

John 1: 1-10

11-5-17

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### Word Alone

As children my brothers and all remember being afraid of the dark.

We often requested our parents to leave the hall light on at night and if one of us woke up in the middle of the night and the hall light was off we would yell, "Turn the light on!" Until my Mom stumbled from bed and turned it on.

Eventually my mom tired of this and installed night lights in our rooms and gave each of us a scripture card with Psalm 121 printed on it.

### **Psalm 121**

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?

<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will keep  
your going out and you're coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.

When I would wake up in the middle of the night with my heart pounding over a bad dream reading over this psalm would slow down the beating of my heart.

Why was that? Martin Luther would have said it is because God's activity in the world comes through his word, his speaking. When we read God's Word, God is truly active in us and among us.

In Genesis when God formed the world, God's breathe swept over the face of the deep. God created by speaking, "Let there be light. And there was light... And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind." The creation story tells us that when God speaks it happens.

Luther saw that the Gospel of John says the same thing. The Word was in the beginning, and this word became flesh in Jesus Christ. When Jesus spoke in the Bible it happened. When Jesus told a little girl to get up in the Gospel of Mark she got up. When Jesus told the wind and sea to be still it calmed down. When Jesus

shouted Lazarus Come out!” Lazarus rose up from the grave and came out. When Jesus spoke it happened.

Human words could not do the same. When it comes to matters of faith, the only role human speaking has is to restate what God’s word says.

Luther understood that the only thing a Christian can rely on, the only thing a Christian can trust, is God’s speaking. The Word Alone makes Faith and the Word Alone is true.

While there are a lot of children who are afraid of the dark I think that as people become older they become increasingly afraid of the light. I would rather not have my life exposed to the light. I would rather hide in the shadows.

I know as I get older the light increasingly comes to feel like a flash light that an officer shines into my eyes after pulling my car over at night because I was speeding or failed to stop at a stop sign. Then my heart starts pounding because the light hurts my eyes and I have been exposed.

I guess there are probably a lot of adults who are afraid of the light and I don’t necessarily mean the physical light. I mean the light that exposes all of the things we have said in secret, done in secret and that we wish wouldn’t see the light of day.

The word of God is like that. It has power to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. That is how the word of God is always reforming us and reshaping us and pushing us back into the arms of the God who loves us.

I don't know what is going on in everyone's life right now. I don't know if your heart is pounding like a jack hammer right now and you are fearful and distressed if so I would recommend that you read something like John 10:10 where Jesus says "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Maybe that will calm some of the pounding of your heart.

Or if you're feeling pretty comfortable this morning. Everyone you know is healthy and safe and there is a recliner with your name in it may be read Matthew 10:28, "What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops, Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." Maybe that will get your heart pounding and send you running straight into the arms of Jesus.

This is why it is important for us to sit down and read through the entire Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John every once in a while instead of just googling verses about hope or comfort or love.

I don't know about all of you, but sometimes I'm not sure what my heart need to hear, but if I keep reading God's word in a disciplined way eventually it will drive me back into the arms of my loving God with a word of comfort and hope or a word of confrontation. As Hebrews 4:12 says, "Indeed, the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Because the Word of God is alive and active we can speak God's word into a situation and it might actually do something. Of course this is what we are most afraid of- that it might actually do something.

But I want to suggest, with everything that is going on in the world, that a verse from our reading this morning is a good place to start, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Say it with me, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." It is a word of hope and comfort when something bad happens, but I also think it is a word of warning. The light shines and the deeds done in the darkness will be exposed.

I want you to try that one out this week. I want you to speak the Word of God in your life and in other's lives. Try it out and tell me how you see it being active. IF you greet me as you leaving church this morning I am going to say, "The light shines in the darkness and you will reply and the darkness did not overcome it." Let's try that- "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."