

# E-Series

## Darkness



**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. **What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. –John 1:1-5**

---

Yesterday morning I started writing an e-series message about Advent, waiting, patience, and how we're not really good at those things. But I couldn't finish it before the phone calls started rolling in, then people. I had to stop. Normally, I would've gotten back around to it, but I don't think that I'll go back to complete it. It doesn't seem to matter as much now.

The title of this message is darkness. I don't know that it ever gets much darker than it did at two o'clock Monday afternoon. A phone call came in. When Lynda interrupted my counseling session, I knew that it wasn't going to be good. A child was playing in the yard. There's been an accident. It looks dim.

When I got to the hospital, it got dimmer. Then there was darkness in the middle of the afternoon. He didn't make it. A beautiful, little four year-old reflection of God's light had been extinguished. Now the grief.

Some of you knew Chavis Berley. Most of you know his family. During the past twenty-four hours, many of us have experienced the clouds of shock, disbelief, and grief. They have threatened to block out the light of the sun and produced a shroud of darkness.

Naturally, one of the first things we do in the face of tragedies like these is ask: Why? And, people will offer lots of answers. One of them is always, "It was God's will."

Of course God's ways are not our ways, and I can't say with certainty that this answer is wrong. But I can say that I don't believe that it is right. God created us for life. God created life and light, not death and darkness. Genesis tells us as much. "In the beginning, when God began creating the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep." God didn't create darkness. It wasn't God's handiwork. In the beginning there was already this dark, bubbling, oozing chaos that was not of God's hand. But God spoke into it. God said, "Let there be light," and there was. It's God's nature to bring light out of darkness. Not the opposite.

Last night, as I thought back through the events of the day, I thought of the book discussion that many of us in the church had just the night before. We were discussing *The Shack*, a fictional account of the faith journey of a guy named Mack whose daughter was abducted and murdered. It's a story of Mack's journey and encounter with God. To have a relationship with God, Mack first has to deal with his anger. He harbors incredible anger and screams toward heaven that God didn't stop the murder of his daughter. Jesus replies, "No, he didn't. He doesn't stop a lot of things that cause him pain. Your world is severely broken...nothing is as it should be, as [the Father] desires it to be, and as it will be one day. Right now your world is lost in darkness and chaos, and horrible things happen to those that he is especially fond of." Later, God the Father says to Mack, "Just because I work incredible good out of unspeakable tragedies doesn't mean that I orchestrate the tragedies. Don't ever assume that my using something means that I caused it or that I need it to accomplish my purposes. That will only lead you to false notions about me. Grace doesn't depend on suffering to exist, but where there is suffering you will find grace in many facets and colors."

God didn't create yesterday's midday darkness, but you can rest assured God was there. And, as always, God is doing what God does. Like he did in a tomb in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, God will bring forth life from death, and God will bring forth light from darkness...and the darkness will NOT overcome it. These dark clouds of grief and pain will NOT block out the Light of the Son.

Grieving the darkness and trusting the Light,

*Pastor Michael*