The Miracle of the Manger

John 1:1-5
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Darkness
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. 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. 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.

Darkness. Just the word stirs some primeval element of fear within us. Oh, we tell ourselves, we aren’t scared of the darkness, but each of us can remember a time and a place when the darkness frightened us. Someone once said, “I’m not scared of the dark, it’s what’s in the dark that worries me.” There is something about darkness that worries us. It doesn’t take long, sitting in the darkness, until your imagination runs away with you. Things that aren’t really there begin to populate the darkness of our lives. Things that go bump in the night grow into huge ugly creatures with superhuman abilities.

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.” Rather, darkness is the absence of something. Darkness is the absence of light. Physical darkness happens where there is no light. 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. He finishes the verse by saying, “…and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 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. The entire situation is changed. 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. Light is good. Darkness is bad. We understand that from our earliest childhood. But it goes deeper than that. Light and dark are divided. They stand at opposite ends of the spectrum. They can’t occupy the same place at the same time. They are locked in a constant battle, light and darkness.

If the power were to go off right now, in the blink of an eye – at a speed that is beyond the scope of our understanding, darkness would invade this room. This is just the simple
condition of physical reality. But it stands for all of time as an example of a much greater spiritual truth. In Genesis the light is good, reflecting God’s approval of and goodwill towards His creation. Darkness and chaos, by contrast, are not good, and they are never far away. Genesis describes a journey from chaos to order, from darkness to light.

**Spiritual Darkness**

John’s gospel is unique in many ways, but one significant characteristic of John’s gospel is that he records the spiritual significance of the physical event that was recorded by Moses. John’s gospel and the Genesis account start the same. “In the beginning…” But as John rewrites the Genesis story he leaves behind the transition of this physical world from chaos to order, instead he picks up the idea from Genesis that Light is what put chaos to flight and he relates it to Jesus Christ. John introduces a different idea of darkness. John speaks of a spiritual darkness.

Just as darkness prevails where light is absent, so John sets out to cause the reader to understand that spiritual darkness happens when we are away from God and the light of His presence. When John looks at the world he lives in he sees a world not much different from the way that Moses saw it, without substance, empty and dark. He sees men and women and children, who don't know God. He sees a world that is far from God, and he sees a generation that rejected God, even though he walked among them. He sees a people that, even though the light shined among them, they saw the light and comprehended it not.

**Spiritual Light**

We find the root of John’s strongly held view of light and darkness in the words of Jesus Christ himself. In John 3:19 Jesus said of himself, “that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” This is the sorry condition of the flesh. The sinful nature loves darkness. Mankind, by nature, prefers darkness over light. The flesh prefers sin and evil to righteousness and good. So, John tells us, the light shined into the darkness, but the darkness sought to extinguish the light. The darkness sought to swallow up the light, to overpower it, to destroy it.

I’ve come to declare to you this evening the miracle of the manger. On that blessed night in Bethlehem, where there was no room at the inn, the spirit of God moved upon the void of this world and said, let there be light! And the light of the world stepped into a reality where spiritual darkness and chaos had reigned. Emanuel, God with us, the light shined into the darkness! Just like the Genesis account, a line had been crossed, and the world would never be the same. Spiritual light had exploded on the scene!

Let me share with you a simple, elementary fact about light. Darkness is defined as the absence of light, it is void, it is emptiness. But, by contrast, light, in the very simplest of definitions, is the presence of energy. The two may appear to be locked in a constant struggle, as I have portrayed to you this evening, however that’s not entirely accurate. Where there is light, there can be no darkness. One has power and one does not. Light has
the ability to overpower darkness, but it is physically impossible for darkness to overpower light.

The miracle of the manger is that on that night, in the decadence of a world that was shrouded in darkness a light shined, that will never be extinguished! The miracle of the manger is that hope entered the world on the night that angels sung and shepherds rejoiced and that hope will never be crushed. The baby that was born in a manger would grow to be a man. God manifest in the flesh would shine the light of truth into those around him, and Darkness would rebel against it. Shrouded within dark chambers, hidden in the darkness they adored, evil men, spurred on by hell’s minions would conceive a plan to extinguish the light of the ages. But at a hill called Golgotha, on an old rugged cross, that plan would backfire.

As sinful men, who preferred the darkness over the light, sought to extinguish the light, they only fulfilled the plan of God and insured that the light would spread from there to the 4 corners of the world, through all the ages of humanity. Until finally there would come a day and an age, where darkness would be banished to a bottomless pit, to a place called hell and the redeemed will dwell forevermore in a city where the lamb is the light, in a city where there never comes a night, in a city where there is no darkness.

I’ve come this evening to declare the miracle of the manger. There may be darkness and chaos in your life. Things may seem to be out of control. But I’ve come to tell you that there is hope! There is a light that breaks through despair. There is a light that shatters the chains of bondage. There is a light that overpowers addictions and things that would stifle your worship. There is light that brings freedom and liberty. All the darkness of hell can rise up against it. It can spew forth it’s putrid bile and filth. But darkness can’t extinguish the light. Tonight, in this house there is hope for your life. There is hope for your dream.

There is a call going forth this evening. It is the same call to the saint and the sinner. It is a call to come out of the darkness of this world and stand in the marvelous light of His truth. The darkness may whisper to you that you can’t make it. But the light of truth shouts loud and long, you can make it, victory is yours, step out of the darkness and into the light. The darkness tells you, you’ve gone too far, you’ve done too much. But the light beckons you, leave the darkness behind and embrace the hope that is in the light. Darkness says that you’re holding on to a promise in vain that it will never come to pass, but the light of truth declares the everlasting fact that the promises of God are yea and amen.

I John 1:7 “If we walk in the light as he is in the light…” You have a choice tonight, you can walk in the chaos and confusion of darkness or you can step into the clarity and truth of light. It’s a choice; darkness only prevails where the light is intentionally extinguished.

Close
The miracle of the manger is that in the midst of a great darkness there came a light, and the darkness was not able to overcome the light. It was not just a temporary flicker. It was an eternal flame. We need to remember that. There are times, in the events of the world
and in the events of our own personal lives, that we feel that the light of the world will be snuffed out. But the miracle of the manger affirms that whatever happens, the light still shines. The miracle of the manger, is the wonder of creation, it is the understanding that even in the midst of darkness and chaos, God is in control. How about you? What about your life? Will you cower in the darkness and believe the whispers of hell that your life really doesn’t matter or will you step into the light and embrace the truth of God. He has a plan and a purpose for you.