

IT IS GETTING DARKER SO MUCH EARLIER

Have you noticed how it is getting darker so much earlier these days? We expect this to be part of fall just like we anticipate leaves turning colour and falling to the ground. Not very long ago it would be about 9:00 p.m. when we would see it getting dark. By the end of August, we noticed a slight change with respect to this timing. As September rolled into October, we saw a more significant change in timing. I was walking our dog Daisy last week around 7:15 p.m. when I stopped to talk with a neighbour who commented on how much earlier it was getting dark. Nadine's mother made the same comment on Monday night when she was over to our house for Thanksgiving dinner.

With it getting darker earlier in the evenings we begin to notice a difference in people's behaviours and patterns. For instance:

- I used to see families with their children playing in the park until 8:00-8:30 p.m. during summer but now they are heading home by 7:00 p.m.
- I used to see people walking their dogs around 8:00 p.m. most nights (probably after Jeopardy was over) but now they are going by my place around 6:30 p.m. (before Wheel of Fortune).
- I used to see my neighbour out in his yard doing various chores until 8:30 before calling it a night, but now I see him doing it either before supper on weekdays, or on the weekends instead.

We see changes like this occurring once the evenings start getting darker sooner. When the time change happens, making it become darker even sooner, we will see other patterns begin to unfold such as:

- Some having to go to work in the dark and come back home in the dark
- Wanting to be in for the night once we get home and not to go back out
- Getting into our pyjamas a lot earlier in the evening
- Feeling less active or energetic than we do in spring and summer
- Watching more television or falling asleep doing so more often

When the nights become darker sooner due to fall and the time change, we see a lot of changes in people's lifestyles and moods. We are affected by darkness. Sometimes being affected by darkness is not just a result of the time change, or summer turning into fall. When we go through moments of uncertainty in our lives it can feel like we are surrounded in darkness. The early stages of the pandemic certainly felt this way to so many of us. There are so many other things going on in the world right now that may make us feel we are surrounded in darkness. The war in Ukraine, the storms we have

been seeing of late, supply chain shortages, and the prices of many things increasing have brought a level of uncertainty into our lives.

Added to these uncertainties are personal issues that may feel like we are being surrounded by darkness. Health issues, loss and death, family dynamics, relationship problems may add to the uncertainties we are facing. As we identified with the nights getting darker sooner, darkness can have an impact on our feelings and lifestyle.

One of the psalmists in scripture felt surrounded by darkness and uncertainty at a point in his life. He was going through a period of uncertainty where people were telling lies about him. He not only felt oppressed by his enemies, but he wandered in grief. Feeling surrounded by uncertainty in this dark moment of his life, the psalmist wrote:

***Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me.
Let them lead me to your holy mountain to the place where you live.
There I will go to the altar of God, to God-the source of all my joy.***

(Psalm 43:3-4)

The first thing the psalmist asks God for here in this period of darkness is to **send His light and truth to guide him** through this situation. By asking for this truth and light the psalmist knows God will provide him with the right path to follow through this situation and give him a clear vision (light) to do so. The psalmist also acknowledges how important it is to go to God's temple during this period of uncertainty in order to worship Him and find joy again despite what he is going through.

This is important advice for us to follow if we are feeling surrounded by darkness and uncertainty right now. **We too can ask God to shed His light and truth upon us to be guided through the uncertainty.** We know He will give us the right path to follow. Just like the psalmist, we too can go into God's house and worship in order to sense His presence and be filled with a joy that only He can provide. With God's help all of the despair we are feeling being surrounded by uncertainty will be replaced with light, clarity, and joy. I think we will all agree **it is a far better way to experience life in these days and times of uncertainty.**

It is getting dark sooner. I like fall, but not this aspect of it. If we are finding ourselves affected by this reality, let us do what the psalmist did and **JOURNEY TO GOD'S ALTAR EACH SUNDAY.** The last time I looked it is still daylight at 10:00 am on Sunday.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean