

Text: Jn 12.46

For our baptismal service today, I was thinking of the theme of light and darkness. These are frequently used as metaphors.

Light is good, darkness is evil.

I did a quick search on the internet for the effects of prolonged exposure to darkness. I couldn't find a lot, but some of the effects were:

- Over-production of melanin, under production of serotonin

This can lead to depression, or something they call SAD syndrome (seasonal affective disorder)

- Disturbance of the circadian rhythm, or your internal clock

Some people spending time in caves would get their internal clocks all messed up, like staying awake for 36 hours and sleeping for 12.

- One claim: It can make us more likely to lie and cheat, make mistakes at work, and even see things we don't normally see.

Of course, we live in alternating cycles of light and darkness, so living in darkness alone isn't at all the normal state of affairs, except when we talk about spiritual darkness.

Text for today: John 12.46

Proposition: Jesus came to bring light into the world, so that people who believe can live in the light.

I. Spiritual darkness is a constant state

A. Jesus came so that believers would not "remain" in darkness

1. The KJV uses "abides"
2. For the lost, darkness is a constant state
3. If we apply the effects of physical darkness, we could say
 - a. Darkness disorients life
 - b. Darkness disturbs the natural rhythms of the soul
 - c. Darkness descends to despair

d. Darkness (perhaps) increases the propensity to lie and cheat — at least we can be sure of this with spiritual darkness

B. The Bible describes the effects of spiritual darkness

Ep 5.11-13 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹² for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

1 Jn 2.9-11 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. ¹⁰ The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Ep 5.3-8 ¶ But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴ and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

II. Spiritual light is found only in Jesus Christ

A. In our text, we see Jesus proclaim he came as Light into the world

1. Not “a light” but just “Light”

2. He hints at an exclusivity here (which he boldly declares elsewhere)

B. Other claims about light in Christ

Jn 1.4-5 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Jn 8.12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Jn 12.35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

III. Transition from darkness to light is by faith alone

A. Everyone who believes escapes the darkness

Jn 12.36 ¶ "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

1. Jesus spoke those words to some Greeks who were seeking him
2. Later, in our text we have the last public words of Jesus to the world at large
 - a. Still has much to say to his disciples (Jn 13-17)
 - b. He answers his accusers at trial
 - c. But no more messages to the public at large

B. The issue with Jesus is believing in him as your only saviour from sin

Jn 3.16-21 ¶ "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.¹⁷ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.¹⁹ "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.²⁰ “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.²¹ “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

Conclusion:

Proposition: Jesus came to bring light into the world, so that people who believe can live in the light.

This is the proposition we celebrate today, with a baptism.

With baptism, we are confessing that Jesus is light, and we are walking in light.

The darkness is past, the light shines.