

“Opposites Day”

A Walk Through the Old Testament

Genesis 1:2-5

Rev. Ted Wood

August 30, 2019

Brave Men Singing:

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Ted: The Lord be with you.

Brave Men: And also with you.

Ted: Let us pray. Lord God, in Your creation You created light and dark. And You brought into existence that light that enlightens every man. We thank You and praise You for the light that You brought into our lives. We pray that we may move from darkness into light so that we may truly experience what it is to be children of the light. We pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Ted: Okay, good. Well, what I normally do in preparing for the teaching is that I look to something that’s kind of making me curious or interested, or whatever I’m thinking about as I’m doing my devotions. I just finished the Gospel of John as my devotional book. I probably took about six months to get through it because I take a couple verses at a time—maybe one verse, maybe five verses. So I have a list of all the books of the Bible and I put a check mark by it every time I read it. And I’ve gotten this down for about twelve years.

And I realized that I had only read through Genesis once. So I returned to Genesis and I began to read Genesis, the book that we’re now studying, just by coincidence. And I found it fascinating. I found that first chapter very fascinating. And I dug into it, and there were things that struck me as I was reading it and meditating and praying about it.

And the verses I want to talk about today are from Genesis the first chapter, verses 3 and 4.

“God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening, and there was morning, the first day.”

When my kids were younger, they loved something in school. It was something called Opposites Day. And you would go in and you would play this game called “opposites.” Do you all know what I’m talking about? If it was a sunny day, you’d say, “Oh, it’s raining outside.” (*Laughter*) Or if it was rainy, you’d say it was sunny. Or if you had food like spaghetti, you’d say, “Oh, I really like this hot dog.” And the kids loved that. And there was even an Opposites Day that was held in school.

But I’m thinking about the opposites found in the Bible. And we get what may be the first of the opposites in these first few verses of Genesis. And I’m just wondering how

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many opposites you can think of that are in the Bible. Just go ahead and shout them out. Think about the opposites that are in the Bible.

Bishop Rodgers: Good and evil.

Ted: Good and evil. Okay, that would be one.

Jim Hamilton: Night and day.

Ted: Night and day. Okay.

Don Maurer: Death and life.

Ted: Death and life.

Bishop Rodgers: Jerusalem and Babylon.

Ted: Yes, Jerusalem and Babylon. Very good. Who said that? Okay, you get extra points. That was a hard one. *(Laughter)* That’s a third-level answer. *(Laughter)* Okay, what else do you think?

Corky Semler: Predestination and free choice.

Ted: No. *(Laughter)* I would not call them true opposites. What else do you have?

Jim: Salvation and condemnation.

Ted: Salvation and condemnation. Excellent. Right.

Bill McCoy: The righteous and the wicked.

Ted: The righteous and the wicked; excellent!

Brave Man: Eternal death and eternal life.

Ted: Eternal death and eternal life.

Bishop Rodgers: One God and many gods.

Ted: One God and many gods.

Jim: Hate and love.

Ted: Hate and love; excellent. What else? The Bible is full of them. I bet that if you sat down and wrote up a list you might have 50-plus opposites in the Bible. I think about flesh and Spirit, right? I think about second Adam and first Adam. I think about the second birth and the first birth.

So there are lots of opposites that are in the Bible. But here in these first few verses in Genesis we have what I might call one of the first primary opposites. The Bible begins with one of the primary opposites in all creation. That is light and darkness.

There is this that happens on day one. *“God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And there was evening and there was morning,. The first day.”* So in those first few verses we have light and darkness, day and night, light separated from darkness.

But then there’s the fourth day of creation. And we pick this up in the fourteenth verse of that chapter. And I’m going to read it.

“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.’ And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars, and to separate the light from the darkness. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.”

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So the subject of this fourth day of creation is that you have the greater light and the lesser light, probably the sun and the moon, day and night, light separated from darkness. Prior to the fourth day of creation, and the creation of the physical sun and the moon and the stars, there was a first day of creation of light and darkness. I found that very puzzling, and this is what kind of led me on this journey through these verses.

I see something like this in the third chapter of John in the third verse. You remember the story, when Nicodemus came to visit Jesus. *“Jesus answered Nicodemus, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’*

Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Spirit is spirit.’” In John the third chapter there is a natural or physical birth, and there is a supernatural or spiritual birth. And the spiritual birth is far more important than the physical birth.

And I wondered, as I began to think about these verses, is day #1 of creation talking about the creation of a spiritual darkness, one of the first primary opposites in the Bible? Even though Bruce does not include light as one of the 28 attributes of God, Jesus said this. *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

Jesus gave His priority to light by saying that He Himself was the light. And the light of Christ is more real than the light of the sun. And at the end of time there will be no more sun or moon. We hear about that light of Christ which will be the only light in the new heaven and the new earth. And Revelation says that the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth *“has no need of sun or moon to shine on it. The glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. And there will be no night there.”*

Turning away, that is separating from darkness to light, is the starting point of Paul’s instructions from Jesus. It’s interesting to read what Jesus told Paul in his conversion when he was on the road to Damascus. And he reports this to Agrippa. Listen to what Jesus’ instructions were to Paul. *“I am sending you to open the eyes of all people, so that they may turn from darkness to light.”* So this idea of opposites was so critical that it was the beginning instructions of Paul’s ministry.

And the dispelling of darkness by the light of Christ continues to be the apostles’ teaching. John writes this. *“This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you.”* So John is saying, *“This is the message.”* And he didn’t say, *“This is the message, that you need to be saved.”* He didn’t say, *“This is the message. Jesus died for you,”* which is true. All of those are true. But there’s something more primary. *“This is the message that we proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”*

Throughout the New Testament the light of Christ is the identity and the mark and the experience of the children of God. Paul writes, *“But you are not in darkness, brothers, for you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.”* And again in Ephesians Paul writes, *“At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”*

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And also again Peter writes, *“You are a people of God’s own possession, called out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* It’s a huge theme in the Bible that we often overlook.

If light is one of God’s attributes, and light and darkness are primary opposites, what are the ways that the light of Christ overcomes darkness in the children of light? For that is what we are. I want to suggest four ways that the light of Christ overcomes darkness in us.

The first is *to trust God’s promise of light over darkness.* *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* We are often faced with situations, you and I—moods, circumstances—that may seem very dark. It’s interesting that in those first several verses of Genesis that the Hebrew word for darkness, *chashek*, means *darkness* or *obscurity*. But it’s also used to mean *distress, dread, ignorance, perplexity, or confusion.*

So we often have situations in our lives that are like that. And Isaiah describes this darkness as a condition of God’s people in his time. He said, *“We hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We stumble at noon as in the twilight. Among those of full vigor we are like dead men.”*

In the face of those situations that we face, this is God’s promise to His people. Isaiah says, *“I will turn the darkness before you into light. And these are the things I do; I do not forsake you.”*

And this was Zechariah’s prophecy in the Gospel of Luke when he was presented to John the Baptist. *“Because of the tender mercy of our God, the Sunrise shall visit us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”* Remember, this is God’s promise. Contrary to everything we might perceive about the world and our personal lives, this is God’s promise. *“The darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining”*, says 1 John. So the first thing we do in overcoming darkness with light is to trust God’s promises.

The second thing, the way that light overcomes darkness in the children of light, is *to be exposed by the light.* I just love the fact that the beginning of the Anglican Communion service always has this opening prayer. *“Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hidden.”* This is the beginning first step as you begin the service. It’s not about let’s greet your neighbor. It’s about being exposed by the light. And we say that is the beginning of real communion with God, to be exposed by the light.

And it goes on to say, *“Therefore, since we are exposed to You, we cannot hide from You. Therefore cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration and indwelling of the Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord.”*

Psalm 139 tells me that being exposed is inevitable. I can’t avoid it. That’s what the prayer says. The prayer basically says that being exposed by the light of God is inevitable; I can’t avoid it. Psalm 139 supports that.

O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

You discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down,

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*And are acquainted with all my ways.
If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will cover me,
And the light about me be night,’
Even the darkness is not dark to You;
The night is bright as day,
The darkness is as light with You.”*

Job reminds his accusers:
*“The LORD uncovers the deeps out of darkness,
And brings deep darkness to light.”*

If the light of Christ did not expose the darkness in my life, I would be lost in darkness. Without the light of Christ I will never see the kingdom of God.

The third way that light overcomes darkness in the children of light is that the light not only exposes the darkness. *The light humbles those on whom the light shines.* It says in Psalms that

*“You save a humble people,
But Your eyes are on the haughty, to bring them down,
For You are my lamp, O LORD,
And my God lightens my darkness.”*

Once again,
*“You save a humble people,
But Your eyes are on the haughty, to bring them down.”*

There’s a very popular verse that’s often used, especially now that we’re in a great transitional time in world history today. I think there has never been a time –well, that’s not true. This is a time of great transition. We don’t know where it’s all headed. And many folks are very unhappy about the direction of the country, especially its cultural and social life. And this verse is often quoted. *“If My people who are called by My name shall humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

You know that verse, don’t you? *“If My people who are called by My name shall humble themselves.”* What does it mean? *“If My people humble themselves.”* What does that actually mean? What does it mean to seek God’s face, and turn from their wicked ways?

Isaiah warned the wicked people of His time, the wicked people of God’s people,
“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and shrewd in their own sight!”

Paul was dealing with the same problem in the early church when he says, *“We have renounced disgraceful and underhanded ways, and we refuse to practice cunning, or gamble with God’s word.”*

So I ask you. To whom are these warnings directed? Who are the wicked that are talked about in that very popular 2 Chronicles verse? Who is it? Is it those people out there, or is it people within the church? What would actually have to happen that God

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exposed and gave light to the situation, the wickedness in this world? Who is He directing that toward?

Bishop Rodgers: Toward us.

Ted: I think it's us. And so I wonder when people talk about that. Do they mean, if this nation will humble itself. If people who are doing abortions and they will stop doing that? If people who are exposing godless theories, if they would just quit doing that, then God will bless us again? We can go back to the good old days, when everybody was kind of a good person and humbled themselves before God.

I think this is an illusion, because it's about what the people of God are doing. The abortionist cannot help himself. He is going to do evil. He cannot help himself in doing that. Unless the light of Christ shines on his life and gives him wisdom and gives him conversion, he will never do the right thing. I just don't care for that verse, because I don't think people aim it at the body of Christ. Basically, brothers and sisters, we're suffering the consequences of not tending to the first things of the gospel. And even now we have this attitude that bigger is better, and programs are more important than conversions, and that popularity and attractive speakers are greatly desired.

You are all probably aware of Joshua Harris who wrote *I Kissed Dating goodbye*. He wrote a book about not dating but courting, or something like that. It was very popular. He wrote it when he was 21 years old. And now he has come forward in the last several months. He's divorced his wife and he has probably renounced the Christian faith. And he was a big church pastor who wrote a very popular book. What happened there? You see this on a number of occasions recently. Something is seriously wrong in the church when these things happen.

The light of Christ will lead me into the truth in righteousness. But to get there the light of Christ will humble you. The light of Christ is going to lead me into the truth. That's the promise. But to get there God is going to have to humble me.

The light will expose my self-deception, the lies I have told myself and others. And the biggest lie of all that I tell to myself is this one. I will not die, but I will be like God. And every time we lie and don't tell the truth, living in lies and being self-deceived, every time we do that I am like God because I create my own universe.

“Honey, I had to work late at the office.” What is the wife thinking? She's thinking about me being in the office. But that's not true. I've become a god that creates a universe in somebody's mind every time I lie.

I'm late for a client meeting. “Oh, the traffic was terrible!” And the client is thinking interstate backup. That's not true at all. I just didn't get up early enough to leave on time. That is the problem. We have lots of ways that we create our own universe as a god, because we really want to be God. But when I lie I create my own universe. I am like God. And like God there will be no consequences to my lies and self-deception. I will not die. I will not suffer any consequences when I tell these lies to myself and others. I will try to hide my wickedness from the light. But God comes to expose me.

And if that fails I will minimize the wickedness. “Ted, you did this.”

“Oh no I didn't.”

“No, really you did it. You did it this day, this day and this day.”

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“Oh, you’re right. But it’s really not that bad.”

So that’s what we do. If exposed by the light we begin to either deny it or minimize it. I will dig in my heels and refuse to be humble. I will put off getting reconciled when God commands me to get reconciled to others. I am unwilling to repent unless put up against the wall.

I hate the exposure and the humbling. Do you think the wicked hate that? I hate it every bit as much as they do at times. *“The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil.”* The light has come into the world, Ted. And you love darkness rather than light.

You say that’s harsh. But isn’t that real? Bruce used to tell us. He said that every time you sin you are telling God that you don’t love Him. I would say that every time we sin we prefer the darkness to the light.

The fourth way that light overcomes darkness in the children of light is *to repent and return to the light*. It’s interesting. In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus’ ministry begins with a fulfilled prophecy. *“The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and from those dwelling in the region of the shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”*

But it’s interesting. As that prophecy gets fulfilled at the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry, the very next verse says this. So light is coming, the dawn is coming. There’s a new day, Jesus is here. *“And Jesus began to preach, saying.”* What were His first words?

Brave Men: Repent.

Ted: *“Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.”* So faced with the lies, faced with the humbling, faced with the embarrassment, faced with the exposure, there’s only one remedy when I stray from the light. When I avoid being exposed by the light, when I walk away from the light, when I refuse to be humbled, I need to repent and walk in the light. This is my only option, because I can never escape from the light of Christ.

God began the first day of creation by separating light from darkness. He is doing it still in my life and your life. God is in the business of separating light from darkness in your life. When you are getting exposed, trust the One exposing you. Humble yourself, repent, and walk as children of the light.

That pretty much concludes it. Any thoughts about that?

John Barry: As you were talking this came to mind. I’ve heard it said that the natural state of the universe is darkness. But as you were talking, the first thought that came to my mind is that this is not true. The natural state of the universe is not darkness.

Ted: You’re saying that the natural state of the universe is light, not darkness. But it’s interesting to read in those first few verses of Genesis. What does it say? *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Somebody read it for me.”*

Kirk Ellerbusch: Formless and void.

Don: Without form and void.

Ted: Keep going.

Don: *“And darkness was on the face of the deep.”*

Ted: So in a sense we had darkness before we had light, because then comes the creation of light. And the fact of the matter is that darkness did not exist on its own. It’s

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not separate from God. It's a creation of God. Darkness would not be there unless God created it. And that's a whole other subject to talk about. That's a good thought.

How did the presentation strike you? Was it just a little too abrupt, or was it nothing that you could kind of sink your teeth into?

Bill: It required deep thought.

Ted: John?

Bishop Rodgers: This raises a question for me. How do I come into the light that I might be humbled and repent?

Ted: Thank you, straight man. That's good. *(Laughter)* The question is how do you come into the light and be humbled, which leads to exposure? Exposure leads to humility. Humility leads to repentance. How do you get there? How does that happen? I mean, I have my thoughts. Do you have your thoughts? How does that happen?

Transcriber's Note: A long pause.

Ted: Okay, you guys are all wicked and in the darkness. None of you have been predestinated. *(Laughter)*

Jim: We hear the benefits.

Ted: Okay. We hear the benefits. Okay, keep going.

Corky: Well, perhaps a little different direction, although I guess I'm saying the word of God. And humility is so powerful because, as you pointed out, when we're not humble we create our own universe.

Ted: Yes, we're playing it out.

Corky: We're playing it out exactly. And we do it every day, don't we?

Ted: Yes, we do.

Corky: We try to take control. And that's the exact opposite of what the Lord wants from us. What a powerful message and very convicting, I'll tell you what! Thanks for those words.

Ted: It's my practice that I don't talk about anything that I'm not wrestling with myself. And when I finished this I said that I'm too wicked to do this talk. That's what I thought. I have no business giving this talk. My own lack of humility, my own self-deification and self-deception is so constant that either I'm saved by grace or I'm totally lost. Yes, Mike. Please.

Mike Davis: I was thinking that maybe I don't want to listen to you again because I don't like being convicted. *(Laughter)*

Ted: I want you all to begin to think about the faith in the full spectrum of the message from Scripture. And there are lots of opposites. We talked about them. There is salvation/damnation, and there are all of these other concepts. But the fact of the matter is that I'm trying to bring forth another opposite that we don't think very much about: light and darkness. Another profound thought just left my mind. Yes, Don?

Don: I have a three-pronged question.

Ted: Ouch! *(Laughter)*

Don: What you said was very good. I guess I'm a little confused, though, about how you're correlating the first few chapters of Genesis to this whole idea of spiritual

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darkness. Is it your contention that Satan had fallen already, and that was the cause of the darkness? Also—

Ted: Is that the first prong?

Don: That’s the first prong, yes.

Ted: Ouch! Okay. *(Laughter)*

Don: Okay. The second prong is Joshua Harris and the apostasy. That’s scary. That’s really, really scary.

Ted: How many of you are familiar with the story? It’s been big on the news. Okay, Don, let me stop you there, because I really don’t want to deal with the first prong.

(Laughter) What is so scary about the Joshua Harris situation?

Bishop Rodgers: It reveals our instability.

Ted: That’s part of it. Go ahead, Don. I have to ask you a question. That’s my first prong to you.

(Laughter)

Don: What’s scary to me about it is how do I know that it won’t happen to me?

Ted: Excellent question!

Don: I mean, he was devout, supposedly.

Ted: Right. But I think that we have lost sight of the things that are really critical in terms of the life of the body of Christ. And you know that this is a big beef of mine. The body of Christ prospers not in programs and personalities. It doesn’t. It prospers by doing what the apostles did, what the first disciples did in Acts 2. And that is that they devoted themselves to prayer, fellowship, the breaking of bread and the word of God. That’s what they did. And they did it in groups that were accountable to each other. Big churches can’t be accountable. Accountability becomes artificial and it’s imposed.

“We need lots of small groups.” Well, why not have a church of only 200 or less so you can know people and you know where they are. “Oh, we didn’t see you last Sunday.” People can’t hide in that situation.

I think Harris comes right on to this big box mentality. It is a carnal, worldly attitude about how we do church. And we slide into that. We have churches that have small attendance and are faithful.

Remember that Bruce talked about the one fellow who he had known. The thing that was his glory was that he started with 170 people and he ended up with 670. He didn’t lose any. Do you remember that story that he talked about?

And the fact is, we don’t know if we lose them or not. We don’t keep records of who leaves. We have no way of knowing, because success is critical. And success in the kingdom of God is always judged over long hauls of time, not short hauls of time. How much money did we raise? How many souls were saved? How many programs did we have? How many marriages were saved in the last year or month?

To me, Harris was part of that whole way of thinking. That doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen in other forms. You see, I just wanted to say something to provoke you. I’m sorry. I only dealt with one of two prongs. I apologize.

Don: That’s all right. I forgot my third prong anyway.

Ted: Yes?

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Brave Man: Ted, honestly I think you’ve hit on large churches four or five times. Bad things happen in small churches, but there is no one there to talk about it. That’s why you don’t hear about those so much.

Ted: See, I’m not so much concerned about the pragmatic issues. Bad things happen and don’t happen there. I’m more concerned about how we think about church. How is it regardless of what happens in the short term? You can always find good things and bad things pragmatically in any kind of church. We have tiny ones with five struggling people, or people with five thousand. But I think that a lot of church today does not start off with the theology of church. It starts off with a practice of church, because theology is not a good thing. With practice the results are much better.

Don: And Ted, Joshua Harris never went to seminary. In fact, he resigned from his pastorate initially to go to seminary because he hadn’t really studied theology. And that’s probably a big part of the problem.

Ted: Right.

Bishop Rodgers: He went to the wrong seminary. *(Laughter)*

Ted: You know what? And he went to the wrong seminary. *(Laughter)* I’m sorry. Go ahead.

John: You didn’t answer his first prong.

Ted: You know what? Let me just deal with this first prong.

Don: All right.

Ted: To me, as I began to read Genesis, we had a lot of discussion: old earth, new earth. Seven 24-hour days, big periods of time. All of these things happened. As I began to read however many of these verses there are in the first chapter to the fourth verse of the second chapter, it seemed like there was such a mystery that was evolving. I mean, I was kind of overblown by the deeper issues.

Don: Bad word, Ted. Evolve is a bad word. *(Laughter)*

Ted: Micro, not macro.

Don: Right. I agree; go ahead.

Ted: But I’m just saying that that’s what grabbed me. I wasn’t interested so much in reading and applying all these issues like Satan here or there, whatever. I wanted to see a bigger issue with what God is trying to say in this first part. Do you understand what I’m saying? Go ahead. Thank you.

Bishop Rodgers: Can I bring up another whole area in John’s Gospel?

Ted: No. *(Laughter)*

Bishop Rodgers: In John’s prologue it says that “*the light which enlighteneth every man is coming into the world.*” How do you interpret that?

Ted: The light that enlightens every man. I would say it’s the light of nature, God’s creation. God’s glory is reflected in what He has made. I don’t know how anybody could not feel that. Even pagans, even those who don’t believe in God are blown away by the magnificence of nature. And when you get out on a starry night when there’s no ambient light around and you go, “Whoa! I’m a nothing!” And so what does man do with that? Men are stuck with their own fragility.

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I’ve shared this story. I sat on the beach at the Outer Banks. And I’m not a beach person. I only go to the beach when there is no sun. I’m so fair. *(Laughter)* It was later in the afternoon and I was on the beach. And I was sitting there. And I spent about an hour just sitting and looking out at the Atlantic. And there was nobody else at the beach. And the horizon went up like a huge dome. And it was a beautiful late afternoon. I mean, you can almost imagine it. And I got scared because I was so small compared to that! I felt all of the fragility. I mean, I’m vulnerable at any moment to be made nothing.

And what the Christian needs to do, what the person who seeks after God needs to do, is to say, “God, this is my situation. It is true. Only You can solve that. Only You can solve my fragility. I am absolutely hopeless.”

The person who does not know God says, “I’m absolutely fragile. How can I strengthen myself?” That’s how it goes. You end up in either one of two directions. John?

Bishop Rodgers: Same question. If it’s true that if the light of God shines through what is created is a reference, it also says that it is “*coming into the world.*” That would imply that which is stated in other places: that the creation is through the Son. It was Jesus who was coming into the world. So you have to connect the two. This is another way of saying that God created the world through Christ.

Ted: Very good; excellent. Don, I’ll come back to you later.

Corky: Back to the Josh Harris thing. Big church, small groups. Didn’t Judas fall away?

Ted: Yes, he did.

Corky: So from the very beginning of Christ’s closest small group, one fell away. And is this so very different? Evil is powerful. So yes, there it is from the very beginning. One of Christ’s closest followers fell away. *(Unclear)*

Ted: But he was predestined to do so.

Bishop Rodgers: Small groups won’t save us.

Don: It’s not over till it’s over.

Ted: Yes?

Bob Busted: On a daily basis we talk about light and darkness. To me it all starts with the opposites of belief and unbelief. I’ve heard that unbelief is a grievous sin. And so if you say to me, when do you understand light and dark? When are you ready to repent? Do you even know what that means? You start with the very basics. Do you believe? Do you really believe? We go back to words like *faith* and *grace*. And I’m going to have to say first of all that I believe about light and dark that God created everything, and He put the sun and the moon and the stars up there that would create light. So it’s a different form of thinking. But for me, though I believe that and though I have true faith and true belief, then I don’t have the ability to distinguish between light and darkness, and I don’t have the ability to repent.

Ted: I agree. But I would say this about that. There are a lot of people who believe that God created the universe. They believe all the things you’ve said. But they still walk in darkness without any sense of repentance. I mean the acknowledgment of it, I’m walking in darkness; I need to be humbled by God and repent. These are steps in the right direction. There are lots of people who are claiming Christianity without understanding

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that they need to change. And they will say they need to change. But when you push them against the wall in marriage counseling, “Oh yeah, I know I need to change.”

Well, you get into a counseling session and before you know it, you’re defending your inexcusable behavior because you really don’t believe in change. You believe in her change, but not your change. That’s true with everything. Oh, those bad people over there! Well, you’re just as wicked as they are.

Well, they deserve the full weight of the law and justice. You do, too! Don’t you fear that statement that you want justice against them? Because that same justice is going to come against you.

So I think what happens is that we get to the point that we do not want to live with the deception anymore. We cannot bear it any longer. We’ve deceived ourselves. We can see the fruit of that. And sooner or later we hope by the grace of God. We’re like the drunk in the gutter in his own vomit. He wakes up in the gutter and he says, “Anything is better than this.” Before he said, “I can’t live without a drink! I can’t live without the world! I can’t live without my possessions! I can’t live without my position!”

That’s what he’s saying until one morning, by the grace of God, you say to yourself, “Anything is better than this!” And at that point God says, “Good statement. I’ve got the other thing for you. I’ve got life and light.” And that’s where we get serious. But that has to come as the mystery of conversion, the mystery of getting it. It strikes me that some get it and others don’t.

Why did Josh Harris not get it? Why did he see no other option but to renounce his faith and his marriage? Why is that so? Is he so proud that he can’t see that? I guess so. Here’s a 21-year-old fellow who’s writing books for the rest of the Christian world with no training, but a very successful pastor. Go ahead.

Brave Man: A couple points. First of all, the fact that the universe began in darkness speaks to me of the separateness of the universe from God. That’s like a non-pantheistic view because of the separation between the two, because the universe began in darkness. Another minor point is that the fact that it started with the universe bathed in light I believe is where the Jews got the idea of the new day beginning at sunset. You have darkness and then light.

Ted: That’s interesting.

Brave Man: As far as people falling away, I read an article about someone who was question his faith from one ministry. And he said he was called by Him just to leave. And I don’t think he had a good foundation there.

Ted: Right, because the end goal is pragmatic; it’s not theological.

Jim: So God created days and nights, darkness and light. And we live with that forever. And what makes us think that darkness is bad? Where do we get that out of Genesis, that darkness is bad and light is good?

Ted: That’s a good question. And that’s a whole other area to get into, because there is a rule of darkness, is there not? I mean, darkness—

Bishop Rodgers: We need sleep.

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Ted: We need to sleep. But I think about this in terms of spiritual darkness. The only thing that spiritual darkness does is make our lives so miserable that it drives us to the Savior.

Once again, I’m not looking at the first four verses of Genesis as being focused on the physical creation. I’m thinking more about the creation of the spiritual realities in that. I mean, I won’t argue that. That may or may not be true. But that’s all speculative. Yes, go ahead, Bill. Bill has his Bible open. Now I need to be nervous.

Bill: All right. I found some hope in all this. It’s in 2 Timothy. It says, *“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patient in enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth. And they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”*

The other thing I was thinking about was thinking about someone else being an apostate, and that making me feel insecure. If my salvation in any way depends on me, I should be insecure. If God is faithful, and He said He would discipline His children, we don’t have to worry. He’s faithful; we’re not. He will discipline us and bring us to where He wants us to be. In that verse, repentance comes from Him.

Ted: The light exposes. God brings light and exposes darkness. And that is meant to drive us to the cross.

Someone will say, “You’re not feeling bad because you were guilty. You were feeling bad because you were caught.”

And I say, “You’re right. I feel really bad that I’m caught. And if I keep doing this, I’m going to get caught again and caught again until God has his way.”

So I don’t know. I’ve had experiences in life of being exposed and embarrassed. It’s awful, because there’s nothing you can say about yourself in any defense. You’re truly exposed.

“Oh, it really wasn’t that way. These are the circumstances.” Or “it was because of that, or because of that.” If you’re truly exposed, all of that gets wiped out. And it just means that you’re a big failure. You have really dropped the ball with this issue.

And you have to say, “You’re right; I did. Lord, have mercy.”

Bishop Rodgers: You’re truly guilty.

Ted: You’re truly guilty. I mean, all the other props that we put around us make us feel bad on that beach, and we’re really not that fragile. In an instant it’s all gone.

But to me that’s not depressing. To me that is wonderful, because it’s the way life truly is. And I need to be driven to Christ. And He drives me to repentance. And He drives me to a new life and all hope for the world.

I think I shared with you that a fellow came to talk to me. One of the board members of one of my client organizations came to me. He knew I was a Christian. He made the point of telling me “I’m not a Christian. I’m an atheist. I’m very much into science, a materialist.”

After the meeting everybody else had left the room and we were by ourselves in the board room. And he turned and he said, “Ted, let me ask you a personal question. Do you have a lot of regrets in your life? Do you have any regrets?”

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And I said, “Yes, I have a lot of regrets. But I have a Savior who has saved me and brought me forward from those pangs.”

And He said, “I wish I had that.” Now this fellow had been very adamant about his atheism. But he said, “I wish I had that.” And there was hope.

Brave Man (with mock enthusiasm): Well you can, brother! Just get down on your knees! *(Laughter)*

Ted: I just said, “I wish you had it, too,” because the mere realization of his own hopelessness should drive him somewhere! I mean, if your beliefs produce ultimate hopelessness, why do you want to stay there? And I was hoping that would be it for him. But who knows? God knows.

I think that about does it. Don, I didn’t get to your third prong.

Don: That’s all right; I forgot what it was anyway. *(Laughter)*

Ted: Thanks guys; I appreciate it. *(Applause)*