

“Men Loved Darkness”  
John 3:19-21  
(Preached at Trinity, November 29, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Jesus has been instructing Nicodemus on the gift of eternal life. Human beings are terribly corrupted by sin. Instead of eternal life we all deserve to perish in our sin. But God is rich in mercy. Paul wrote to the Church of Ephesus:  
**Ephesians 2:4-6 NAU** - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus"
2. Who can comprehend such love? Jesus described the marvel of it:  
**John 3:16 NAU** - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
3. God's love was so infinite and rich that He gave that which was most precious to Him to save fallen men from ultimate damnation. He gave His Son who would come and bear the iniquity of men.  
**Isaiah 53:5-6 NAU** - "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.<sup>6</sup> All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him."
4. What could be better than God providing the means of our deliverance from an eternity of suffering? It is the greatest of all gifts. The Greek word for Gospel is εὐαγγέλιον. We all know the literal translation. It means "Good News."  
**Luke 2:8-11 NAU** - "In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;<sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."
5. This gift of the Gospel is offered to all men and will be freely given to all who will receive it.  
**John 3:16 NAU** - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."  
**Isaiah 55:1 NAU** - "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost."
6. Who would possibly reject such a gift? It would be insane madness. Why would anyone choose to continue on the path of perdition? In **Verses 19-21** Jesus provides the answer.

7. He uses the familiar darkness/light metaphor.  
Metaphorically, there are two distinct and separate realms on the earth –
- A. One is characterized by darkness and ruled by Satan who continues to blind the unbelieving with lies and deceit.  
**2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NAU** - "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
- B. The other is characterized by light and is ruled by Christ whose very nature is light.  
**1 John 1:5-7 NAU** - "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."
- C. These two realms of darkness and light are completely incompatible with each other.
1. God demonstrated this at creation  
**Genesis 1:1-4 NAU** - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness."  
This great separation will always be present. Darkness is the absence of light. Light will always dispel darkness.
  2. Paul described this incompatibility  
**2 Corinthians 6:14 NAU** - "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"
  3. Hell will be the ultimate expression of darkness—the ultimate separation  
**Matthew 22:13 NAU** - "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"
8. In **Chapter 1** John wrote that in the incarnation Light has come upon the earth.  
**John 1:4-5 NAU** - "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. <sup>5</sup> The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."
9. Tonight, as we look at **Verses 19-21** I want to point out three axioms:
1. Lost men despise the light - "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light "
  2. Lost men love darkness - "Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."
  3. God transforms us to love the light –  
"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light"

I. Men despise the light

A. All of humanity is born into a world of darkness. Sin has left us with a spiritual and moral blindness

1. A blind person is unable to process light
  - a. Light can be all around him and yet he cannot perceive it. He lives in a world of darkness.
  - b. This is a perfect analogy of our spiritual condition. We are in a world of darkness and completely unaware of the existence of anything else.
2. This spiritual darkness leaves the lost man unable to comprehend spiritual things. The light of Christ is repulsive to him.
3. Why is it that so few believe in a nation so saturated with the gospel? They will not come to the light.

B. The nature of light is it exposes

1. A darkened room can hide all manner of dust and grime. A light will expose the filth  
**John 3:20 NAU** - "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."
2. The lost man does not like his sin exposed. He will often become very angry if you tell him he's a sinner. This is so true in our generation.
  - a. We love the homosexual but his behavior is sinful. To utter this in some countries is illegal. To declare it in many workplaces will cost you your job.
  - b. It is sinful to have sexual relations outside of wedlock
  - c. Drunkenness is sin, gossip is sin, an unforgiving heart is sin, hatred of authority is sin, covetousness is sin
  - d. It is sinful to break the Sabbath
3. We all have sin that we would not want exposed—hidden thoughts, impure motives, careless deeds. The beauty of Christianity is we have an Advocate that we can come before and confess our sins.  
**1 John 1:9 NAU** - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."  
**1 John 2:1 NAU** - "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;"

C. Jesus Christ has come to save sinners

**1 Timothy 1:15 NAU** - "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*."

1. To look at Christ without the context of sin is to completely miss who He is and what He came to accomplish
2. Lost humanity cannot comprehend Christ. This was John's point in **Chapter 1**. Even with the infinite brightness of the light of Christ men still cannot see it.  
**John 1:5 NAU** - "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

3. Lost humanity sees no value in the Gospel. They despise and reject Christ.  
**Isaiah 53:3 NAU** - "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."
4. Even if he doesn't speak his hatred of Christ with his mouth, the lost man hates the light in his heart. He seldom reads his Bible, seldom prays, find's it easy to avoid worship.  
**John 3:19 NAU** - "men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

## II. Men love the darkness

- A. Lost humanity is born into a world of darkness.
  1. Darkness is all we know. But we are satisfied.
  2. All that the lost man loves is in the realm of darkness. Sin is hidden under the cloak of darkness.
  3. We justify our sin. We paint it with bright colors. We adorn it with the jewels of this world.
  4. We are content in our sin. In fact, we will scream very loudly if you try to take our sin away.
- B. Men will not come to Christ, not because they have not been invited but because they WILL NOT come  
**John 5:39-40 NAU** - "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; <sup>40</sup> and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."
  1. They lack moral ability  
**John 6:44 NAU** - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."  
**John 6:65 NAU** - "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."
  2. They are satisfied in their sin. Jesus says in **Verse 19** they are in love with their sin.  
**John 3:19 NAU** - "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."
  3. This is at the heart of Jesus' opening words to Nicodemus  
**John 3:3 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
  4. **Revelation 22:17** says, "And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."  
The problem with lost humanity is they are not thirsty. They are satisfied.

- C. As terrible as life in sin may be, they are not willing to leave it
1. In the Gospel they are being promised a new life, a better life -- liberation, redemption, adoption, and a possession
  2. As incomprehensible as it is to understand, the sinner is thoroughly attached to his bondage – he desires to remain. Remember how fondly Israel remembered their bondage even after their liberation.  
**Numbers 11:5 NAU** - "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,"
  3. Human beings are in terrible bondage to sin. They cannot escape it, even if they try. They love their sin more than they love God.  
**2 Timothy 3:1-4 NAU** - "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,"
- III. God transforms us to love the light - "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light"
- A. Jesus told Nicodemus at the beginning of **Chapter 3**  
**John 3:3 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
1. We are naturally repulsed by the light. The lost man covers his eyes and turns away from Christ.
  2. Only God can bring the great transformation upon man. Only God can remove the scales from our eyes.  
**2 Corinthians 4:6 NAU** - "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."
  3. God calls us out of the darkness and into the light  
**1 Peter 2:9 NAS** - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"  
**Colossians 1:13 NAS** - "He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,"
- B. We come to the light because we are able to savor it
1. For the believer, Jesus Christ is altogether lovely
  2. The Christian now hates his sin. He turns away from the darkness and now seeks to walk in the light of Christ.  
**Ephesians 5:8 KJV** - "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye light* in the Lord: walk as children of light:"

Conclusion:

1. Does this describe you? Is your life characterized by the light of Christ, the beauty of His character that is displayed in brightness?  
**1 John 1:6-7 NAU** - "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."
2. God works in us to display His glory.  
**John 3:21 NAU** - "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."