Getting Used To The Dark

1 John 1:5-6 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

1 John 2:9-11 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

Have you ever noticed that when you walk from a bright room out into the darkness or even into a dimly lit room, how stark the difference seems to be?

- There is a dramatic difference in the perceptive ability of your eyes as you walk from a brightly lit place into a place where there is little or no light.
  - However, over time, if you stay in the dimly lit room or persist in the darkness your eyes gradually adapt to the darkness.

The human eye is an incredible thing.

- God has endowed your eyes with a sensing ability that enables them to span nine orders of magnitude.
  - What that means is that the brightest light transmission that your eyes can interpret and the darkest light transmission that your eyes can interpret are separated from each other by a factor of one billion!
    - That is a dramatic dynamic range of interpretation which is far beyond the capability of an mechanical device that man has ever created.

However, even with this incredible dynamic range, the eye can not perceive all of those ranges at one time.

- At any given moment the eye can only sense a contrast ratio of one thousand, not one billion.
  - What enables the eye to process the much broader dynamic range that it is capable of interpreting is a unique ability to change its definition of what darkness is.
  - The eye adapts its definition of what absolute “black” is.
- As a matter of fact, the human eye is capable shifting the light level that is interpreted as “black” across six orders of magnitude, or a factor of 1 million.
  - In other words, your eyes can perceive one million definitions of absolute darkness depending on the amount of available light.

It is this remarkable ability to adapt to the darkness that enables you to sit in a mostly dark room, like you are right now, and gradually regain your ability to see.
• It's not a fast process, it's not an immediate thing, it takes some time, but your eyes will adjust to the level of the darkness around you.
  o Scientists say that it takes about 20-30 minutes for your eyes to fully adapt from bright sunlight to complete darkness.
  o Once that process is complete, your eyes become one million times more sensitive than they were in full daylight.

Light and Dark
There are certain overriding themes of scripture, they are woven throughout the whole of the bible, they are represented in this physical world, but they are testimonies to greater spiritual truths.
• One of those themes is the constant ageless struggle between light and darkness.
  o Right from the beginning the second verse in the bible introduces this theme, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...”
• Under the unction and anointing of God Moses was allowed to catch a glimpse of the state universe just before creation began.
  o His impression of the condition of things in the universe, just before God began to move was that there was no substance, no form, it was void, empty, and it was dark!
    ▪ Darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Have you ever stopped to consider the darkness?
• What is darkness?
• Moses got it right when he used words like “without form” and “void”.
• Darkness is not the presence or existence of some “thing.”
  o Rather, darkness is the absence of something.
  o Darkness is the absence of light.
  o Physical darkness happens where there is no light.
  o This is what Moses saw, the absence of light.
• But just as this reality dawns on Moses, just as he recognizes that this is the state of an existence where there is no light everything changes.
  o He finishes the verse by saying, “...and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
  o And God said, let there be light and there was light.”

All of a sudden, physical light floods into the primeval darkness.
• In a moment, where there was once darkness, there is now light.
  o The entire situation is changed.
  o And God saw the light that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness.
• This is one of the foundations of lasting truth.
  o Light is good.
Darkness is bad.
• We understand that from our earliest childhood.
  o But it goes deeper than that.
  o Light and dark are divided.
  o They stand at opposite ends of the spectrum.
  o They can't occupy the same place at the same time.
  o They are locked in a constant battle, light and darkness.

But it is more than just a physical truth.
• It is also a spiritual truth.
  o Sin delights in darkness.
• Darkness, both spiritual darkness and physical darkness, are the enablers of sin.
  o Sinful men and women hide their deeds in darkness.
• Physical darkness promotes and enables sin, providing a cover for all manner of evil deeds,
  o while spiritual darkness perpetuates evil.
• The kingdom of evil is built upon lies, secrets, deceitfulness and darkness.
  o It requires the absence of light to survive.

Job speaks of the condition of those in spiritual darkness in Job 24:13, reading from the English Standard Version

13 “There are those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways, and do not stay in its paths.

14 The murderer rises before it is light, that he may kill the poor and needy, and in the night he is like a thief.

15 The eye of the adulterer also waits for the twilight, saying, ‘No eye will see me’; and he veils his face.

16 In the dark they dig through houses; by day they shut themselves up; they do not know the light.

17 For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.

This is the condition of a world that is lost and shrouded in the deep darkness and bondage of sin.
• They have made their peace with the darkness.
  o They have made friends with the terrors of deep darkness.
• There is something inherently frightful about darkness,
  o there is something sinister that our souls perceive as lurking in the darkness
but men and women who have lived so long in the darkness become comfortable with evil and immorality and not only do they become comfortable with it but over time they even go so far as to make friends with the terrors of the darkness.

- In the course of time darkness becomes their ally,
  - they seek it out because they are comfortable there.
  - They don’t want their deed known,
  - they want to keep their faces anonymous,
  - they want to shut out the light because the light reveals things about them that they don’t want to face.
  - They would much rather live in the darkness.

This is the condition that John describes in John 3:16-21:

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

John said that men had become so acclimated to the darkness,

- they had become so accustomed to living in the dark
  - that even though light came into the world,
  - in the person of Jesus Christ,
- that they loved the darkness more than the light because their deeds were evil.
- Ladies and gentlemen we live in a world that has gotten so used to the darkness that they perceive it as normal,
  - even to the extent of hating the light because the light reveals things that they would rather keep hidden.
- That is the condition of our world and the kingdom of darkness.
  - The church, and the kingdom of God, however, stands in stark contrast to it.
John says in John 3:21 that he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

- The writer of Proverbs shares with us an eternal truth of the kingdom of God (28:13) that he who conceals sin does not prosper but he who confesses sin finds mercy!
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
  - His word is light and God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts
    - and that light has transformed us.

- Once we were servants of darkness,
  - once we were bound by sin,
    - but no longer!

- We have been exposed to the light.
  - His light and his glorious truth has revealed our iniquities has laid bare the deceitfulness of our hearts and we have been washed in his glorious blood.
  - No longer are we the children of darkness but rather the children of light.
  - No longer do we walk in darkness, but rather we walk in the light.
  - No longer do we hide our deeds in darkness, seeking the shroud of secrecy
    - but rather we seek out the glorious light of his presence that all of his goodness might be made manifest in our lives!

I come to this pulpit tonight to sound a warning.

- Hear my voice; listen to what I’m about to tell you.
- Just as surely as there is a slow subtle process that has allowed your eyes to become accustomed to the darkness of this house tonight
  - there exists a spiritual process by which we become desensitized to sin and spiritual darkness.
- Little by little, if we are not careful, our perception of light and dark will begin to change.
  - Little by little, if we do not guard ourselves we fall subject to a simple natural law,
  - as we expose ourselves to darkness, our spiritual perception, just like our eyesight, begins to adapt to the degree of darkness around us.

Our world is awash in gross immorality, promiscuity, pornography, and every sin imaginable.

- If the human mind can conceive it, sinfulness has attempted it under the cover of spiritual darkness.
  - We live, like it or not, in a spiritual Sodom and Gomorrah,
we live in a day and an age where deviant lifestyles are celebrated and unthinkable evils are embraced.

• While we cannot help the fact that we live in a world that shrouded in spiritual darkness,
  o we can and should, choose not to become desensitized to the reality of the condition of our world
  ▪ and the truth of the fact that it stands in absolute contrast to and defiance of the kingdom of God and righteousness.

You see Lot had to have known the condition of things in Sodom and Gomorrah.

• Lot had to have been aware of the spiritual perversion with which he was surrounding himself.
  o But because he found the scenery to be attractive,
  o because he liked the accolades of his peers,
  o because he esteemed to the pride and position that was afforded him there
  ▪ he chose to tolerate the darkness of Sodom and Gomorrah.

• We read in scripture that he vexed his righteous soul daily.
  o But more than that he became so comfortable with the environment with which he had surrounded himself until he simply became used to the darkness!
  ▪ My friend it cost him everything!

We can’t afford to become like Lot.

• We can’t afford to simply accept the condition of our world.
  o We can’t afford to become so spiritually desensitized and calloused that we are comfortable surrounding ourselves with the sin and immorality that our world has embraced.

• Lot just learned to make his peace with it.
  o This is just the world we live in,
  o this is just the way it is,
  o this is just how its going to be.

• Eventually, over time he became comfortable with the condition of his world!
  o He got used to the dark.

Here’s the truth that I want you to grasp tonight:

• If you sit in the darkness long enough then you begin to imagine that it I getting lighter.
  o Over the course of his sermon this room has, by your perception, grown much brighter.
  ▪ But the absolute truth is that the degree of darkness in this room has not changed, except to possibly get darker the later it becomes.
  o The change that has taken place is in your own personal perception of the darkness.
Getting Used To The Dark

- What seemed so dark just a little while ago, now seems to be much lighter and much more tolerable.

There exists and extreme danger of growing accustomed to the darkness.
- This is how sin, immorality and worldliness begin to creep into the church, because our personal perception of the darkness begins to change.
  - Just like our eyes, we shift our definition of what dark is!
- Tolerance of this world’s condition, an ability to grow comfortable with the sinful condition and state of our world,
  - is nothing less than coexistence with darkness and evil.
- When you start to get used to the darkness, false doctrine becomes less objectionable.
  - When you start to get used to the darkness, sin becomes less repulsive.
  - When you start to get used to the darkness, your conscious is stretched to new degrees as things that once bothered you now become commonplace.
  - When you start to get used to the darkness the unacceptable becomes acceptable!

In his first epistle, John makes us aware of a dreadful condition that existed even within the church of the first century.
- In the first portion of our text, 1 John 1:5, After reiterating the fact that God is light and that in him is no darkness at all he declares this truth to the church:
  - If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.
- In other words, there are those that have been a part of the church,
  - those that have experienced this incredible salvation,
  - those that have walked with God and had fellowship with God that have lost their way along the way and now,
    - though they say they walk in the light,
    - though they declare that they are walking in the light,
      - they instead walk in darkness.

He goes on in the second passage of our text (1 John 2:9-11) to further flesh out this concept.
- He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
  - He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.
  - But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness,
  - (but watch this)
  - and knoweth not whither he goeth,
  - (he doesn’t even realize his condition)
  - because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.
Let me preach to someone in the church tonight.

- It is entirely possible to become blinded by the darkness.
  - To become so used to the dark that you adapt to the darkness
    - to the point that you don’t even realize that you are living in spiritual delusion.
  - You can become so used to the dark that the darkness begins to appear to be light!
    - Right now it looks lighter in here than it did when we started,
      - but it hasn’t changed at all,
        - we’ve just become more accustomed to the darkness.
  - And the key is that it happens so slowly, it happens so subtly that you don’t even realize that its taking place!
    - David speaks of this condition in Psalm 82:5 *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*
  - They’ve lost their way, and they don’t even realize it.
    - They will not understand.
      - They are deceived, they have fallen under a great delusion.

Can I tell you something tonight.

- There are something that we should never get used to.
  - The horror of sin should always bother us.
  - The tragedy of hell should always stir us.
- The calamity and condition of our world should stir us, it should move us, it should break our hearts.
  - God forbid that we become so desensitized to the condition of our world that we can feel comfortable
    - or even find humor and entertainment in the sinfulness and vice and gross immorality of our world!
- We should never get used to brutality,
  - we should never become accustomed to violence,
  - we should never learn to simply overlook sexual immorality.
    - We should never make our peace with the terrors of the darkness.
      - Because, when we do, we cease to be the church!
- When we do, we cease to shine our light in the darkness.
  - When we become casual and complacent about the condition of our world,
    - we relinquish our objectivity about sin and sinfulness,
      - we become blinded by the darkness!

When the church becomes accustomed to the darkness,

- what was previously perceived as dark now seems to be light.
What was originally perceived as darkness now appears to be a degree of light.

This is how righteousness, morality, godliness and integrity become watered down until they no longer even resemble their original condition.

There are religious institutions, today, that are placing their seal of approval on all kinds of immorality and ungodliness in the name of tolerance.

- Tolerance of sin and immorality is not a virtue,
  - it is the evidence that the church has gotten used to the darkness.
  - It is the evidence that religious institutions have been blinded by the darkness.

The Remedy

We are the church.

- We are in this world but not of it.
  - We were not made to acclimate to the condition of our world.
- The light that shined into our hearts was not made to grow dimmer with time.
  - It was never intended to reduce in intensity the longer we were exposed to the darkness.
  - We were not made to be conformed but rather transformed!
- There is a remedy for the slow subtle change that takes place as you are surrounded by the darkness of this world.
  - There is a cure for the tragic condition of becoming blinded by the darkness.
- Any hunter or any soldier can quickly tell you that the enemy of night vision is light.
  - Soldiers are repeatedly warned when they stand guard through the long hours of darkness
    - to shield their eyes from any source of light because nothing kills night vision faster than exposure to light.
- What the church needs,
  - what the religious institutions of our world need,
    - what you and I need is to look full in the wondrous glory of God.
- Let his light shine into our lives fresh and new.
  - Let the light of the presence of God shine into every corner of our hearts.
    - Let the convicting holiness and righteousness of God invade our very beings!

When the individual that has become accustomed to the darkness looks into the light, the eyes immediately return to their original state.

- It may take 20 to 30 minutes to become accustomed to the dark
Getting Used To The Dark

• but when you turn from darkness into the light,
  ▪ there is an instantaneous transformation that takes place.

• It takes only a moment of exposure to the light to reverse the adjustments that darkness slowly and subtly makes to the eyes.
  o In the light, our vision is sharpened. In the light, our perception shifts back to what it was originally intended to be.

1 John 1: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The light of the truth of God exposes all things!

• Pride begins to melt away as it is exposed to his light.
  o Flesh runs to hide as it is exposed to his light.
    ▪ Carnality shrinks away, its influence is diminished when we stand full in the glorious light of God’s presence!

• In his presence there is light,
  o he is light and his light shines in the darkness of this world
    ▪ and our weaknesses are revealed,
    ▪ our inconsistencies are exposed,
    ▪ the stumbling blocks in our lives are illuminated,
    ▪ those weights which do so easily beset us are made more apparent when we walk in the light!

Ephesians 5

1Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

3But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
8For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

It is a tragic thing when the church is lured to sleep by the darkness of the world.
- It is a tragic thing when we become so used to the dark that we begin to embrace the darkness.
  - The remedy is simple.
    - Awake, thou that sleepest.
    - Arise from the dead.
    - Christ shall give thee light!