

## Darkness, Then Light Hope

During the dimmest hours of the night, we are moments away from the morning light—a light that never fails to arrive and welcome us into God’s new morning mercies.

Lamentations 3:22-23 “The LORD’S acts of mercy indeed do not end, For His compassions do not fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

1. It only happens to other people!

A. The phone call no one wants to receive. (Your son was killed in a climbing accident)

1. “It only happens to others.” Not this time.

2. His heart was crushed and ground to pieces. It broke him and he felt that he wanted to die, but the pain reminded him that he was very much alive.

3. He would walk for miles; pray the Psalms; weep rivers of tears. Ask “why?”

B. This father said the Spirit of God was doing what he has been doing since the dawn of life.

1. He was accomplishing his best work in the dark. The creation of all things began in the dark. “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

2. His creation of each of us began in the darkness of the womb.

Psalms 112:4 “Light shines in the darkness for the upright; He is gracious, compassionate, and righteous.”

2. Our Father is with us in the dark.

A. He is with us when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

1. There is hope because our enemy “may kill our body but God’s truth continues to live on.” Jesus conquered death.

2. Because we are united with Jesus by grace through faith, death is the doorway to life.

3. We bury the bodies of those who die. Jesus was buried as well, but he rose victorious, his foot on the neck of death for us.

B. Through wounds and tears, in darkness and grief, we are taught:

Psalms 139:12 “Even darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.”

1. How can Christians possibly, audaciously, pause for Advent in a world so dark?

2. As the hymn “O Holy Night” says: “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.”

3. The birth of Jesus came at a time no less troubled than our own, to a people pressed down and weary, to a world on edge.

4. Zechariah said,

Luke 1:78–79 “Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, 79 To shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

5. Isaiah wrote: (9:2)

“The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.”

6. Your world may feel dreary and full of grief and woe. You may feel as though there is only darkness. But Advent offers us hope in our groaning.

7. God became flesh, inhabited our world, and by his life, death and resurrection defeated the darkness that fills the world.

8. We can sing “Joy To The World” because the baby who was born in a dark cave is the King of the world. In him is no darkness at all. A new world awaits.

C. Christmas is not a feeling; it’s a fact.

John 1:4-5 “In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.”

1. You didn’t receive Christ as an ever-present emotion. You didn’t become a follower of a feeling.

2. Something far greater happened.

2 Corinthians 4:6 “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. We can celebrate this Advent season “knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us into his presence” (2 Corinthians 4:14).

D. God knows our hearts need help in these times.

1. He knows our hands will grow weak and our hearts fearful.

2. He knows we’ll want to give up, if only in small ways.

3. So, it is to us, in this moment, that he speaks a word of promise: “I am coming and will set all things right.”

“The darker your room, the more powerful his light.” (Micah 7:8)

There is a longing in your heart for purpose, meaning and life itself. And this life you long for is the life of Jesus himself, who gave his life for you and wants you to know eternal life.