

Ev221 Sharing Your Spiritual Journey

Lesson Ev221-13 Spiritual Encounters: Light and Darkness

Imagine yourself in a dark cave—total and complete darkness—with no light whatsoever. Suddenly you strike a match and the cavern is filled with light, although the flame is small. When the match burns out, darkness returns. It is not because of anything the dark does itself, but only because of the absence of the light. This illustrates an important truth: darkness does not overcome the light, but light dispels darkness.

Imagine if the light in that cave were from a larger fire, not just a match. Then consider how much light a fire out in the open seems to give, in the middle of the noonday sun. Hardly any effect is noticeable. The point is that the light shines brightest in the deepest darkness. So it is with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The same principle can be seen in our spiritual encounters. Without Christ, people dwell in great darkness. Jesus comes to bring light into their lives. He wants to give them spiritual insight, but even more so to bring them eternal life.

Paul tells believers in Corinth, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2Cor 4:3-4). Paul was well-acquainted with the contrast between light and darkness, blindness and seeing. We learn in the Book of Acts that he was blinded by a heavenly light on the way to Damascus. He remained unable to see for three days. But God sent a disciple named Ananias to pray for him. When he laid hands on him, “immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again.” Then Paul began to see what God had for him to do. His assignment was to bring insight—spiritual sight—to the Gentiles through the gospel (Acts 9:3-18).

Paul then continues to address how light drives out the darkness. It comes by preaching the Lordship of Jesus Christ: “For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ” (2Cor 4:5-6).

In other words, people are in spiritual darkness, because they have been blinded by the god of this age. Who is the god of this age? His names are Satan, the evil one, the ruler of the kingdom of darkness, the devil. He and his evil cohorts (demons) blind people to the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. You learned in the last lesson that there are spiritual forces of evil in this dark world. But the gospel of Jesus brings light to those in darkness.

The symbols of darkness and light, or blindness and seeing, are used throughout the Scriptures. They indicate the spiritual state of human beings. Without the revelation that Jesus gives us, we are blinded to our spiritual condition and remain in spiritual darkness. The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus is the light, that he overcomes the darkness. He is “the true light that gives light to everyone” (John 1:9). We see this throughout John—this theme of Jesus as the light to a world in darkness.

A few chapters later John says, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates

the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light” (John 3:19-21). Have you seen this Scripture to be true in the lives of those you minister to? Those who do evil shrink away from the light of Jesus, for fear their deeds will be exposed. Those who live by the truth come into the light, so that their deeds can be seen as pleasing to God.

Jesus himself brings people out of darkness into the wonderful light of his love: “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’” (John 8:12).

And later in his first epistle, John relates the simple truth that “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all (1John 1:5). The contrast between light and darkness cannot be denied. Those who remain in their sin and are blinded and in the dark: “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him” (1John 2:9–11).

So, the contrast between light and darkness is seen frequently in the Scriptures. In fact, it goes all the way back to Genesis where it says, “The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness” (Gen 1:2-4).

This early account shows a strong connection between God and light in the world. He spoke and there was light in the darkness. John echoes this thought when he says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it” (John 1:1-5).

The simple truth is that the words of the gospel are light to those in darkness—in bondage to sin. When we speak them to those in the dark, they bring spiritual insight and light into their lives. Jesus is the Light of the world. He wants us also to be lights to shine out his truths to those in darkness. He said, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:14-16).

Living for Christ, sharing his true love with others, is a source of light to those who are in darkness. We should be constantly seeking to bring the light of Jesus Christ into the lives of those who don’t know him.

This story is **important** because it reminds us that without Christ, people are in darkness. The truth of the gospel is light to them. It brings insight into their spiritual state and freedom from the bondage of sin. Truth about Jesus releases them from the evil one’s hand. We must tell people who Jesus is and what he did for them.

The **main truth** is that people are spiritually blinded by Satan, but the truth about Jesus enables them to see. It gives them insight into their spiritual condition. The words of the gospel can

bring them out of their darkness into the wonderful light of God's presence. They can go from the darkness of sin's bondage to the light and freedom of eternal life in Christ.

Review Questions

1. Scripture tells us that people are blinded to the gospel by the god of this age. Who is this god of this age? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you answered, "The devil, or Satan, is the god of this age Paul is talking about," you answered correctly.

2. John tells us that people loved darkness more than the light. Why? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "Because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed," you are right.

3. What is the primary means whereby light overcomes the darkness? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that light comes to people in darkness by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it until you can quote some of the passages and share the truth in your own words. How do these concepts go along with spiritual blindness and insight? Look for ways to share the truth of the gospel with those you know. Talk to those that are struggling with sin or seem to be blinded by the darkness in their life. Look for signs that your sharing has brought "light" to their situation. In what ways have you seen that preaching the truth of the gospel has overcome areas of darkness and bondage in the lives of unbelievers?