

Series: Psalms

Title: Make Thy Face to Shine

Text: Psalm 31: 16-24

Date: December 3, 2017

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Today, God saints are remembering our Lord Jesus as we partake of his table.

Luke 22: 19: And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20: Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

It is my desire to point us to Christ and him alone this morning. Our text is found in Psalm 31. This Psalm is prophetic of Christ on the cross. In Psalm 31: 5, we have Christ's last words on the cross, "*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.*" (Ps 31: 5) In Luke 23: 46, on the cross, we hear Christ speak those very words, "...*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*" (Lu 23: 46) Today, our text begins in verse 16. Christ says to God his Father,

Psalm 31: 16: Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

Pay close attention to these words. Christ asks God the Father, "*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.*" Zero in on these words, "*Make thy face to shine*" Christ prayed this while in darkness. We know when that time was from Matthew 27.

Matthew 27: 45: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

What caused "darkness" over all the land for those three hours? This is deep water—this is holy ground. We cannot enter into the depths of what was transpiring at that time so we will not pry further than scripture.

But the Holy Spirit connects the "*darkness*" with God "*forsaking*" Christ. To give us some idea of what Christ was suffering when God the Father forsook him on the cross—"there was darkness over all the land." To show us what caused the darkness, Christ cried, "*My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me.*" Being forsaken of God resulted in being left in darkness. God turned his face from his Christ; God took away *the light of his countenance* from shining upon our Substitute. Christ prayed to God, "*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.*"

Again, Christ show us this darkness was due to God turning his face from him in *Psalm 31: 22: For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes:*

Proposition: The death of sin is being cut off from God by God refusing to shine the light of his face upon us; but the life of righteousness is being received into God's presence by God shining the light of his face upon us.

THE DEATH OF SIN

First, let's remember Christ suffering the death of sin for us.

Sin entered when Adam—in disobedience to God—transgressed God's law in the garden.

1 John 3:4: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

God came to Adam and imputed sin to him only after Adam became sin by his transgression of God's law. And God imputed sin to all Adam's race because in Adam all have sinned. (Rom 5: 12)

Now, let us remember our holy Lord Jesus, the Son of God, Christ the last Adam. His name is Jesus (Savior) because he came to save his people *from our sins*—he has and he shall. He came to establish the law on behalf of his people, that is, to justify us and make us the righteousness of God by his obedience as our Head and Substitute.

The first Adam *became sin by disobedience* but Christ was *made sin by obedience*. Christ is that Holy One formed in the womb of a virgin who knew no sin and would not sin. Therefore, in obedience to God, when the hour came, Christ presented himself without spot to God, the spotless Lamb of God, and

2 Corinthians 5: 21:...he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

It was not one sin laid on our Substitute but all the sin of all his people.

Romans 5: 16: And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one [offense] to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

Isaiah 53:6:...the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Oh, believer, remember Christ in his incomparable, perfect obedience. *In obedience*, our Substitute gave himself to be *made*—before the judgment seat of God—exactly what Adam *became* by his *disobedience*, that is, worthy of death.

Now, remember our proposition concerning the death of sin: the death of sin is being cut off from God by God refusing to shine the light of his face upon us. When Adam became sin, the wage he earned, was death. *Death entered by sin*. And Adam's death passed upon all men because Adam represented all men and we all sinned in Adam.

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [in Adam] all have sinned.

To better understand the death Christ endured on the cross, what was the death that Adam experienced due to sin? Adam's death was by God turning his face from Adam. Adam's death was by God cutting off the light of his countenance from Adam. The death of sin for Adam came when God left Adam alone in darkness. Adam became:

Psalm 107: 10: Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;
11: Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

That darkness is a foretaste of the death of hell, the second death, which is the eternal wages of sin. Those outside of Christ on the day of judgment,

2 Thessalonians 1:9:...shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

The everlasting destruction of death is to be cast out “*from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*” That everlasting living death is to be cast out from the light of God’s presence and from the glo of his power. Christ called it being

Matthew 8:12...cast out into outer darkness.

We see something of the darkness of death in Adam’s immediate death. Immediately, Adam loved darkness, hated God and refused to come to God the Light. He became one like Christ described and we too,

John 3: 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

After Adam died, what did he do? Not only did sin and spiritual darkness make him ashamed of his nakedness, not only did he become vainly religious trying to cover his own nakedness with fig leaves, also he hid himself in darkness from the Light of the LORD God.

Genesis 3: 8: And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Now, let us remember Christ our Head who was obedient even unto *the death* [the darkness] of the cross. Having been made sin for his people, justice required God make Christ bear the second death on the cross in our place. Justice demanded the last Adam be cast out “*from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*” On the cross, in those three hours of darkness, Christ was bearing that living death of hell which is to be cast out from the light of God’s presence. He suffered the darkness of death by being forsaken by God. God cut off the light of his face from our Redeemer. God left Christ to tread the winepress alone in darkness as Christ suffer death in place of his people.

Matthew 27: 45: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

Brethren, see the contrast between the first Adam’s disobedience and the last Adam’s obedience. When Adam was left in darkness, he tried to save himself, he hid from God’s light in darkness, and he even blamed God. And us too!

Yet, when left in darkness, Christ never wavered in his obedience to God.

Matthew 27: 46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying,...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Christ cried, “My God!” He owned God to be his God. Not only this, Christ vindicated holy God and exalted him in praise for doing justly in forsaking the Sin-bearer.

Psalm 22: 3: But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel...6: But I *am* a worm, and no man;...9: But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother’s breasts. 10: I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother’s belly...19: But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

In our text in Psalm 31:16-18, the Sin-bearer is—not hiding from the light of God’s face as did Adam—but Christ is desiring the light of God’s face—*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. 18: Let*

the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

In the midst of the darkness of death, the last Adam was so obedient that he desired God judge him in righteousness by the light of God's presence,

Psalm 17:2: Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

In stark contrast to Adam's disobedience, in Psalm 42 we hear Christ, alone in darkness, communing with himself in assurance of God's faithfulness,

Psalm 42:5: Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

Now, before we move on, once again let's remember our proposition: the death of sin is being cut off from God by God refusing to shine the light of his face upon us. We see Christ bear that death for us in darkness on the cross. But the life of righteousness is being received into God's presence by God shining the light of his face upon us.

THE LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Psalm 31: 19: Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! 20: Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. 21: Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. 22: For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. 23: O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. 24: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Here, we behold the life of righteousness as we behold God's light shining upon Christ Jesus the Righteous. When our Substitute finished satisfying justice, our faithful God, being well-pleased, gave his perfect servant the light of his countenance. Christ assures us of what God does for all his elect for his sake by declaring what God the Father did for him—*Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

The word "*presence*" is translated from the same as "*face*" in v16. Christ feared and trusted God in holy perfection as he bore the darkness of death for his people. In other words, Christ fulfilled the positive righteousness of the law as he fulfilled the negative. And being satisfied, God the Father raised Christ into the light of his presence.

In the midst of the congregation, Christ sings praises unto the Father—*Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*

Our faithful God did not leave Christ cut off in darkness, nor allow him to see the corruption of the grave, but raised Christ into the light of his presence, just as Christ said he would back in Psalm 16:

Psalm 16: 10: For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 11: Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence [the light of thy countenance] is fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

The darkness of death by sin passed upon all Adam's race by Adam's disobedience by our being born of Adam's corrupt seed. But by the grace of God, the light of life by Christ's righteousness shall pass upon all for whom he died and we shall reign in life by Christ Jesus.

Romans 5: 17: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)...

From his throne, through this gospel Christ is doing exactly what God gave him to do. He is

Isaiah 42:6:...a light of the Gentiles 7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

When will a sinner come out of the darkness to Christ the Light? When Christ speaks into the darkness and says, "Shew yourselves." God raised Christ and gave him the glory and honor,

Isaiah 49:9: That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

Christ promised his people,

John 12:46: I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Sinner, on the authority of my Redeemer, I declare to you that if you believe on Christ then you shall never dwell in darkness again! In our text, Christ promises what God shall do for every sinner who believes on him—*Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion [a covert] from the strife of tongues.*

There is not one sinner for whom Christ suffered the death of sin who shall be left in the darkness of death. Since Christ justified his people by his blood, justice demands that at the appointed season, he shall shine his light and make each one see,

2 Corinthians 4:6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But there may be some believer who is suffering a great trial right now. Believer, does it seem God has left you in darkness? It is only to turn you to Christ our Light. Christ gives every believer full assurance for every trial—*O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.*

Believer, as we eat this broken bread, remember Christ's broken body. As we drink this wine, remember his shed blood. And remember, by the darkness his Son suffered for us, we shall always abide in the light of God's countenance. O thank God our Father,

Colossians 1:13: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Ephesians 5:8: For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

Amen!