

Intro: Years ago I was fishing with a buddy in a stream in Mont County. Small so we could wade, connect to Potomac R Wade in, walk out. Having a great time, ready to go, getting dark, "One more bend, One more fish" Kept going...Dark In stream, no trees overhead, but out of stream, in woods...pitch black! Short cut thru woods...LOST! Couldn't see!! Finally found the stream, water was running the WRONG direction! Path there...buddy had waterproof matches..

\*\*\*Everything Changes When The Light Shines!\*\*\*

That is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Promise of Christmas that I want to look with you at this week. Comes from Isaiah 9:1-2

Quoted Mt 4:12-17 Page 683 "God Gives Us Light To Live By!"

### 1. We Live In A World Of Spiritual Darkness. 4:16

The people "walking in Darkness: Lit = *to live or to dwell; to sit down and reside (not just walking through!)*

"Darkness:" Lit = *shadiness or obscurity, metaphor for spiritual darkness, lack of light*

Here is the reality that God is pointing out: Our world is a dark place

True in Isaiah's time Is 9:1-2 Jesus Time Mt 4:16 True in OUR DAY AS WELL!

We say that, but it is becoming more and more obvious every day. Sometimes I feel like my Grandmother...

*"Just Don't know what this world is coming to anymore!"*

- Bible tells us that: Romans 1:28-42 Pg 796 Just like the evening news, isn't it?
- See it all around us:
  - >Sexual harassment and abuse in every area of our culture
  - >People that think it is good to walk into a church and shoot dozens of people
  - >Desire to blow others up, run over with a car, take a gun and shoot hundreds of people!
  - >Baltimore murder rate: 310 or more (More than NY: Per Capita, more than Chicago!!!)

Applic: Spiritual Darkness is rampant. No one is immune, no area of culture or life is exempt

We see it nationally, we see it corporately, and we see it personally and individually

Sometimes I feel during the course of the day the way I did in the woods that night fishing: Stumbling, Dark, Slapped in face

### 2. The Consequence Of Living In Spiritual Darkness Is Greater Than Just This Life. 4:16

Here is what is important: It isn't just physical death that we need to be concerned about! Awful...

ETERNAL and SPIRITUAL DEATH is what Jesus is addressing when He quotes Isaiah!!!

We are "...*Living in the land of the shadow of death...*"

Look at vs 16:

- Land: Lit = *a region, a place, a territory, a county*
- Shadow: Lit = *shadow thrown by something larger that blocks out the light!*  
Fishing, OK, no trees: Got out of the stream, the shadow of the trees blocked light...Shadow  
We are walking in this world...in the Shadow of Death! (Reality that blocks the light!)
- Death: *Separation from God...From Jesus...From Eternal life!* All we have is THIS...getting worse by day  
Mt Those without Jesus will be excluded from Jesus Kingdom (light) thrown into darkness!

Look at What Bible Tells Us Darkness

- John 1:5 Darkness around us doesn't understand spiritual light (or Cannot OVERCOME it)
- John 3:19 Men love darkness instead of the light
- Jn 12:46 We don't have to stay in darkness...(If we believe in Jesus...we can have spiritual light)
- 1Pe 2:9 We have been called out of darkness
- 1Jn 1:5 God doesn't have anything to do with darkness!
- 1Jn 2:8 Darkness is passing....(true light has come!)  
KEY
- 2Co 4:4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Applic: As long as we walk in darkness, and never come to the light of Jesus, we continue to live in the shadow of death!

The promise of Christmas is, "We Don't Have To Live In Darkness:" "God Gives Us Light To Live By!!!"

Yes, we WALK in darkness, we LIVE in Darkness, We sometimes CHOOSE darkness,

But, it doesn't HAVE to be that way...The Light of God is shining...for those who will see it

The Light of God always there...always shining...always calling us out of the darkness...

Jesus is the Light of the World! Calling us away from Darkness and Death Calling us to Light and Life!

THE PROMISE OF THE WORLD IS DEATH! REMEMBER THE MOVIE "GREEN MILE" DEAD MAN WALKING!  
THAT IS WHAT WE ARE AND THAT IS WHAT WE DO WITHOUT JESUS. NOT JUST DARKNESS...DEATH  
BUT... THE PROMISE OF CHRISTMAS! THE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS HAVE BEEN GIVEN LIGHT!

### 3. The Light Of The World Has Come!

Mt 4:16

*"On those living in the land of the shadow of death...a light has dawned!"*

**Light Dawned:** lit = *to spring up, to rise up, to stand up:* Used of the sun rising in the morning  
Starts with a very small, almost imperceptible sliver of light....then...glory breaks through!

That is the image of what God did for us when He sent Jesus!

- Jn 1:4: "In him was life...and that life was the light of men!"
- Jn 1:9: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world!"
- Jn 3:19 "This is the verdict...Light has come into the world!"
- Jn 8:12 "I am the light of the world!" Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life"
- Jn 12:46 "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness!"

**Applic:** That's the Promise of Christmas. WE don't have to walk in Darkness...Light is right here with us...if we will accept it  
God gives us light to live by!

Is 42:16 *"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."*

### 4. Light To Live By Is Available To ANYONE That Will Receive It! 4:16

*"The people living in darkness have seen a great light!"*

Have seen: Lit = *to look up and observe, to see, to perceive*

This is a word that is used to talk about casual and mechanical vision. We see it...

**BUT**

We don't want to understand it...or Submit to it...or allow that light to inform the way that we live

Because, as Jesus said in Jn 3:19 *"Men loved darkness rather than light...they didn't WANT to change!"*

The reality is, that when we see and understand the light that God gives us for living...

It requires...it DEMANDS a response:

Vs 17: *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"*

*Repent: To turn from one direction...to the opposite*

**Illus:** My very first paid position in a church was as a part time youth pastor

Young boy...core of your youth group, came with a friend...Dad didn't come. Asked me to talk with him

Made an appt, went to see him, Explained the good news...Talked about response:

Stunned when He said... "I understand what you are saying...I just don't want to change!"

Son sat with tears in his eyes...and I realized: Sometimes...Men love darkness rather than light

**Applic:** Jesus Gives us Light to Live by, but it requires that we turn from the darkness

**Repent:** Turn from living for ourselves...Our way of thinking...Our perspective of what is right

**And Live for the Kingdom** Submit ourselves to him

**CONCL:** Do you need to make that decision today?

Are you like I was in the woods that night? Walking in Darkness?

Today is the day you can reverse that. It's a simple prayer...God...I am SO lost...I need you!

Do you know someone that is walking in darkness today/

The promise of Christmas is that God Gives us Light To Live by

If you know someone walking in Darkness...Doesn't matter how they GOT there...

Share the Light: Invite them to The Christmas Eve

Don't let them stumble around!

Fishing Trip...Found path...Walking down it with matches...got to the LAST ONE!

Came up on a couple guys fishing...With an ATV...Gave us a ride back to the Car

Still remember the feeling of driving down the path by the stream...in the darkness...lights from ATV

Covering the ground...Knowing we were going home...the burden lifted...I didn't know where I was going..they did!

They showed us the way home...Will you do that for someone this week?

Take a Card and share it!

Cards...Find them this week...Next Week...Hand them out...Invite them...Christmas Eve: Little Things Mean a Lot

Its very simple: Stopped to pick up some medicine...Walked in...Door beeper...That would drive me crazy!

Clerk said: "That's NOTHING" I have so much going on in my life, my brain...I don't even hear it...

What can I pray for...: Everything.... Went out, got a card...Brought it back in! Half a dozen times this week: Pray