

Afraid Of The Dark!

Evangelistic Message

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Let me ask you, friends, have you ever stayed at a haunted hotel? I remember years ago my family stayed at the Grove Park Inn at Asheville, North Carolina, and it was one of the most haunted hotels in the country, and as soon as we checked into that hotel, we felt like we were being watched wherever we went; there was an eerie presence in the room with us and we had to keep the light on at night because we were afraid of the dark in that hotel room because of the eerie presence that was there. Well, I've got a message for you tonight, friends, that you're not gonna want to miss because it addresses a common fear that just about every one of us have and that's the fear of the dark. Maybe when you were little you were afraid of a dark room and you made sure to sleep with a nightlight. Some of you here still sleep with a light on because you are afraid of the dark and that's the title of my message this evening, friends, "Afraid Of The Dark!"

There is a name for this phobia or fear, it's called nyctophobia and it's triggered by the brain of having an intense fear of what could or would happen in a dark environment in the unknown. It could be triggered by watching a horror movie or witnessing a tragic event where you would not want to be, in a room where when you opened your eyes, it was pitch dark. The fear of darkness can create physical symptoms like feeling sick, heart palpitations, sweating and nausea. Are you afraid of the dark, friend? Would you want to be lost in a forest at night with no flashlight? I sure wouldn't, where it would be so dark you couldn't see something as it brushed up against you.

I remember when I was a little boy, my family took me to visit my grandfather up in Michigan and he lived in an old scary-looking house that had a room up in the attic. Well, guess where I had to sleep? In that dark attic by myself. I must have been around six years old and I started crying and my cries woke up my grandfather and he came up into that dark attic and turned on the little light bulb and he asked me why I was crying. I believe everybody here is probably afraid of the dark.

Listen to me, friends, I believe if I could walk you over to the verge of hell and lift the lid off that bottomless pit, your ears would ring with the cries of the damned, their wailing and weeping and sobbing and shrieking would drive you mad. How would you like to be shut up in there with them in the regions of the netherworld which is hell and its darkness? Hell is always described in the Bible as a place of darkness. In Judge we read, "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." It's so dark in hell, friend, that you can't see your hand in front of your face, and it's oppressively hot like an oven. You can't breathe, you can't see, and things tear at you, demons tear at you in hell in that

blackness of darkness forever because once you're shut up in there, you can never escape. You can never get out of that prison.

Jesus had a special name for hell, he called it outer darkness. In speaking of those thrust out of his presence forever in hell, Jesus spoke of their horrible state in Matthew's Gospel, he said, "shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Like me as a scared little boy up in the attic crying my eyes out, afraid of the darkness, the weeping that's going on in hell at this moment is from the tortured souls of the damned as they sit in darkness in anguish and terror. Weeping speaks of grief and frightfulness. Gnashing of teeth signifies great anger and regret. They gnash their teeth in grief and anger.

Have you ever been in a haunted house, friend? Do you know what that feels like? Have you ever been in a troubled house where there was a demonic presence, a demonic activity that manifested itself? Let me share a story with you. I grew up in a haunted house in Chicago. Hear me now! It was an old house that had a demonic presence there. It was eerie. It was creepy and almost suffocating in that haunted house. When my family first moved in, we learned right away it was haunted. We were sitting downstairs in the living room and we heard heavy footsteps directly above us; it sounded like someone was slowly walking up and down the hallway stairs, plopping one foot down after another. We looked at each other and my dad tried to laugh it off by saying, "Spooks," but it wasn't funny as those footsteps fell heavily and it was a common occurrence in that haunted home.

One night as those footsteps were falling up and down that hall, I ran up the stairs to see if anyone was there, but my eyes could not see what I was hearing and that's what it's like in hell, friend, you'll hear noises all around you that you cannot see. But something happened in that haunted house that was so terrifying it would stop you in your tracks. Occasionally even in the daytime a pounding would begin on the door beneath the stairwell and it would grow in intensity as that pounding, horrifying pounding would just be on that door pounding. One day I went over to that door and right after it stopped pounding, and I quickly opened the door and a cold, chilly blast of air came out on me even though it was 100 degrees outside. I sure was glad when we finally moved away out of that haunted house. I had to sleep with the light on for years after that experience.

How about you, friend? Are you afraid of the dark? What would you do if you were trapped in a place full of darkness and full of demonic activity? Hell is full of demons. I believe that when you die outside of Christ, that demons drag you down to hell. I believe when you lay dying, by your bedside is a pack of demons waiting to leap upon you as soon as you pass through the door of death if you're an unconverted individual. It was said by a family member of the actor Michael Landon from "The Little House on the Prairie," that when he was in the hospital near death, he kept waving his arms frantically around his head as if he was trying to ward off an unseen attacker.

As Jude speaks of hell as the blackness of darkness forever, and that's forever friends. There's a verse in Isaiah which best describes the terror of being trapped in a devil's hell,

waking up in hell suddenly and being startled. In Isaiah we read, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Listen to me, friend, are you afraid of the dark? Are you scared of the darkness of hell? Hear me, friend, there may be one here who thinks they're on their way to heaven but you're really almost sunk in hell, you hover by a moth's wing over that pit of hell and your weight will soon carry you down to that region of pitch-black darkness! You don't want to go to hell, friend, you don't want to be shut up in that region of darkness and burnings. The heat in hell is so intense it's described as an oven.

When I was in high school, I had a job as a sack boy in a local grocery store and one of my duties of my job was to break down the cardboard boxes that the produce came in and stack them on a dolly and take them to the back of the store to a big cast-iron furnace. Well, when I would open the heavy door of that burning furnace, the heat from those white-hot flames was so intense it would singe my face. It forced me backwards. In Malachi, we see how hot it is in hell, "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Trust me, friend, when I say you don't want to go to hell. I'm here to warn you, to warn you of your great danger of dying in your sins outside the saving blood of Jesus Christ. Let me tell you about Jesus. Listen to me, friend, as I tell you about this wonderful Savior from sin. He's your only hope of staying out of hell. You've heard of Jesus, he stepped out of heaven and he came down here so we can go up there. He came into the world doing good, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, feeding the hungry, and giving rest to the weary, yet what happened? Wicked men cried, "Away with him!" and nailed him to a cross. Look at that blood-stained Savior from sin, look at that man on the cross, friend, his arms outstretched, his nail-pierced hands beckoning you to come to him. He calls, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Come to Christ, friend, and believe on him. Look at those nail-pierced hands and feet. When all was against him, his love flows out to a world of guilty sinners. At the cross is the place where wicked men sought to get rid of him, but by his death it becomes the place where saving power flows out to all – hear me now – flows out to all who come in repentance confessing they are sinners and own him as their Savior and Lord.

Let me ask you, friend, are you weary of your sins? Are you tired of carrying that burden of guilt around with you? Come to Christ, friend, and lay your sin-burden down. Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." Salvation is in Jesus, friend. He is the friend of sinners. He is the Pearl of Great Price worth having, worth selling all for. Jesus is the only remedy and refuge for sin but you must come to him to get under his blood for forgiveness of sin.

Listen to me, friend, hear me now because your very destiny may be at stake here tonight. If the Spirit of God has been dealing with your soul through this message, friend, I want you to come to Christ. Do not delay. Come to Christ and believe on him. Come to him in repentance and believe on him for salvation.

I'm gonna sing a hymn and if God's been dealing with your heart, if he's been troubling your conscience, if he's been dealing with you this evening, friend, if he's working on your heart, don't delay, you come to Christ. You come and get under his blood. Don't go to the darkness in hell where you can't stand, you can't stand that darkness, friend, but you come to Jesus. You stand in his light, the light of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I can't imagine how bad hell really is but I can only imagine how wonderful heaven is. Listen, friend, you come as I sing.

"I can only imagine what it will be like
When I walk, by your side
I can only imagine what my eyes will see
When you face is before me
I can only imagine

Surrounded by You glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for you Jesus
Or in awe of You be still
Will I stand in your presence
Or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah
Will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine
I can only imagine

I can only imagine when that day comes
When I find myself standing in the Son
I can only imagine when all I would do is forever
Forever worship You
I can only imagine

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for You, Jesus
Or in awe of you be still
Will I stand in your presence
Or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah
Will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine
I can only imagine."