**Faith and Darkness**

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*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. John 1:5 NLT*

A few weeks ago, our area experienced a large windstorm and our power went out. It was a cold, dreary, now dark experience. I am fortunate and live in the center of our town–so we seem to a priority for the power company. Many people’s power went off in the evening, while mine didn’t go out until 7:00 in the morning, but it was still difficult to see.

I had actually prepared this summer for expected power outages by replacing the used batteries in my best flashlight. It is a fancy type with flashers, a radio, a broad light and a typical flashlight type headlamp. I admit I felt a little smug—I knew where my flashlight was and I was prepared! I had an emergency light that extinguished the darkness.

My Bible, *New Spirit Filled Life Bible,*has a feature called “word wealth”. It is a help that gives a bit more insight into different Hebrew or Greek words. It defines the word “extinguish” in John 1:5. “Extinguish, *katalambano*Strongs#2638. The word is capable of three interpretations: 1. to seize, lay hold of, overcome. As such, v.5 could read ‘the darkness does not gain control of it.’ 2. To perceive, attain, lay hold of with the mind, to apprehend with mental or moral effort. With this meaning the verse could be translated, “the darkness is unreceptive and does not understand it’. 3. To quench, extinguish, snuff out the light by stifling it. ‘The darkness will never be able to eliminate it.’ Light and darkness essentially are antagonistic. The Christian’s joy is in knowing that light is not only greater than darkness but will also outlast the darkness.

Darkness can be disorienting, fearful and a thief. It can rob of us of joy, hope and expectation, because it robs us of our seeing. It gives opportunity for our imaginations to run wild. However, when we understand that our God is light. He has given us that light and with that light we are able to walk in confidence–because His *word is a lamp to guide my feet and is a light for my path. Psalm 119:105 NLT* When we find ourselves in “darkness” in any situation or difficulty we must run to God’s Word. That requires submission and humility, and maybe some time to actually seek out what it has to say.

There are a couple of things implied in this scripture. One is movement. We are looking to navigate through a dark or at least low lit area as safely as possible. The promise of this verse is that God’s Word will give us exactly that–enough light to move ahead. We may not be able to see clearly all around us, but we will have enough wisdom, insight or direction to safely take the next step. This involves trust and submission. Both things which aren’t natural in dark places. As we follow him and his ways we know that his path leads to life, truth and freedom. He will not lead us to wickedness or evil. Romans 12;2 instructs us*: Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.* We must be honest and admit when we walk our own selves into darkness through disobedience, sin. Before we can walk farther, we must repent, turn from our wicked ways and back to the light. Of course, this implies that we are willing to let go of our own selfish, fearful ways, and follow him. This lamp, God’s Word, that guides our feet will only lead us to knowing him and his ways in a deeper, fuller measure.

Sometimes, our paths do lead us into suffering and trials. It can feel very dark. I want remind you that this darkness does not have the power to extinguish your faith, love or future. When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we do not need to fear any evil lurking there. *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 ESV* When we take the time to remember we are never alone in the dark places because our Sovereign God is with us. peace comes. When our walk with him, becomes more about our relationship with him, than what we think we want, we will choose to follow no matter when he leads.

My friends, the darkness of this world (Satan and his minions) do not control this world. Please understand, that God has not abdicated. He is ruling and reigning, right now, whether we see it or not (dark places). He wants us to understand and live our lives in such a manner. That is why it is important for us to follow him, because he not only has the light, but is the light of the world. The smallest candle has power over the darkness. He has commissioned us to be part of that light. Let us let our light (which was lit by him) shine bright in this dark world, it needs us.

*Father, we need you to really help us understand how strong and powerful your light is. Every fear, torment and lie that rises up against your truth we turn back now in Jesus’ Name. We choose to walk in the light, we choose to follow the lamp you have given us (your word) and I ask that you continue to instruct us how to shine brighter in this dark world, In Jesus’ Name. Amen*