

What Do I Do in the Dark Places?

Psalm 88; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 7-29-18

Dark Places in the Christian Life

The Christian life is filled with 'dark places.' We can be in 'dark places' as the direct consequence of our sin. But many times the 'dark places' are simply the result of life in a fallen world, according to God's wisdom and love and design for the believer.

The 'dark place' has different forms.

- The *Dark Place* of Limited Understanding: What is going on and why? What does this mean? What should I do?
- The *Dark Place* of Negative Feelings/Emotions: Why do I feel this way? Do I really love Him? Is there any hope?
- The *Dark Place* of a Broken Body: When will this end? Can I stand this another day?
- The *Dark Place* of Uncertain and Unwanted Circumstances: Why doesn't this change? Why this disappointment? Why this ongoing need? Why this difficulty?
- The *Dark Place* of Difficult Relationships: Why am I treated this way? Will things ever get better? Will this broken relationship ever heal?

The 'dark place' is filled with questions/uncertainties and pain/suffering and temptations of anxiety/fear and longing for something different/better. The 'dark place' is often the context of the Psalmist! (see Psalm 88) How do I have joy in the 'dark places'? What do I do in the 'dark places'?

1. Don't be surprised.

You have put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths. – Psalm 88:6

He has driven me and made me walk In darkness and not in light. – Lamentations 3:2

In dark places He has made me dwell, Like those who have long been dead. – Lamentations 3:6

“He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, And He has put darkness on my paths. – Job 19:8

“When I expected good, then evil came; When I waited for light, then darkness came. – Job 30:26

See also Psalm 31:10; Psalm 103:4; Psalm 143:3; Psalm 22:15; Psalm 23:4; Psalm 44:19; Psalm 55:4; Psalm 107:10; Job 17:12; Psalm 11:12; Psalm 88:18; Isaiah 59:9

2. Don't give up.

So that my soul would choose suffocation, Death rather than my pains. – Job 7:15

See also Jonah 4:3; Jonah 4:8; 1 Kings 19:4; Job 3:21; Isaiah 45:7

3. Trust in the Word.

⁸ *“Behold, I go forward but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; ⁹ When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. ¹⁰ “But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. ¹¹ “My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. ¹² “I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. ¹³ “But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does. ¹⁴ “For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him. ¹⁵ “Therefore, I would be dismayed at His presence; When I consider, I am terrified of Him. ¹⁶ “It is God who has made my heart faint, And the Almighty who has dismayed me, ¹⁷ But I am not silenced by the darkness, Nor deep gloom which covers me. – Job 23:8-17*

Who is among you that fears the Lord, That obeys the voice of His servant, That walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. – Isaiah 50:10

See also Genesis 1:2; Genesis 15:12; Exodus 14:20; 2 Samuel 22:102 Samuel 22:29; Job 38:2; Isaiah 9:2; Hebrews 12:2

4. Love according to the Word.

And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. – Isaiah 58:10

See also 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:6.

5. Wait on God in prayer.

⁷ *But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. ⁸ Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; Though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is a light for me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the LORD Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me out to the light, And I will see His righteousness. – Micah 7:7-9*

See also Psalm 107:14; Psalm 112:4; Psalm 139:11-12; Isaiah 29:18; Isaiah 42:7; Isaiah 42:16; Jeremiah 2:6