

The Dark Side

Intro –

In 1977, 20th Century Fox released a movie blockbuster called *Star Wars* – a futuristic classic struggle between the forces of good and evil in the universe – The evil Darth Vader had fallen prey to the Dark Side of the Force

Text: 1 Corinthians 2: 1-9 (also overview of chapters 2-4)

Julie Ackerman Link (*Daily Bread*) writes:

“The life of faith is not about showing only our good side. It’s about exposing our dark side to the light of Christ through confession to God and also to others. In this way we can receive healing and live in the freedom of forgiveness.”

Last Week Pastor Nick gave us an introduction and overview to this to the Corinthians setting the scene and theme while hinting on the major issues this Church of Corinth was struggling with.

⇒ More than any of Paul’s letters – this one is corrective ... The Corinthian Church was in trouble and the sad thing is that most of them didn’t even know it!

Chapter 2: 1-9 Test from *The Message* ...

¹⁻² You’ll remember, friends, that when I first came to you to let you in on God’s master stroke, I didn’t try to impress you with polished speeches and the latest philosophy. I deliberately kept it plain and simple: first Jesus and who he is; then Jesus and what he did—Jesus crucified.

³⁻⁵ I was unsure of how to go about this, and felt totally inadequate—I was scared to death, if you want the truth of it—and so nothing I said could have impressed you or anyone else. But the Message came through anyway. God’s Spirit and God’s power did it, which made it clear that your life of faith is a response to God’s power, not to some fancy mental or emotional footwork by me or anyone else.

⁶⁻¹⁰ We, of course, have plenty of wisdom to pass on to you once you get your feet on firm spiritual ground, but it’s not popular wisdom, the fashionable wisdom of high-priced experts that will be out-of-date in a year or so. God’s wisdom is something mysterious that goes deep into the interior of his purposes. You don’t find it lying around on the surface. It’s not the latest message, but more like the oldest—what God determined as the way to bring out his best in us, long before we ever arrived on the scene. The experts of our day haven’t a clue about what this eternal plan is. If they had, they wouldn’t have killed the Master of the God-designed life on a cross. That’s why we have this Scripture text:

No one’s ever seen or heard anything like this,
Never so much as imagined anything quite like it—
What God has arranged for those who love him.

But *you've* seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you. (The Message)

Paul's Upfront message – "I deliberately kept it plain and simple..."

- first Jesus and who he is;
- then Jesus and what he did
- Jesus crucified

No one has ever seen, heard or imagined what God is ready to reveal to those who love Him – but it can only happen by His Spirit

- You can't receive or maintain a "New Life experience," on someone else's spirituality
- You can't survive on the faith of your mother or father – husband or wife's walk with God
- You can't thrive and mature by coming to Church on Sunday then coast the rest of the week

We become easy pickings for enemy attack – hostile enemy jamming and lies (the other voice becomes prominent)

Account: Years ago the *National Observer*, printed a cartoon of a busy intersection where cars were backed up bumper to bumper in all four directions, horns honking. A pedestrian looking up at the cross walk sign doesn't see the normal "walk or don't walk" display instead the sign reads "Good Luck."

Good luck is what you'll need – if you try to make it, on your own without daily spiritual reinforcement

The Church in Corinth had fallen into a trap – a cleverly disguised one – by their own efforts to become *more spiritual*

- They had turned into Pharisees and Sadducees who fought against each other and Jesus
- They lost their connection with God in their own arrogance.
- They thought they knew more than anyone, including Paul their spiritual father.
- They were arguing over teachings & teachers,
- They created a circus side show, misusing the gifts of the Spirit to draw attention to themselves.
- They failed to see or correct serious sexual immoral practices by members of the church!

☆ They were what Jesus called ... blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel whole

Chapter 3: 1-9, 21 -23

¹⁻⁴ But for right now, friends, I'm completely frustrated by your unspiritual dealings with each other and with God. You're acting like infants in relation to Christ, capable of nothing much more than nursing at the breast. Well, then, I'll nurse you since you don't seem capable of anything more. As long as you grab for what makes you feel good or makes you look important, are you really much different than a babe at the breast, content only when everything's going your way? When one of you says, "I'm on Paul's side," and another says, "I'm for Apollos," aren't you being totally infantile?

⁵⁻⁹ Who do you think Paul is, anyway? Or Apollos, for that matter? Servants, both of us—servants who waited on you as you gradually learned to entrust your lives to our mutual Master. We each carried out our servant assignment. I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but *God* made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. Planting and watering are menial servant jobs at minimum wages. What makes them worth doing is the God we are serving. You happen to be God's field in which we are working.

²¹⁻²³ I don't want to hear any of you bragging about yourself or anyone else. Everything is already yours as a gift—Paul, Apollos, Peter, the world, life, death, the present, the future—all of it is yours, and you are privileged to be in union with Christ, who is in union with God.

What happened to these people – what where they missing?

Love –the two greatest commandments, according to Jesus

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, and strength: and love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12: 30 -31

Instead of having a servant's heart – they became self serving – instead of working together they became blind and deaf and destructive

When I fail to spend time with God's Spirit I have nothing to fall back on but my own *religious efforts* – and we all know where that will get us

Data from Gallup Polls and sociologists - *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*

“Evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic and materialistic, self-centered and sexually immoral as world in general. The statistics are devastating:”

- Church members divorce their spouses as often as their secular neighbors.
- Church members beat their wives as often as their neighbors
- Church members' given patterns indicate they are almost as materialistic as non-Christians
- White evangelicals are the most likely people to object to neighbors of another race
- Of the “higher –commitment” evangelicals, 26 % think premarital sex is acceptable, while 46 % of “lower commitment” evangelicals believe it to be okay also.

If true spirituality is reduced to religious motions - the church begins to exude the stench of death. We justifiably fit the label the world pastes on the church of Hypocrites

We need a fresh experience with God – daily and we absolutely need each other as members of a living body of Jesus Christ – that is what a church is!

Prayer – You can't get away from it - spending time with God - Thankfulness

But just spending time with Him ... before asking for any petitions or requests – It give you the chance to listen - help us hear His voice – empties us of self and wrong ideas opens our minds and hearts

That's when the Bible comes alive and our prayers for others become effective and powerful.

“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.” Mother Teresa

Paul called the Corinthians to see their own the *dark side*

Corinthians 4: 20 ...God's Way is not a matter of mere talk; it's an empowered life.

James also wrote about the *dark side* **James 5:16**

¹⁶Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16

☆ Darth Vader had fallen victim to the Dark Side and there was no way back

But with God there is always a way out – and a way back to spiritual health - and it always comes by way of confession and repentance

All of us fall into the carefully laid traps of the enemy – all of us need at times to make things right with the Lord

Were in this struggle together – The way out is at your disposal this morning:

There are times we feel good about the way things are going – that might be our most vulnerable time

Take time right now – be silent for a few moments – take a deep breath – listen - if you need to get some things off your chest take time right now for confession