LIVING IN THE LIGHT

WHILE PASSING THROUGH THIS DARKNESS

CELEBRATING IN THE LIGHT VS. SUFFERING IN THE DARKNESS

We are talking about either Light or darkness, not shades of gray.

It is one extreme or the other. Which one it is for each of us will depend on the choice each of us makes.

It is our call, our decision, our choice.

The world is described as the “dominion of darkness” in the Bible.

This dark world has its gods.

### *Psalm 82:5*

***5The ‘gods’ know nothing, they understand nothing.
    They walk about in darkness;
    all the foundations of the earth are shaken.***

The god of this age has blinded people

***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.***

***2 Corinthians 4:4***

***They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Ephesians 4:1***

### This “blinding of the minds” results in spiritual blindness and darkness. That leads to turning off our brain to the truth. We become hardened, closed, and cold to God. We cut off the messages coming from God.

### Our receptors only respond to promptings and messages from the ”god of this world.” We become his slaves, living (and dying) to carry out his will. The “god of this age” doesn’t want to lose anyone he is holding captive. He will fight to keep you. He doesn’t want to go down alone!

Light or darkness? It is our choice.

What draws us to the darkness to start with? It is pretty simple.

***For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.*** [***1 John 2:16***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John+2:16&version=NIV)

It is our love for or lust for what is attractive, desirable, but in the end destructive. While we lust for these illicit, damaging things, they lead us down the path into darkness.

Esau had this problem. Genesis 25:29-34 He had to have something. He couldn’t wait. He wanted it and he wanted it now. And he sold his birthright to get it. You could say he sold his soul for something he had to have that satisfied his short-term wishes, but that was damaging to him in the long run. He couldn’t wait. “Hey, it’s just a bowl of soup.” But it was a bowl with deep implications. It was dark soup. “Just once,” I’m sure he thought. “What can it hurt?” But he crossed a line in his head and heart that changed everything for his future. **He had to have it.**  He couldn’t live without it. It would be more accurate to say he didn’t **want** to live without it. It says he despised his birthright. He took what he had been promised as the oldest son for granted. He didn’t appreciate or value it and what it meant. He valued something in the moment and was willing to trade what he was promised for the long haul in order to have something NOW. His choice took him into the realm of darkness where there was weeping, pleading, and gnashing of teeth afterwards. It seemed so innocent, so unimportant at the time. How wrong he was.

Isaiah gives an interesting description of those living in darkness.

***Isaiah 5:20***

***Woe to those who call evil good
    and good evil,
who put darkness for light
    and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
    and sweet for bitter.***

We, too, can cross into the realm of darkness when we try and take what is bad, damaging, destructive, evil, and bitter and say it is good, sweet, right, and OK.

### *But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! Matthew 6:23*

#### What Jesus is saying is that if we live in the darkness where we are trying to justify what is really evil, then we have passed into darkness, the zone where it is REALLY DARK. We are in the deepest of pits.

**To live in darkness or light**

**is a personal, individual choice**

**that every living person must make.**

Most think they can venture into the darkness, frolic in its delights, and get out of there without being hurt. It is sort of like “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” The problem with that saying is that it is a lie. Proverbs speaks of that. There is a way that seems right to man, but ends in darkness and death. Sorry, but you take it home with you.

Now the interesting truth is that **we all start in the darkness**. We are all in the same boat, and its name is Darkness.

More than a boat, it is a death cruise. It is a cursed ship. We are doomed if we stay on board.

But help has come. A rescuer has come. There is a life boat.

The LIGHT has come.

### *The people living in darkness    have seen a great light;on those living in the land of the shadow of death    a light has dawned.” Matthew 4:16*

### *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.*

### *2 Corinthians 4:6*

### God has a plan as to how to free us and rescue all of us who are slaves and prisoners in the darkness. He sent LIGHT to shine in our hearts. That LIGHT is the only thing that can guide us or lead us out of the darkness. It can save us and change our hard heart. When we see Jesus and what he has done to rescue us, how great his love is, what a huge price He had to pay to free us, our hearts will soften and we can be released from the darkness.

We can get off this condemned, cursed ship. But it is our choice. Some prefer staying on the death cruise. What a terrible choice. It might look like it now, but it IS NOT a party cruise. Its end will be more horrible than that of the Titanic.

The light came, the life boat came, but people loved the boat named darkness.

### *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. John 3:19*

### *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*

### All have a decision to make. Do we want to live in the Light or the darkness?

### In making that decision, we need to know that the darkness IS passing.

### *Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. 1 John 2:8*

### Being surrounded by darkness is temporary for those who choose the Light.

It is permanent for those who chose the darkness, as in never ending. For them it will never end. Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30 describes the destiny of those who choose the darkness in this life. Eternity, or hell, will be an extension of what they choose in this life, darkness. It says they will be in OUTER darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth as they realize what a bad choice they made. Do you know what it feels like to know you blew it, you missed it, that you passed up the best for a poor choice? This is that feeling on steroids, for eternity. This is serious stuff.

### Paul says we Christians were once darkness.

### *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. Ephesians 5:8*

Jesus came ***to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. Acts 26:18***

*Jesus came* ***79to shine on those living in darkness
    and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace. Luke 1:79***

### The Light is shining so those living in darkness can escape.

### He will guide us out of the realm of darkness into a new life for eternity.Cross references:[Luke 1:79](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A79&version=NIV#en-NIV-24973) : [Ps 107:14; Isa 9:2; 59:9; Mt 4:16; S Ac 26:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps%20107:14,%20Isa%209:2,%20Isa%2059:9,%20Matt%204:16,%20Acts%2026:18&version=NIV)

1. [Luke 1:79](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A79&version=NIV#en-NIV-24973) : [S Lk 2:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%202:14&version=NIV)

***35Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. 36Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” John 12:35,36***

 ***46I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. John 12:46***

#### It is our choice to be children of Light or children of darkness. We don’t have to stay in the darkness.

When we choose the Light, we are forgiven, justified, exonerated, freed, cleansed, filled, and liberated. We are made right with God. It is a free gift with free passage out of darkness into the Light.

Living in the Light is so incredibly rewarding, fulfilling, and enriching. It is what we were created for. We were created to live IN RELATIONSHIP with our heavenly Father, in the Light. We weren’t created to live in darkness.

It’s our choice. But it is a choice with consequences.

Now even though the darkness is passing, those of us who have chosen to live in the LIGHT have to spend our years of life here on earth surrounded by darkness and those choosing to live in it. And it is not an easy journey.

It wasn’t for Jesus. It won’t be for us. Once we choose the LIGHT, we will still face challenges in life and very likely will experience suffering, persecution, unexplainable situations, and events. We will suffer losses, hurts, etc. But be strong. We aren’t alone. The darkness is passing. It will end.

### We have been called from the darkness.

### *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.1 Peter 2:9*

### We heard the CALL, and bailed out of or off of the ship of death. We are in Jesus.

We need to understand that we will live with a new TENSION the rest of our life here on earth. Don’t be confused by that. It is normal. It is a result of the choice we made and will need to continue making or renewing every day.

***So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, Galatians 5:16,17***

That tension is caused by HAVING TO CHOOSE between living in light or darkness every hour of every day for the rest of our life. While we changed ships, we chose Jesus, we are children of Light with all the benefits of that we will need to continue to decide and choose to be faithful to Jesus every day. The darkness (the dark side) will still be calling us to return. Satan wants us back. He will pull out the big guns. He is ticked off with our decision.

We have to continue to choose between Jesus and the light or the way of darkness or Satan. The god of this world is prowling around seeking for someone to deceive. The new tension is not a bad thing. It can strengthen us and build us up.

I ran across a picture some years ago. I don’t know where it came from.

Jesus and Satan are arm wrestling.

What do you think they are arm wrestling over?

For me, as I interpret it, they are wrestling over you, over me.

We know Jesus will win in the end of time as we know it and Satan will be defeated. Satan can’t and won’t win.

But who will win in our life now? What determines who will win and who will be the most powerful of the two in our life?

It is the one we choose. We give the power in and over our life to the one we choose to obey and trust.

Choose to live in darkness and Satan wins, you lose.

Choose to live in the Light and Jesus wins, you win.

It is up to us.

And Satan doesn’t give up easily. And certainly Jesus doesn’t. They both want us with them for eternity. Satan doesn’t want to suffer alone. Jesus doesn’t want to celebrate alone.

The daily choice we have to make is between going after the false promises Satan offers us or the WAY Jesus offers. This choice puts us is a battle. Both Satan and Jesus are persuasive.

But all of Satan’s promises are poison filled candies. They end in death.

Jesus’ promises give life.

In the New Testament this conflict is described as being between the old man and the new man; the flesh and the spirit; the light and darkness. Take your pick. It is the same thing.

We need to stay in the light, close to Jesus. What draws us to and keeps us in Jesus? It’s love. *We love because He loved us first. I John 4:19*

And He proved His love for us. John 3:16

Yet we are vulnerable. Just as married people are vulnerable to infidelity, so are we with our relationship with Jesus. Paul warns us to be alert, to be sincere and pure in our allegiance to Jesus.

***But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*** [***2 Corinthians 11:3***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians+11:3&version=NIV)

### It is a war.

### *Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 1 Peter 2:11*

We are told to arm ourselves.

***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.11Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.13Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:10-16***

But in this battle we can be victorious in Jesus.

***No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*** [***Romans 8:37***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8:37&version=NIV)

I remember the great basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski saying of basketball, “This is a mind game.” The same can be said of living in the world, choosing between darkness and Light. It is a mind game better referred to as a war.

*Above all else,****guard******your******heart****, for everything you do flows from it.* [***Proverbs 4:23***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+4:23&version=NIV)

 What we give our heart to, is what will control us and our thinking and decisions.

### *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1,2*

We need to think differently. We need to see things from God’s perspectives, and truth, not Satan’s.

### We were darkness but now are light in the Lord.

### *For you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. Ephesians 5:8*

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### We are to shine in a wayward and crooked generation.

### *so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky. Philippians 2:15*

We are to help those still trapped in the darkness just as someone helped us. We are to try and rescue those trapped in the villages of deceit. We are to risk ourselves, to go and pillage those villages of the captives living there.

***Rescue those being led away to death;
    hold back those staggering toward slaughter.
12If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,”
    does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?***

***Proverbs 24:11,12***

### We are light; let our light shine.

###  *You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Matthew 5:14*

***The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Romans 13:12***

### *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

*I Peter 2:10-12*

Have nothing to do with deeds of darkness.

Live to honor and please Jesus.

Venture out to rescue those in the darkness.

Be faithful till death.