

From This Corner

When It Gets Dark Enough You Can See the Star

Luke 2: 1-20

Two young boys grew up loving the outdoors and spent hours wandering through the woods across from their home. It was a dense woods and big enough in which to feel you were in the wild. One afternoon just prior to Christmas they went to the woods to play. Time went by and soon it seemed the darkness came over the woods sooner than usual. Shortly thereafter these young men discovered that they were in effect lost for as they made their way to the edge of the woods they found themselves in an apple orchard instead of facing in the direction of their home.

It's strange how even relatively small woods can become disorienting, every tree looking the same and not a little bit sinister, and other topographic features becoming obliterated by the dark. What to do now? They knew they were not far from being home and even felt a sense of embarrassment they could not get oriented. Should they split up, perhaps, but in the dark it is also hard to tell where a voice is coming from, even in small woods.

Slowly it became darker and darker. It was one of those nights that seemed pitch black. Worsening the scenario they were overdue at home.

Oddly enough, however, it was when it seemed it could get no darker that relief came. Soon there was a twinkling of lights, and since only one side of the woods faced the village they knew which way to go and were soon on their way.

Relief came only when it got dark enough to see the light of home.

And so it is with us. Each year during Christmas we worry about how we are going to get to Bethlehem. For even those of us who worship regularly at home and church know that sometimes it is easy to get lost in the world and lose sight of Jesus.

This year we find ourselves engaged in a very difficult war, and we are less certain of the intent of our neighbor than in the past. The world has gotten a whole lot riskier than to what we were once accustomed. Some have had

rough personal years for one reason or another. Others find themselves struggling with emotional issues buried in the unlit dungeons of psyche. This is the state of our humanity more years than not. If you have no worries, you are indeed blessed if not lucky.

And yet there is a lesson in the woods for humanity. Sometimes help comes when it is the darkest. A light in the distance points the way home. When it gets dark we look for that which can guide us on our way. This is the lesson of Christmas Eve.

Hear again the truth: “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, **and the glory of the Lord shone around them.**”

My guess is their path to the baby was lit by starlight, just as later three strangers from far off lands would come too by the light of God’s grace.

Yes, it is true. Sometimes when it gets dark enough you can see the star, and the light can lead you home.

I can witness to this because I have seen that sometimes it takes a dark night of the soul for people to realize they need to let Jesus’ light find them after stumbling in self focusing darkness.

It’s the same reason people flocked in Easter and Christmas proportions to worship on September 16 following 9-11.

Sometimes when it gets dark enough you can see the stars, and like the shepherds “the glory of the Lord shines around us” and we see things differently.

This may also be why Christmas Eve candlelight services are so special and revealing.

Sometimes when it gets dark enough you can see the Star.

May we see Jesus this Christmas, and may his glory shine upon all the people of the world in the year to come. In the darkness, it is our best hope of getting home.