



Walking in the Light

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Exodus 10:21-29

Clint Pressley

²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. ²³ They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived. ²⁴ Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind." ²⁵ But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. ²⁶ Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there." ²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. ²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." ²⁹ Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."

(Pastor Prays)

We have all watched with horror over the last week or so as reports came out of Texas, especially regarding the Guadalupe River flood. It seems like every time you see the news, there are just all these devastating stories about the kids. So many children drowned without warning. You don't have to be there. We can be 1000 miles away, watching the news, and know

that there is a pain that you can feel. It's such a devastating thing that even the President and the First Lady felt the need to go there. It will now hit a little closer to home. Last week, we found out that a young man named Sebastian Trotter went to our church for a while, and he even worked out of my house. He is now a young soldier with a young wife. He is stationed in Texas, but was on vacation in New Mexico, and that same flood that hit three days prior in Texas finally made it to New Mexico. They were camped by a creek in a trailer camper, and the waters came without any warning. He and his wife and their two children, so they held on to those two babies, six and seven years old. The water hit, and the walls blew out, and as hard as they tried, they couldn't hold their children, and they are gone. You hear that news, and it's a pain that you can feel.

The story before us is not about a pain you can feel, but there's something else here that you could feel. In verse 21, we are told that God sent a darkness that could be felt. A darkness so deep, so foreboding, a darkness that was so saturating, the most powerful people in the world were paralyzed. You've read the Bible. It serves as a picture of just how deep evil goes, just how dark evil is. And right in the middle of this story of the darkness, what did God do? God walled off His people, and He provided light. Throughout the Bible, God uses darkness and light, both of them, as powerful metaphors. And in this penultimate plague, penultimate. You know, Kyler has been preaching, and he likes big words, so I'm trying one out myself. Penultimate means the one right before the last one. Right before the last plague, God shows us two things. He shows us his power to condemn his enemies and his power to save his people. And what you read here in this passage is that God's enemies, the Egyptians, are in darkness, and God's people, the Israelites, are in light. So, what I want to do is I'm going to plagiarize the Bible. I'm going to take a quote out of First John and use that as the point of my sermon. Here it is. Here's the point. Here's the command.

Walk in the Light as God is in the Light

What I want to do is just walk through and just sort of study the passage for a little bit. It's not very long, but I will point out a couple of things to you in verse 21 down to verse 29. We will walk through the plague, study it, and then maybe come back and make some application as to what we learn. How do we walk in the light? So, let's go down to verse 21 to the 9th plague. I will go through the previous plagues with you very quickly. The first one is the plague of blood,

and the Nile River turns the blood. After that, the frogs came up. The frogs were terrible. You put your foot in your flip-flop and there's a frog. It squishes between your toes. It's a terrible plague. After that comes lice, crawling all over everybody. Then, after the flies, God sends a plague that kills everything. It's the plague that kills the livestock, the horses, the goats, and the cows. And everything dies. After that is the plague that attacks the people, it's some sort of skin disease, boils. And after the plague of the boils, then you have the hail. It rained to the degree that all of the crops were destroyed, and whatever was left, the locusts came in and ate.

And now, here we are, in the darkness. There's not a warning in verse 21. Moses doesn't go to Pharaoh and say, let my people go and if you don't, here comes the darkness. No, verse 21 jumps right over the warning. God says to Moses, put your hands in the air toward heaven, just like he'll do when they're fighting. Hold your hands up to show where this is coming from. There's going to be a darkness; look at the darkness. You'll find it described there in verse 21. 21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." This is no ordinary darkness. This is not just when the lights go out. This is a darkness that can be felt. It's palpable. You've heard of a silence that is deafening. This is a darkness you could feel. So, Moses did what he was told to do. He stretched out his hands toward heaven, and there was this pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt. Three days. Don't miss the descriptors. It's pitch-black darkness. It's everywhere in Egypt. It lasted 3 days.

This is not a sandstorm. This is not an eclipse. This is God showing condemnation. I get up early, and it's dark when I get up. So, you get up in the morning, and in my house, I run into stuff. So much so that Connie put a night light in the wall like I'm six years old. I have a night light now. So, I get up and it's dark and I turn on the coffee and read my Bible. When I go back for the second or third cup of coffee and look out my kitchen window, it's looking toward the east, and about 5:30, I start to see that it's growing lighter. The sun's coming up. Not this day. Darkness fell over the land, and at 6:00 in the morning, the sun was not up. Maybe it's just cloudy. At 7:00, the sun's not up. 8:00 in the morning, the sun's still not up. You don't have a match to strike. You don't have a torch lit. You can't see anything. It is so bad that they can't move. You see them in verse 23; they are crippled. They couldn't see one another. They couldn't rise up from their home for three days of darkness.

And then, look at the contrast in verse 23. Here comes grace. So, there's condemnation, and right in the middle of this darkness, all the people of Israel had light where they lived. There is a distinction between those who are outside in the darkness and those who are in Christ and loved by God. When we see baptism, it's a picture of you. You were once dead in your sin, now you are alive. You once were in darkness, now you're in light. Here is a picture of darkness, and in the middle of it, God's people are in light.

So, Pharaoh is losing his mind. He can't see. His eyes have not adjusted. So, what does he do? Verse 24 says, he calls Moses. And here's what he does. He gives the greatest concession up to this point. There have been eight other plagues. So, there's a little negotiating, and he'll say, okay, I'll let you go. You can go and take your children with you. This is the greatest concession yet. The only thing I'm going to say is, take your kids, but leave the livestock here. There's a compromise. But Moses said in verse 25, we have got to have the animals. We have to have them for sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we might sacrifice to the Lord our God. There's something here that Moses knew. It's not developed. We don't have the sacrificial system yet. But there's an understanding that in order for you to approach a holy God, something that is alive must die in your place. That's the sacrifice. If the wages of sin is death, then a sacrifice paid for that. That was the symbol, and that symbol points us to Jesus Christ and His perfect sacrifice. Why did he die? He who is perfect living died in our place, that we might be covered with his righteousness, in verse 26. Moses goes on and says, Look, and we don't really know what's going to be expected of us. You see, our livestock must go with us, not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take them to serve the Lord our God. We do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we get there. God hasn't shown us yet.

Verse 27 is problematic for some people. Do not let it be problematic. Read it and accept what the Bible says. You see it right there in verse 27. " 27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. Sometimes I think people feel like, well, Pharaoh, if God had left him alone, he was just the nicest person. He's probably going to send Moses Christmas cards. He was such a nice guy. And then God came in to harden his heart. Don't forget our understanding of sinful nature. We come into this world with a bent towards sinfulness. There is Pharaoh already making bad choices. His heart was turned from God, and God just kept him there; kept him there in his own sin. So, Pharaoh said to him, here come the three threats. You

see the threats in verse 28. Three of them. 28 Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." That is a threat. It feels like Moses knows this is a turning point. So, Moses says, you're right, I'll never see your face again.

So, what do we do with this story? How do we learn lessons of walking in the light if there's a contrast of darkness? What do we learn from this plague? Or I might ask the question, how do we walk in the light? Let me see if I can give some application. How do you walk in the light? Number one:

Come out of the darkness into Christ

In verses 21 and 22, there you find the plague of darkness. In verse 23, you find light. I mentioned darkness and light as metaphors. In the Bible, when you see darkness mentioned, it sometimes means the judgment of God. Sometimes, the darkness we find in the Bible will tell us of God's abandonment. Think of the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Think of the very end when Jesus is on the cross. Think of the three hours of darkness and Jesus saying my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Darkness would symbolize that. You open up the Bible, and you get past the introduction, you get to Genesis 1:3, there's darkness, and chaos. Sometimes darkness gives us this formless, void, and chaotic scene. Sometimes it's just straight-out death. Sometimes, like in this story, it's a picture of God defeating the Pagan gods. The sun god for the Egyptians would be Ra, and the God defeating Ra. Sometimes when you get to the New Testament, you hear Jesus talk about hell. In Matthew 8:12, Jesus says that hell is the outer darkness.

Within the Bible, we find the metaphor of light. What does light stand for in the Bible? You open up to Genesis one and there you find the very first thing that happens. God said, let there be light. Light is the beginning of all things. In 1 John chapter one we are told that God himself is in the light. If you read the book of Ecclesiastes, it's a really entertaining book, it's good for your soul to read, you would find the light of day is to be alive. In Romans 2 we are told that light represents truth. In John Chapter 3, Jesus himself said, everyone who does evil hates light. Light is good. In John chapter one, we are told that life is the light of men and Christ is the light.

Now, in this passage, the plague is darkness and salvation is light. God's enemies are in darkness. God's people are in light, and the picture is to come out of darkness and into Christ.

It's the gospel. I try to share it every week. That God is holy and created you in his image, but the image of God in you is disfigured by your sin. That sin is a crime against God that he will punish. The gospel says that he put that punishment on Jesus, who lived perfectly, and at the cross, the punishment is poured out on Jesus. It kills him, the wages of sin is death. Jesus died. They put him in the grave. God, in his holiness and goodness, victoriously raised Jesus from the dead. He has ascended into heaven, and the way that becomes yours is you trust that Christ did that for you. Look to him, trust him, run to him. How do you walk in the light? The very first step is to come out of darkness and into Christ. That's number one, here's the second one, number two.

Get a good handle on grace

You'll find it in verse 23. Grace does something in you. So, verses 21-22 say there's darkness that you could feel, pitch black darkness. Darkness is all over Egypt. But verse 23 is in Goshen, there is light where God's people are. Light streams into the darkness from the homes of God's people. What did Jesus say to his followers? You are the light of the world. You are a city on a hill; it cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. No, they put it on a stool so everybody could see it.

Oftentimes, even if it's a Christian School, it can be a dark place, and you are the light. If you are going off to college, whether you've been moved to go to college or you're here in town, it can even be that the classroom will be a dark place, and you're the light. Sometimes you're afflicted with a sickness, and it gets you into a hospital, and it can be really scary. And even there, you are the light. I have a friend that has had a terrible bout with cancer in Mobile, AL. His name is Don Brown, and oftentimes the medicines seem as harsh as the cancer itself. And I was listening to Don, and I know that he's a doctor, but now he's got cancer. And speaking to doctors, I've heard him talk over and over again about the goodness of God, the grace of God, the Gospel of Jesus. And even in that hard spot, he is the light. I talked to Paul Little, who came out of our church, and he's living down at Parris Island with all the Marines working for Campus Outreach. God is using him to share the gospel every week. I was in Washington, D.C., last week

and met several senators. Washington, DC is a dark place. Wherever you are, God has saved you, and the light of Christ has shone on you.

There is a ministry here, do you see it? Let the houses of God's people be lighthouses. A couple of weeks ago, we were in Brookhaven, Mississippi, and we were ready to get some BBQ. We waited to be seated, and this probably 35-year-old woman came up to us and said, 'Are you Brother Clint?' I said yes, I am. And she then turns to Connie and says, 'I went to your first church when I was 23.' So, I thought to myself, how old am I now? My goodness. I mean, this is a grown woman with six children. So, she turned to Connie, and she told the story of being at Clear Branch Church. She grew up in a really hostile home with toxic parents, and at five years old, she happened to come to our house one day. Connie doesn't remember any of this, but Connie was baking some cornbread or something, and she just sat at the kitchen counter with Connie, talking. She said that made me realize that there can be happy homes. She's 35 now, and she's serving in a church as a children's director. So, she told Connie this, and it's so encouraging, and Connie doesn't even remember it. Don't discount the little things that you do for the gospel, and how that will affect down the road. You find it in this picture. You have darkness, which is God's judgment. And you have God's people under lights, that's grace. There's gospel grace there.

When you think about grace, you think about the saving grace of God. He saved you. And if you're having a bad day and you're a Christian, look, any day that you're not in hell is a good day. It's a saving grace. I was thinking about God's providing grace last night; the storm came over, and there's a roof over my head. I didn't get wet when it rained at my house last night. In fact, I couldn't really see the rain, because when Connie's gone, I pull the air conditioner way down, and it's fogged up the windows. 67° and me and the dogs are just lying in there, as cool as we could be. You think about the sustaining grace, what God has brought you through. Turn around and look back at your life. This is how God has sustained you. Hey, think about the unnecessary grace God has given you. Some things are luxuries. You think of those things, and you develop some gratitude in your heart; then, you take that gratitude into ministry. It's the very opposite of complaining. How do you walk in the light? There are two things. One is to come out of darkness, and the other is to get a handle on grace. When you think about grace, it

changes how you view all that happens to you. Let me give you a third way to walk in the light, number three.

Don't compromise your convictions

Let me show you where I get that. The Pharaoh offers up a negotiation. In verse 24, Pharaoh called Moses in and said to him, look, you can take everybody, take the old people, take the young people, take your children. I just want you to leave the animals here. That's a compromise. I'm going to let you go, just leave the animals here. It's reasonable. It makes sense. This is the most generous offer that Pharaoh has made to Moses yet. You probably are not tempted to commit murder, but you are tempted to compromise. You're not going to be faced with this terrible decision; you're going to be faced with little, teeny ones. You compromise on a Sunday, as a Christian, you should be coming to church. You compromise on what you'll watch or let your children see. You compromise on your views of sexuality. You compromise on what it means to follow Christ. Almost all the compromises that we are tempted with have to do with feeling nice, or being nice, or getting a financial advantage, or some sort of social advantage. My plea to you here is that when you look at Moses, he is tempted to compromise, and he does not; he stands there. You see, don't compromise. Let me give you a fourth thing, number four.

Know good theology

You need to have a grasp on what you believe and why. It's not fully developed, it's in embryonic form, but Moses knows that in order to approach a holy God, there must be something called propitiation or substitution. That's something that once was alive has to die in the place of the worshipper; there's a sacrifice. And so, what does Moses say in verse 25? You have to let us go and have the sacrifices and burnt offerings that we might sacrifice to the Lord our God. There's something that we must do in order for us to worship the Holy God; we need a sacrifice.

We talk about the gospel every week. I want you to know it, to be able to talk about the Holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the perfect life, the atoning death of Jesus, and the need for repentance. If you have just come to Christ or you just joined the church, I would say,

learn the 10 Commandments, learn the Sermon on the Mount, and learn the Apostles' Creed. So, they used to use those three things for all the catechisms. You can go to our bookstore and find Christian beliefs, 20 Basics That Every Christian Should Know by Wayne Grudem, and there's another book called 50 Core Truths of the Christian Faith by Greg Allison. All I'm saying to you is, I want you to know Jesus, not just love Jesus. I want you to know why you love Jesus and why you need to love Jesus. You need to come out of darkness and to Christ. You need to have an understanding of grace. You need to not compromise your convictions. You need to have sound theology. I'm going to give you a fifth one, number five. If you are going to walk in the light, you need to...

Be disciplined in your walk

What I mean doesn't happen passively. We don't normally stumble into holiness. Your life is disciplined. Where do I get that? Verse 26. Look at the preparation. ²⁶ *Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.* He's prepared. Moses indicated that there are some parts of the sacrificial system that we just don't know yet. So, I've got to be prepared. They've got to be disciplined. Discipline in your mind, what you're thinking. Discipline with your phone and the mindless scrolling. Look, I regret giving my children a phone at 12 years old because you get lost in that. Be disciplined in what you're reading, what you're thinking, discipline with worship, discipline with your words. If you claim to be a Christian, then don't use a foul mouth. Have discipline in relationships and your thoughts, and how you spend money. Look, if you're going to walk in the light, it's not just conversion, it's not just having a picture of grace, or you've got a backbone. It's knowing what you believe, and you have taken that, and you are in pursuit of holiness. Let me give you a sixth one, number six.

Don't worry about the why

Don't worry about the why. So if you want to put a comma there, don't worry about the why, focus on the who. as God. I get that in verse 27. It's a troubling verse. ²⁷ *But the LORD hardened*

Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. Why would he do that? Many of us in this room live with the question. In fact, what hurts us the most is the question, *Why?* God had determined that Pharaoh would not let the Hebrews go until all the plagues had run their course. There are a couple of things you learned from this. God has his own timetable, and it is not set to our watches. Another thing we learned is that sometimes God does things, and he keeps his own counsel; he doesn't tell us. God is under no obligation to tell us why he's doing something. We want to know why, but we don't know. So, what do we do when things are going poorly? You can start asking questions. How do I depend on God's grace in this? How do I depend on God's grace? What are you suffering? Let's talk about suffering. How do I depend on God's grace in suffering? That's one question. Another question is, what sin is being exposed in my life? A lot of times suffering does things to us, but it also exposes sin, and we need to see that for what it is, confess that, and take that to the Cross of Jesus. Is it a lack of trust, doubting? Another question you might ask is, how do I grow through this? How do I grow into a more mature believer? Here's another question you ask when you are at your lowest. What can I be thankful for? Just come up with five random things that you need to be thankful for, and watch the gratitude grow in your heart. There's another question. How can I help others see Christ in this? How can I turn this into an evangelistic suffering? How can I help others see Christ? And then I'll just end with this question. How can I honor God right now? Don't worry about the why; put your attention on the who. Let me give you one last point. How do we walk in the light? Number seven.

Pray for courage

Young men and women, pray for courage. You're growing in your faith. I'm so thankful for your growth. Know good theology, build the right relationships, in your community, in the church, and you pray that God gives you courage. You see, the most powerful man in the world threatened Moses, and Moses had every right to be afraid. But in verse 29, you hear Moses with this real, confident, humble response. Let me close like this, Paul told Timothy in Second Timothy 1, God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. It takes

courage for you to follow Christ. It takes courage to obey God's word. It takes courage to resist temptation. It takes courage to honor the Lord. Pray that God will give you courage. I'll close with this passage. This is what John writes, and 1st John 1:7, with your heads bowed, think about it. *⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Some of you here this morning need to take that first step. Come out of the darkness into the light. Come and put your faith in Christ. Trust what he's done for you. Let God save you through faith in what Christ has done. Some of you need to grow in your walk. You need to quit compromising. You've heard this call, walk in the light. Let this be the day when you start doing that.

(Pastor prays)