

WHO IS JESUS?

JOHN 1:3-9

JESUS IS OUR LIGHT



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression associated with the darker winter months. In most cases, SAD symptoms start in the late fall or early winter and go away during the spring and summer. Symptoms include loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed, sleep problems, low energy, feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, over-eating, and social withdrawal. It was common in the Scottish Highlands where I pastored for 13 years, mainly because of the extremely short daylight hours in the winter (about 5-6 hours of dark gray).

One of the most common treatments for SAD is daily light therapy, to make up for the diminished natural sunshine in the darker months. The person sits in front of a very bright light (20x brighter than indoor light) every day for about 30 to 45 minutes, usually first thing in the morning.

But there's another SAD that's even worse than this SAD. *Spiritual* affective disorder is a year-round (even life-long) depression that results from living in spiritual darkness. It too can result in low energy and mood as well as feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness. **Is there a cure for this kind of SAD?** Let's hear John's answer in John 1:4-9.

BACKGROUND

John wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus is the Son of God so that readers would get life through faith in him (John 20:31). In chapter one alone, John recorded seven names that identify Jesus as God: (1) The Word (1:1-3, 14); (2) The Light (1:4-13); (3) The Son of God (1:15-28, 49); (4) Lamb of God (1:29-34); (5) The Messiah (1:35-42); (6) The King of Israel (1:43-49); (7) The Son of Man (1:50-51).



1. JESUS IS LIFE-GIVING LIGHT

In him was life, and the life was the light of men (4).

The first words here, 'in him was life,' set Jesus apart from mere creatures. He has life in himself; it's not derived from another or dependent on another.

If we compare Genesis 1:1-4 with John 1:1-4 we can see five significant parallels:

- Both begin with 'in the beginning.'
- Both emphasize God's pre-existence.
- Both present God as the Creator of all things
- Both teach that God's Word is life-giving light
- Both present the light overcoming the darkness

John declared that Christ was in Genesis 1, Christ existed before anything else, Christ was the Creator, and Christ was God's Word that shone life-giving light into the world. He is pointing to Christ as the one whose Word produced natural light and life at the first creation and therefore can give can give spiritual light and life in the new creation (2 Cor. 4:6).

There are four essentials for human life: light, air, water, food. As we will see, John repeatedly presented Jesus as the life-giver in all four ways. Here he headlines Jesus, the Word of God, as the life-giving light. His Word shines life-giving light into our dark world. Life is used 35 times in John's Gospel and light is used 30 times. Christ's Word is life-giving light. We cannot conceive how dark the world would be without Christ's Word and its life-giving light.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

As a teen, Sharon used to get a bit depressed during the winter months. As it wasn't too bad, she just pushed through it until Spring time when the brighter days would lift her mood. But, in her mid-forties, Sharon plunged into a dark year-round depression which left her longing not for Spring, but for death. She couldn't understand it because everything was going well in her life and family. Jess, a concerned friend, pleaded with her to come to church to hear the Gospel and one day, in desperation, she did. One of the preacher's questions struck home: "Do you ever ask yourself, 'Why do I feel so sad when my life isn't sad?'" "That's me," Sharon confessed to Jess on the way home. "I know," said Jess, "It was me too, a few years ago. But I brought my spiritual darkness and deadness to God and asked him to shine his life-giving light into my life. His Word changed my world, chasing out the darkness and replacing it with life." Why don't you try this too?

**SIN WORDS ARE DARKNESS AND DEATH
BUT THE SON'S WORDS ARE LIGHT AND LIFE.**



**This world is a really dark place.
Will Jesus's light not get swallowed up by the darkness?**



2. JESUS IS INEXTINGUISHABLE LIGHT

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (5).

'Nyctophobia' is extreme fear of the dark. It damages daily life, disrupts sleep, and usually results in anxiety and depression. Sufferers will do anything to avoid the dark.

Jesus was not afraid of the dark but invaded it with his life-giving light. In a way, this verse is a summary of the entire Gospel of John. The light shone in the deepest most dangerous darkness, but despite multiple attempts to finally and forever extinguish it, the darkness did not overcome it or overpower it. Christ's light was more powerful than all the forces of darkness combined. Even when the darkness thought it had won in the darkness of Calvary, the light shone again even brighter only three days later. Christ's light could not be extinguished.

A few years ago, scientists at MIT created the blackest black ever made. It is 10 times darker than any other black and captures 99.995% of incoming light. Any object painted with it 'disappears.' The darkness overcomes the light. But no darkness can ever overcome Jesus's light.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Sharon couldn't stop thinking about the pastor's question and Jess's testimony. But one thing kept her back from turning to the light of Christ. She kept hearing a whisper, "You're too dark. You're too dark." Jess had encouraged her to read John's Gospel, so she picked it up and was stunned when she got to verse five. Having read it and re-read it many times, she finally fell to her knees and said, "Lord Jesus, I am so dark, but you love to shine in the darkness. Please shine into my darkness to defeat it and overcome it as your Word promises." Within a few days, Sharon could feel the darkness lifting and sensed a strange but growing light inside, especially when she read God's Word. Whenever she felt the darkness returning, she always went back to this verse and it always beat the darkness.

DARKNESS IS POWERFUL
BUT LIGHT IS MORE POWERFUL



**This light made an immediate difference to Sharon's life.
What about the long-term?**



3. JESUS IS AVAILABLE LIGHT

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world (6-9).

We don't usually need someone to tell us, "This is a light." But we are spiritually so dark that that's exactly what we need. That's why God sent John the Baptist, to tell all people that Jesus was the light. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light (8).

But that's not all, he also came to call all to faith in him: **that all might believe through him** (8). John the Baptist's words were not just a dispassionate courtroom witness to the light. No, he was a passionate preacher of Christ who wanted all to believe in him. His namesake, the Apostle John, used 'believe' 100 times in his Gospel, which shows us how much he also wanted people to turn on the light in their life through faith in Christ.

The universal availability of Christ's light is underlined in the next verse too: The true light, **which gives light to everyone**, was coming into the world (9). The light of Christ is available to every kind of person.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

People around Sharon noticed that she was different. At times, it looked like she was actually shining. Eventually, some started asking her about the obvious change in her. The first time it happened, she was too embarrassed to say anything. But that night she was convicted about her silence and prayed: "Lord, I'm watching people stumbling about in the dark. You've given me a flashlight. Help me to turn it on so that others can enjoy the light." The next time she was asked about what was different, she said, "Faith turns the light on!" One of the happiest days of her life was when her younger sister whom she had witnessed to, turned on Christ's light in her life by faith. At her baptism, her sister testified, "I had no idea I was living in the dark until the light of Christ filled my life. I thought my life was as good as it could be. But now that the light is on, I see it was like a bad dream that Christ ended by turning the light on." She ended her testimony by assuring everyone that the light of Christ was available to all.

BELIEVE IN THE LIGHT AND
YOU'LL BELIEVE INTO THE LIGHT.



Hear the story > Change your story > Tell the story.



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Lightmaker and Lightgiver, shine into my life and through my life, so that others will believe into the light. Amen

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you had SAD (spiritual affective disorder) and what was it like for you?
2. What does this passage tell you about sin and its effects upon us?
3. What words of Christ have brought life and light into your soul?
4. What brings darkness into so many lives?
5. Who do you know that shines? What do you think makes them different? Ask them?
6. Who in your life needs to hear about Christ's light and how will you tell them?

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