

Tony Moore

“Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of His servant? Let Him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God” Isaiah 50:10

Today I would like to share with you an experience that I had in my Christian walk and how God sent the light of His word to me through a dear brother here at the church. I recently went through what I would describe as a period of darkness in my Christian walk. I refer to it as “dark” however the reality is the word “cold” would also provide an accurate description of this time. I do not know if you have ever experienced it, but if you have, you know exactly what I mean. God seemed so distant; and nothing I said or did seem to change that feeling.

My reading of His word had become like a task or a duty that was required of me. It didn't provide the same level of joy that it did at other times. It was as if I was going through the motions. Each morning I would return to His word in hopes that it would be different only to find that it was just like the day before. Over time I think I stopped expecting it to be different; but interestingly enough I felt as if I had to keep going back to His word. I felt drawn back to His word. My prayers were full of what seemed like empty words; devoid of any passion. I kept praying for the time to pass, wondering if there was some sin that stood between me and God. The harder I prayed the darker and colder it seemed to get. It was as if I was searching for some magical words that if spoken would make these feelings go away. Nevertheless God kept bringing me back to Him to pray. Here at the church, everyone seemed to be in this deep fellowship with God and it was as if I was the only one struggling. As I sat here on Sunday morning singing songs and listening intently to the preaching of the word, I would glance around and see joy on your faces and wonder where mine had gone. Then one Sunday morning Jerry asked if anyone was struggling they should raise their hand and others would come around and pray with them. As if I had no choice, my hand immediately shot up in the air. At the conclusion of the service, Dave Wilson came up to me and shared with me a simple yet incredibly profound scripture, “This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it” Psalm 118:24

I cannot tell you how many times I have read those words over the years or quoted them with casual familiarity. On that morning, however, those words melted my heart. In that instant, I saw with such clarity that it was God who led me into the darkness and it was God who would lead me out of the darkness. This was the day that God Himself had made. This day belonged to Him and in that knowledge I could rejoice.

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I will share with you that this is not the first time I have experienced darkness during my walk with the Lord and every time I find myself there it feels like the first time. I will also share with you that each time that I have gone through these

periods I have emerged with a greater understanding of God than I had before the period of darkness. I emerge with a greater belief that "...He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" Phil. 3:6 This time around I have learned there is nothing I can do to add to what Christ has done for me and what the Holy Spirit is doing in me. At the end of this life I will know with certainty that salvation is of the Lord; recognizing that I have been like a "brand plucked from the fire." I have been reminded that this process of sanctification is not depended upon my feelings and often times the greatest work in me occurs when I feel the world is dark around me. Everything that I experience has been designed by God as even the Psalmist wrote, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep your word" Psalm 119:67.

Today I am so thankful that Dave took the time to share God's word with me. More importantly, that he obeyed God's prompting to speak with me. If you are anything like me, you have felt a tug at your heart to share a word of encouragement or a scripture with someone. You have experienced that tightness in your forehead, sweaty palms, and a rapid heartbeat as they approach you. If God has placed it on your heart to share His word with someone I would encourage you to obey Him. I can tell you from experience that you have no idea how God will use those words, but this is His promise "For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" Isaiah 55:11.