

May 13, 2020

## Good afternoon, Everybody.

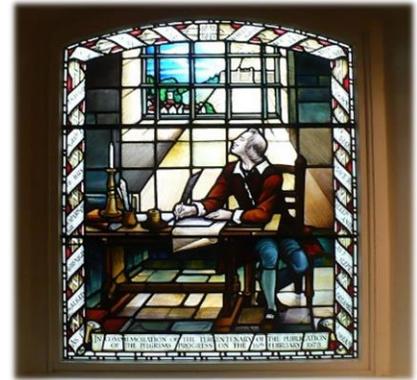
I've been working this morning on the next message in the evening series on the use of *Psalms*.

There are various approaches that preachers take in Bible book series. One is to preach each new message as a largely stand-alone exposition. Like laying bricks in a line end-to-end. If you read the "commentaries" of a preacher like H. A. Ironside, you'll find that they were originally a sermon series after this fashion. More recently, James Montgomery Boice's book expositions tended in this direction.

At the other end of the spectrum is the approach of each new message's extending and expanding ideas in the preceding messages in an exhaustively organic way. Like tracing a tree's branches out to the very tips of nearly every twig. When you read the "commentaries" of Puritan preachers, you'll find that many of them were originally sermon series according to this paradigm. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones' expositions lie along this line.

In between these two poles are attempts to capture the best features of each. I'm never entirely satisfied with my success at accomplishing this ideal, but it's what I like to think that I'm aiming at from week to week. Which means that the introduction to a new message includes a certain amount of intentional overlapping with the previous week's work. Which means that my own preparation from week to week begins with revisiting and rethinking at least the previous message, if not the two or three preceding even it.

While doing this today I clicked back through last Sunday night's PowerPoint. Up came the picture of the man in the tunnel. How about taking a look at it again? Remember the components? A tight place. His head down. Deep despair.





But does this capture our reality *accurately*? Go back and look at Psalm 3:3-4 again.

*But You, O LORD, are a shield about me,  
My glory, and the One who lifts my head.  
I was crying to the LORD with my voice,  
And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.*

I didn't take the time to develop the entirety of those verses. But I did put up a second image. Maybe you could stare at it for a little while and see if it doesn't better portray the **Truth** about our lives right now. I don't want to rob you of the impact that comes from discovering spiritual realities for yourself, so I'll just point out one factor that is portrayed in both pictures. Darkness. The Bible doesn't deny that. In fact, it goes to some trouble to try to convince us that our surroundings in this world are indeed **DARK!** We don't like to think about our world like that, so from time to time the Lord has to bring that unhappy reality down upon our spirit.

When He does we interpret the experience to be like sitting in a tunnel. *A tight place.* Well, it is. That's true. The Bible uses that very expression. But that interpretation, all by itself, is what theologians call *reductionistic*. Because it

doesn't capture, and *cannot* capture, the entirety of our spiritual reality as God's children in a dark world. The scriptural darkness factor is more like that in the second picture. Doesn't that make difference in our perceptions?





### Watching the Live Streaming

I wanted to show you another picture. This is Kyle Frederick, and his and Christiana's little guy, Kyle Jr. And Pastor Tipton, of course. All good looking men, paying attention to Proverbs 31 this last Lord's Day.

### Tonight

This evening we'll have our prayer meeting. Before our Bible study and prayer time, the leadership wants to explain our plans for phasing back into meeting for services on site. You folks have been very patient. Thank you so much. We trust that what we'll share will commend itself to you, and that we'll be able to make a wise and fairly smooth transition. We all MISS each other, and it's about time to renew our fellowship.

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick