

(Pastor Schaser: Christmas Eve Candlelight – 2018)

“A Light in the Darkness”

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I’m sure we could add to that list. God adds to that list of darkness in Scripture. **“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed,...Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or course joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy – such a person is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** (Ephesians 5:3-4a, 5). **“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious...hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God”** (Galatians 5:20-21). We live in a world that is filled with this darkness – we have seen it and experienced it. And not only do we live in a world of darkness, but each of us knows darkness more personally than that as each of us is guilty of the sins listed above. And the scariest part about this darkness is the consequences – **“will NOT inherit the kingdom of God.”** What we deserve for the darkness of our sins is not being put on the naughty list or given a lump of coal, but rather punishment in Hell for eternity.

Let that sink in for a moment. It’s only when that sinks in and we take that seriously that we find true joy in Christmas as the prophet Isaiah describes it, **“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned”** (Isaiah 9:2). **“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord...Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests”** (Luke 2:12,14). What is the Christ, the anointed one of God, willing to do for people trapped in the darkness of sin? He will do whatever it takes to pull them out and rescue them from the darkness. Is the Christ willing to give up the glory of heaven and live in the darkness of earth? Yes. Is the Christ, who created the universe and all humans, willing to become human himself? Yes. Is Christ willing to make a manger his throne and farm animals his royal court? Yes. Is Christ willing to experience all the sadness, heartache, and hardship that is life on earth? Yes. Is Christ willing to do daily battle against the devil and the world with their powerful temptations to be dark with sin? Yes. Is Christ willing to suffer Hell and death so that people dark with sin might enjoy the light of forgiveness for all of their sins? Yes. Is Christ willing to cover the darkness of our sin with his perfect light so that we enjoy a peaceful relationship with God that will last for eternity in Heaven? Yes.

How can we respond to such amazing gifts? **“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth). Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Ephesians 5:8-2, 20).

Amen.