

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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How To See Through The Darkness

by Ken Weliever

Norma Jean and I are blessed to be “sheltering in place” in the Smoky Mountains. Since my April meetings have been postponed and my current preaching appointments cancelled we’re going to remain here for the month of April.

As I write in the early morning darkness I look out my balcony window and it’s pitch black. There’s a beautiful mountain view, but I can’t see it. Yesterday we awoke to rain. The clouds and fog covered the mountains, so we could hardly see.

Later in the morning when the clouds lifted I looked and exclaimed, “Norma Jean, look, there’s snow on the top the mountain.” It obviously snowed during the night. But I couldn’t see it. Not until the weather cleared a little bit.

It occurred me that it’s a metaphor for our current situation. Right now we’re living in

one of the darkest times most of us have ever experienced. The cloud of COVID-19 is limiting our sight.

If you are home-bound, you can only see what is around you. Of course, you can turn on the TV and see the latest numbers of those who’ve contracted COVID-19. You learn how many have died. You hear about the latest orders from your governor or the President about social distancing. And find out from the experts predicting that the cases of the Coronavirus haven’t yet reached their peak, as well as the resulting deaths.

Focusing on all of that can be dark. Discouraging. And depressing. However, when “the eyes of our understanding are enlightened” (Eph. 1:18), we can see the unseen. We need 20/20 Vision. Spiritually speaking. We need to restore our focus. We need to look with the eye of faith.

How To See Through The Darkness ...

Just like the mountain is there, even though I can't see it, God is there. Jesus is Lord. And the Holy Spirit dwells in my heart through faith.

Yesterday, Norma Jean and I were reading Psalm 143 as a part of our daily Bible reading. David is appealing to the Lord for guidance and deliverance from his enemy. He's in desperate danger. Whether it speaks of the time when he was chased by Saul, hiding in a cave, or fleeing Jerusalem during his son Absalom's rebellion, we don't know.

But this was a dark time for David. He's hurting. Dismayed. And distressed. You can feel his anguish when he cries:

The enemy has persecuted my soul;
He has crushed my life to the ground;
He has made me dwell in darkness,
Like those who have long been dead.

Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me;

My heart within me is distressed.

Ever felt that way? Overwhelmed? Crushed? In darkness? Distressed?

In addition to the present distress of this unseen, spreading virus, some are facing financial difficulties. Others sickness. Some have lost loved ones. We can't go anywhere. Not even to a public worship assembly. It's tough.

But like David, we need to "remember the days of old." Remember your blessings. God's goodness. His grace. Mercy. And love.

We need to meditate on all that He has done.

Not just in our lives. But in the lives of others. The spiritual blessings we enjoy, even in difficult times.

We need to ponder the work of His hands. Go outside. Talk a walk. See the sun? The moon? The stars? The beauty of nature? It's a vivid reminder, in the words of A. W. Discus, "When we behold the wonders of creation, The flow'rs that bloom, the raindrops as they fall; The spacious skies and life's perpetuation, We cannot doubt that God controlled it all." And He still is.

In the Psalm David pled, "Hear my prayer, O Lord." "Give ear." And "answer me." Like David, we need to believe that God hears us. Feels our pain. And will respond to our cries.

We see David's faith, hope and reliance on the Lord's providential care when he prayed, "Deliver me." "Teach me." And "revive me." He believed that God was more powerful than his enemy. And trusted Him to relieve his affliction. Like the Psalmist, we too, need to open our eyes to God's greatness. Grace. And merciful deliverance from our affliction.

Well, guess what? As I finish writing, the darkness has dissipated. The fog has dissolved. There are no clouds covering the mountains this morning. The sun is shining.

I'm reminded that this current crisis and present distress will soon be lifted.

Open your eyes to see the unseen. Have faith. Live in hope. Trust God. And be faithful.

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Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - cancelled until further notice.

All services are cancelled until further notice.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens

Jack Wilson

Jerry Richardson

Karen Hallmark

Shirley Perkins' brother, Leon

And continue to pray for each other

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

