

# From Darkness to Dawn 1) Pay Attention to the Light

2 Peter 1:12-21 • 2022-09-11 • 2 Peter Series "From Darkness to Dawn"



Have you lately looked at the sky just before dawn? You can see what has been called "the morning star." Of course, we know it is not actually a star. That really bright light just above the horizon before dawn is Venus, the brightest of all the planets in our sky. People have called Venus the morning star because it so often follows closely with the Sun. The ancient people who worked at night knew that a new day was coming soon after the rising of the morning star.

Someone like the apostle Peter certainly would have grown to appreciate seeing the morning star. He had worked for years as a fisherman, casting his nets all night long into the sea. He labored on through the dark nights. The sky was his only clock. The ancient world didn't have clocks and charts to indicate the exact time for each sunrise. But when the morning star appeared, Peter had an indication that the long night of work was almost over. After the morning star came the dawn. At sunrise Peter could head into shore with his catch of fish. Maybe you can identify with the waiting and watching. It can be hard at times. For you it was probably the clock during long hard days or nights of work.

In 2 Peter we are told that all of us are living in the dark. We are waiting for the new day to dawn. It doesn't matter what our vocation is and whether we work the night shift or the day shift. We are all in a world filled with the darkness of sin and. We are waiting for the time when our God comes to bring us fully out of the darkness of this world and into his promised eternal kingdom. Today we begin a 3-part series looking at 2 Peter, "From Darkness to Dawn." What ought we to be doing as we wait for the dawn? We see in 2 Peter 1 how our God hasn't left us completely in the dark as we wait. He gives us his light and tells us to pay attention to the light.

Peter knew his time of waiting in the darkness was almost over. It had been revealed to him by Christ that he would soon be dying. He referred to his imminent death as his departure from his tent, meaning his body. That is a good description of what life is for us. We are not living in our permanent dwelling. These bodies of ours are more like the tents we set up when we go camping. They don't last too long, and you can't stay in them for too long. Sometimes we might view this world as a place we want to permanently stay. But when we do that, we are like the person sleeping in a tent who doesn't realize just how great it will be to be in a lasting and comfortable home.

If you have ever spent time in a tent, you know what is meant by this picture. Everyone in a tent eventually desires a more substantial home. My family went camping recently and we found out just how true that is. It was fun. Some of us even got to see the morning star as we woke before dawn. But the fun can only go so far when camping. Some woke with soreness and had a rough night with little sleep. And the fun wears down with each dark night. You can be sure we were all glad to get to sleep in a regular bed in a comfortable home. That is how we ought to view our life right now. We are waiting for our permanent home which will be given to us when Christ comes! Peter reminds us that because our God has called us to faith in Christ we will receive "*an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" (2 Pt 1:11) That eternal kingdom will far exceed our earthly tent and these frail bodies!

Since Peter knows his time is short, he wants to remind us of what really is important. "*I intend always to keep reminding you of these things.*" He shared the gospel. But his work wasn't done. As long as he was alive, he knew it was for one important reason. He kept telling them about the gospel. When I give my kids a flashlight to have at night in the tent, I don't just want to give them a light that will last for two minutes. I try to make sure they have a light that will keep running for as long as the darkness of night. They need fully charged batteries. We need the light of God's Word in this world. We don't just need to hear it when we are growing up. And we need to keep in the gospel! We need it continually until we either die or Christ returns!

And make no mistake. I'm not just talking about giving the Word of God to young children. Peter is concerned about more than the young and those new to faith. He is actually writing to mature believers. These are the Christians who know God's Word and who understand the Scriptures. "*I intend always to keep reminding you of these things, even though you already know them and are established in the truth you now have.*"

Many of you might consider yourselves firmly established in the faith. Are you sometimes tempted to think that because you are firmly established in your faith that you don't need to keep being reminded of the truths you've been taught? Peter wants to keep every believer awake and alert. He wants even the mature to keep growing and holding on to the Word. You need to keep being reminded of the Word. You need to keep hearing the confession of Christ as we say it in the Creed. You need to hear the ABCs of the faith over and over again. You need to keep coming to receive the sacrament at the Lord's table time after time. It doesn't matter if you are brand new in your faith or if you are life-long, spiritually mature Christian. We all need constant reminders to always look to the Word and pay attention to it.

Peter is trying to leave behind a legacy. But it's not like the legacy many strive after. Peter doesn't want a legacy about himself. He isn't interested in leaving behind stories about how great he is. He wants to leave behind a remembrance of Christ. And he works very hard to pass on the gospel. "*I will also make every effort so that after my departure you*

*always have a reminder of these things.*" We always think about making a lasting legacy for ourselves. But what about making a lasting impact on those you reach with the Word of Christ? The Christian who leaves their family with a habit of worship and Bible study leaves a lasting impact for generations. The Christian who leaves part of their estate for supporting the work of spreading the gospel makes a far more lasting impact than any other impact. What is your goal to leave behind after your departure from this life? Do you want to leave behind a confession of Christ or just a bunch of accolades on what you accomplished? Do you want friends and family who are merely happy to get an inheritance from you of worldly riches? Or do you want friends and family who have the light of the gospel?

Peter left gospel reminders for you too! He and the other eyewitnesses of Christ have left their testimony. Peter didn't make it up like some fishing story about the one that got away. He saw the glory of Christ. Peter refers to the time when he and James and John accompanied Jesus up a mountainside. There they saw with their own eyes something which Jesus usually had kept hidden. They experienced the sight of Christ shining in glory. It was a brief but real display of the glory and power of Jesus. And they also heard the voice of God the Father who spoke from heaven saying, *"This is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased."* That was our Father telling his children, "Look! He is the light of the world which I sent to you." He wants us to pay attention to him!

Peter is reminding us how Jesus came as far more than an ordinary tent. He appeared as an ordinary man. But Jesus was no ordinary man. He was the Son of God. He veiled his glory in human flesh and walked among us. He lived in perfect holiness. He came to this world of darkness and sin to live a holy life. He was the holy Son of God who came down to be our light!

And Peter and the evangelist aren't the only ones who point us to Christ as our light. *"We also have the completely reliable prophetic word."* All the prophecies of Scripture are there for us. And they aren't just made-up stories. They are reliable. They foretold about the coming of the Savior who would be born into the world. From the very beginning of time the prophets spoke of the coming son of the woman who would be our light. The prophecy of Numbers 24, for example speaks of the *"A star will come out of Jacob. A scepter will rise up out of Israel."*

Even though he was born in darkness, Jesus came as the light. Jesus spoke of the forgiveness of sins. He proclaimed himself as the fulfillment of God's plan to release us from prison and the darkness of death. And make no mistake. The prophets never said Christ would merely show us the light. They said he would bring the light and himself be the light. Jesus is our salvation.

He spoke of his coming departure -not just to death and the grave, but to bright glory! He accomplished our rescue by facing the darkness on the cross as he carried our sins on himself. He came to live in the temporary tent of his body so that he could offer it up as a sacrifice for us. And in the start of a new day and new era he rose victorious from the grave. He fulfilled the reliable words of the prophets about the one who would suffer, die, and rise again to bring us eternal peace. Christ is the light of the world!

The Bible points us to see him! His Word is now a light for all in darkness. *"You do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place."* Do you pay attention to it? It can be so easy to only pay attention to the things coming across the light of your tv screen or phone screen. But don't be deceived! This world is a dark place. Much of what comes across on your screen will actually be darkness. You are *"in a dark place"* right now. The devil once bore the title "morning star." He was given a high position serving as an angel. But he lost his position and was cast down from heaven like a star being cast out of the sky. He seeks to plunge all this world under darkness. He desires that we cease to remind ourselves and others about the light. He would rather we forget about it and fall with him into everlasting darkness and shame.

That is why Peter says we should pay attention to the Word of God *"until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts."* Keep paying attention until you fully see God's light, Christ. The new day that will dawn is the fulfillment of all Scripture. It is the everlasting home of all those who trusted in the Lord. It is our eternal dwelling! When Christ appears in glory it will be the sign that the new day is at hand. We will see the risen and glorious Jesus in the sky. He is *"the bright morning star"* spoken about in Scripture which precedes the eternal new creation. Just as the morning star indicates the new day is coming, Jesus' arrival is the sign of a new era!

This is not just the testimony of Peter, the evangelist, and the prophets. It is the sure Word of God. The Holy Spirit has given us the light of the gospel to give us hope and encouragement as we wait for the dawn. His is a light that will not fail us. *"Since we know this above all else: No prophecy of Scripture comes about from someone's own interpretation. In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit."* Every other messenger is able to fail. But the Holy Spirit provides the sole absolutely reliable message!

Until it is time to leave these tents and until the morning star rises, keep paying attention to the light. One day it will be time to pack up your tent. You will look at the sky and see that the new day is coming soon. It is coming. But until then we have a light in a dark place. Make it your goal to keep reminding fellow believers. It is the gospel which is ours in Christ. It is the good news of Christ our light! Pay attention to it from darkness to dawn.