

Lent to Easter 2015

Upside uMOI & Inside



Lent 4 — The God Who Isn't Scared of the Dark

Focus of Lent to Easter 2015

What does **renewal** look like for those already committed to Christ and his church (CMF)? Committed believers may not so much need a “reset” as **an invitation not to settle**.

God often turns our **expectations** “Upside Down & Inside Out” and calls us to **rethink** what we thought we knew, what we thought we were done with, and to discover more.

It was the “religious” who thought they had arrived and could learn nothing new about God and his plans for them.

So, what God needs from the faithful is **a willingness to be teachable** and to give ourselves to the way of **deep change**.

Upside Down & Inside Out

Lent 1 – The God Who Initiates Deep Change

Lent 2 – The God Who Does the Spectacular

Lent 3 – The God Who Hides His Wisdom In A Cross

Lent 4 – The God Who Isn't Scared of the Dark

Lent 5 – The God Who Creates New Hearts

Palm Sunday – The God Who Is Still Present
When the Party is Over

Easter Sunday – The God Who Raises the Dead

Light & Darkness As Biblical Metaphor

Beyond their literal and physical meanings, light and darkness are also used figuratively in the Bible.

Light – God, Christ, angels, the good, truth, enlightenment, healing, safety, blessing, salvation, new life, etc.

Darkness – Satan, demons (spiritual evil), the bad, lies, ignorance, blindness, destruction, sin, death, etc.

NOTE: Darkness in the Bible is not equal in power to light. It exists within God's control (Job 38:19; Dan 2:22; Ezek 8:12).

John 1:1-5 NIV

¹ In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

“The one we know as Jesus is identical, it seems, with the Word who was there from the very start, the Word through whom all things were made, the one who contained and contains life and light. The Word challenged the darkness before creation and now challenges the darkness that is found, tragically, within creation itself. The Word is bringing into being the new creation, in which God says once more, ‘Let there be light.’”

N.T. Wright, *John For Everyone* (pg.5)

“The God who spoke *light into existence*, saying, “Let light shine from the darkness,” is the very One who sets our hearts ablaze to shed light on the knowledge of God’s glory *revealed* in the face of Jesus, the Anointed One.”

Paul, 2 Corinthians 4:6 (VOICE)

Jesus, Gospel of John 3:14-18 NIV

¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 3:19-21 NIV

¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

The Gospel of John Ch. 3:1-21

The Visual Bible: The Gospel of John (2003)

Jesus, Gospel of John 8:12; 12:46 NLT

“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life... I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.”

Psalm 18:2-6 NIV

- ² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
- ³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.
- ⁴ The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
- ⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.
- ⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.

Psalm 18:25-28 NIV

- ²⁵ To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,
²⁶ to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.
²⁷ You save the humble
but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.
²⁸ You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;
my God turns my darkness into light.

“He reveals the deep things of darkness
and brings utter darkness into the light.”

Job 12:22 NIV

God's Light In Our Darkness

How does God respond to darkness? What sort of “upside down” ways might he use with our own darkness?

1. He may pierce it by shining his light directly into it, stopping us in our tracks, overwhelming us
2. He may shine his light onto something else, drawing you out of the darkness where you're hiding
3. He may meet you in the middle of your darkness, joining you in your valley of the shadow of death

“I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light, things that have saved my life over and over again, so that there is really only one logical conclusion. I need darkness as much as I need light... new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark.”

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*



Psalm 139: 7-12 NIV

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,"

¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

Psalm 23

The LORD *is* my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;

For You *are* with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.



Upside uMOI & Inside



Sermon audio & slides can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org

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