There will be those who go out from us. There will be those who do not like the light of the gospel and the freedom it brings. Remember it was the Jews, his own, to whom Jesus came as the light and it was the Jews who rejected him. There will be those who want to return to the darkness of legalism. *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel* wrote Paul.

Deeds *that have been done in God*. What does this mean? Well firstly it rules out pride and boasting. There are no good deeds that we can do in ourselves. All deeds that stand up under the scrutiny of this light will be found to have been done in God.

Secondly it answers that old question – what about those people who do good deeds but are not believers. Sometimes we are challenged by the good that some ungodly people do in this world. You have heard it said that so and so is such a good person he must be a Christian. Isaiah of course makes it abundantly clear that all our good works are as filthy rags before the holy God (Isaiah 64:6). Why – because God knows every heart. We see a good work but God sees the heart and he sees the whole of life and indeed eternity. That is why it is only deeds done in the truth – who is the truth? Jesus Christ. It is only deeds done in God that stand in the light.

Are you walking in the light? Are your deeds such that they may be clearly seen in the light? Repent and turn to the Lord. Do everything in his strength and to please him.

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