

E-Series

The Light



*1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan-- 2 **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.** 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called*

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” –Isaiah 9:1-6

Darkness. December is always dark. Every year on either December 21st or 22nd is the winter solstice. It's the shortest day of the year, the day with the least light...the most darkness.

If we lived below the equator, it would be different, but it's interesting that our darkest day is so close to Christmas Day. It is on Christmas Day that we celebrate the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy—the dawning of the True Light, a child born to us. Isaiah's prophecy is very similar to the way John's Gospel tells the Christmas story. “**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 men. **5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness will not overcome it”** (John 1:1-5).

Of course it is true that a great light dawned with the birth of Jesus over two-thousand years ago, but it's also true that there's still an awful lot of darkness around. Yes, it's almost the winter solstice, but it's more than that. There's the darkness of depression, sorrow, pain, grief, and death, all of which, for many people, are felt a little more acutely at Christmas time. There's the empty seat at Christmas dinner. There's the soldier who won't make it home. There's the family that has been wracked by divorce. There's the bad doctor's report and the fear that this might be your last Christmas with somebody you love. Darkness.

And we can wrap our houses and trees with lights. We can light Advent wreaths and candles, but none of that can make this into the “hap, happiest, most wonderful time of the year” for some of us. The grief is too fresh, the pain too sharp.

If that describes you, if you are struggling to put on a happy face this Christmas, then know that you are not alone. What you are feeling is natural, normal. Jesus wasn't born, God didn't come to us where we are for us to have to hide our true feelings. He came to redeem us. He came to rescue us from the darkness. (To be continued...)

Preparing for Light,
Pastor Michael