

Knowing God's Ways - Part 5

by Walter Beuttler

In times of darkness, we can trust in God's character and integrity, and remember that He is in every situation, even in darkness.

Duration: 1:00:46

Scripture: Psalm 139:12, Isaiah 50:10, Acts 27:29

Topics: "Knowing God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God even in times of darkness. He references Psalm 139:12, which states that darkness is not hidden from God. The speaker then draws parallels to the story of Paul in the book of Acts, where Paul and his companions faced a violent storm at sea. They cast out four anchors and waited for the day, demonstrating their trust in God's deliverance. The speaker also mentions the example of Paul and Silas, who sang praises to God even while imprisoned and in chains. The sermon concludes by highlighting the transformative power of trusting in God during dark times, both for ourselves and for others who witness our faith.

Transcript

This morning I felt we ought to go into the area of the way of the Lord in darkness. Now bear in mind what I had mentioned the other night, I guess the first night I would think, that in our Christian experience we go through all kinds of situations. It's not all butter and honey.

It's not all tambourines and German umpah, umpah, umpahs. It's not always on but Christian soldiers marching as to war. Some of these soldiers come back from the battlefield, and I have seen them come back when Germany lost the war in 1918.

Glorious, victorious German armies. Well, that's how they went, the jubilation I remember when they left for the war in 1914. My, they were singing, they were playing their brass instruments, they were shouting.

I remember them singing, Sieg Reit, Wohn wir von Greif schlagen, sterben aus sein tapferer Hilt. Well, what did Paul write, if any man speak in another tongue, let him pray that he may interpret. I'm not going to pray, I'm going to interpret anyhow.

Sieg Reit, Wohn wir von Greif schlagen, gloriously we are going, no, Sieg Reit, Sieg Reit, victoriously we are going to beat the Frenchmen and die like a brave soldier. Well, millions of them did die, but four years

later, me boys, we were grown up four years, saw them come back. There was no singing, there was no Sieg Reit, Wohn wir von Greif schlagen.

They came back bedraggled, heads bound up from wounds, they were silent, they appeared ashamed. There wasn't that bravado with which they went, and it's that way sometimes with Christians, it isn't all bravado. Sometimes in our Christian path, we're going through very, very difficult situations, and one of these are what I would like to describe here as periods of darkness.

Now, what we want to do there is to get help from God for the dark. The dark may not be present today, very, very likely it will be present sooner or later, and God does not only give us truth for the situation in which we currently find ourselves. Very, very often God prepares us for situations yet to come, so the Spirit can bring to our remembrance what has been said perhaps years before.

I've heard numerous testimonies like that over the years. Brother Peter, when you spoke on such and such a subject, I didn't get a thing out of it. But as the years went by, and I got into a situation, was flat on my back, the Lord brought back to me some things you had said that helped me in the time of need.

Yes, some of these is preparatory, so when the time comes, we have the knowledge of the way of the Lord to help us through a situation. I'm going to read to you a passage from Isaiah 45, which is going to be the basis for it. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus.

Now it's to be assumed that not all of us are historians, or perhaps even not acquainted with historical situations to which reference is made in the Bible. Now Cyrus was the king of the Medo-Persian empire, marvelously raised up by the power of divine providence. If you ever get hold of a history of Cyrus the Great, even though it may be purely secular, it'll be a great blessing to you when you consider that God raised that mighty king up from nothing, that he might become ultimately the deliverer of God's people, delivering them from the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.

Now Cyrus was an idolater. He was not a Jew, he was a Gentile. He did not know God, yet God called him his anointed.

Sometimes we need to revise our theology a bit. Cyrus was the anointed of the Lord. God used him mightily as a tremendous instrument for the execution of the divine purpose, yet the man didn't know God.

It says so in the Word. It's amazing what God can do. You take Caiaphas, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

They were there discussing how they might put Jesus to death. Yet while they did so, the Spirit of the Lord came, and a man who had murder in his heart, they were there to see how they can put this Jesus to death. Yet the Spirit of the Lord came on him, and he prophesied in the midst of it.

He wasn't saved even. And it says distinctly, This spake he not of himself, but being high priest, the Lord spoke through him. So don't be surprised.

And God did such wonders, really, with Cyrus. Now he didn't know God. Take Balaam's ass.

Balaam's ass, for all practical purposes, prophesied. Balaam's ass saw what the prophet didn't see. So the next time you have a vision and you feel tempted to think you are such a great one, think of Balaam's ass.

Balaam's ass had a vision, saw the angel of the Lord with a sword drawn. The prophet didn't see what he asked so. So when you feel like loathing you, people never have visions like I do.

Now think of Balaam's ass. I don't know if you got the point or not, but there is a point. I'll read on now.

That was just a little parenthesis for your education and edification. So he is anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand have I holden to subdue nations before him. And I will lose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaf gates, and the gates shall not be shut.

I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut and sundry the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name. I have surnamed thee, thou hast not known me. Now here are lessons for us.

As you know from Corinthians, all these things are written for our edification. And there are lessons to be drawn from this remarkable account concerning Cyrus the Great. What we are doing here is now to apply these lessons to Christian experience when God, in the wisdom of his providence, leads us through periods of darkness.

And I mean by darkness here, circumstances we cannot understand, circumstances upon which God does not shed any light. We say, I am simply in the dark. I do not know, I cannot understand, can't understand why God allows this, or does this, or doesn't do this.

We are in total darkness. We pray for light and there is no light. Now actually, by the time we get done with this lesson, if we really get it, or how shall I put that, because it sounds like a contradiction in terms, we are no longer in the dark about our situation, though circumstantially speaking, we are as much in the darkness as ever.

Can you twist around that one with me? There is such a thing as going through circumstances of what we'll call darkness, where we fuddle, we can't understand, we can't see the way, we have no cause, we just can't figure it out. And yet we can go through a period of darkness while having the light of the ways of the Lord within us. So while we are in the dark, the dark is not in us.

Like a ship may be in the water, but the water does not need to be in the ship. If it is, you know what happens. Now, if some of you this morning or in the future are in the dark, and you're full of the dark, by means of this lesson, the darkness can come out of you and light replaces the dark, even though you yourself remain in the very same circumstances.

But there's a great difference between a ship being in the sea and the sea being in the ship. All right now, we are turning to Isaiah 50. It'll take us a little bit to get into this, so you just come along.

This man says I can speak till one o'clock at least, so that will be all right. I'll take you up on that, mister. I'll call your bluff.

Not quite. Now, I have heard preachers say, fortunately we don't have to believe everything a preacher says, but I have heard preachers say that for the Christian who walks with good, there is no such thing as a period, a time, circumstances of darkness. Well, now that just, may I put it this way, ain't so.

I will agree there ought not to be any darkness in us, but that doesn't mean we are not in the dark as far as our environment, our circumstances are concerned. Now notice something. Isaiah 50, 10.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him examine himself and confess his sin and get right with good, so that the darkness might be dispelled. Excuse me, I have been reading from some people's version, but not the one of Isaiah. We'll come back to that.

Now notice again. Who among you fears good? Now the true fear of good causes us to abstain from every form of evil. Proverbs makes that clear.

That obeyeth the voice of his servant. Now who among you, in other words, recognizes the sovereignty of the Lord and complies with that sovereignty, that demands of that sovereignty, in obedience to do his will? The prophet is talking about a person that fears God and obeys God. There is no question of sin and yet walks in darkness.

Put those two things, thoughts, into juxtaposition and you see on the one hand a godly person. On the other hand, that is very same person still walks through darkness, notwithstanding his or her godliness. And when that occurs, such a one is not asked to repent, to make restitution, to get right with God, but rather let him trust in the name, that is to say, in the character, in the integrity of good.

Now what the saint, God's saint, in darkness is asked to do, to put their confidence in the integrity of almighty good, no matter what is happening. That shouldn't happen. Or no matter what shouldn't happen, that does happen.

Where such a saint now is not accused of wrongdoing, but is encouraged, is admonished, now to blindly, although I don't like the word blindly, but without any other rational explanation, put confidence in the absolute wisdom, character, integrity of almighty God. That's what Job did. Though he slay me, he said, or if you prefer, even though God will kill me dead, I'll still trust him.

And God takes us through situation if he dares. If he dares. Why do I say that? Because God does not dare, and I mean dare, to take some people through some circumstances through which he takes others, because they backslide on him, they throw away their faith, they be lost.

But there are other choice saints, choice saints whom God can trust with a severe trial, with a darker darkness, to make such choice saints, choicer still. Can you follow that? There are times when our circumstances, the hardness of the way, the darkness of the night, are in actuality a compliment from God, in that he has confidence in us to take us through a hard place of deep darkness to do for us what could not be done in any other way. There are times when our darkness, our difficult situations are a compliment, a sign of his confidence.

I know this is unusual teaching, but that's the way it is. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Let him trust the name of the Lord. Now then, what God really wants to do is to give us what are here in a historical sense called treasures of darkness.

In experiences of darkness there are treasures to be found that cannot be found anywhere else. We're going to look into those treasures a bit. But first, how are we going to have that confidence? It's one thing to say, trust the Lord.

But it's another thing to trust, you know, if you have any trouble any time, have you ever noticed how easy it is for people to, well, just trust the Lord, brother? Well, God is able. Things that you know from don't say or to don't say, you know, they feel they ought to say something, they don't know what to say, so they say it. Lord's able.

Heart's not limited, dear sister. God answers prayer, just trust him. One, two, three, press, no change should, no.

Now, the Lord has a way, and the things we're using here will help us in our confidence. To put our anchorage in the character of God. First of all, Psalm 139, 12.

139, 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. Now, here are four basic facts.

Did you remember, or do you remember, in the book of Acts, when Paul was in the ship that was sinking, that vicious storm? And the storms in the Mediterranean Sea can be awful because it's relatively shallow, so it throws up quite a fuss. And it says that they cast out four anchors. Four anchors.

Now, here are four anchors. Remember, in Paul's case, it says that when neither sun nor moon nor stars appeared for many nights and no small tempest lay upon us, they cast out four anchors and wished for the day. So what? You and I can get into situations, into rough seas, when neither sun nor moon nor stars appear for many a day, and you wish for the day, oh, that I could see.

But lest they should be driven unto the shoals, they cast out four anchors so they wouldn't go under rocks. I'll give you four anchors to hang on to that keep us from going under rocks. The one I've read just now.

Psalm 139, 12. Now look, in other words, God is the same. That's one comfort.

Lord, even though it looks my ship be sinking, even though everything is pitch dark, I haven't got a ray of light. I open your Bible, nothing but words. Oh, Lord, I'll do what somebody told me once, knock and it shall be opened.

You tried every method, you get no light. You call on the phone, you ask for help, and you get criticism. That's one anchor.

Lord, you are the same God. You have not changed one bit. I'm in the dark, but the darkness and the day are alike unto thee.

It makes no difference with me, with you. So, Lord, one thing I know, you have not changed in this pitch dark, storm-driven sea, the rolling ship. You are the same.

Have you ever been on a rolling ship in a storm at sea? Not only rolling, but pitching at the same time. That's what gets you. I've stood on the upper deck, and huge mountainous waves were coming.

Stood on the upper deck, you couldn't get out on the lower ones. And that ship, as far as the sight was concerned, I do not know what the realities were, but the appearance, that ship was down in the valley and came up toward the crest. And, folks, when that thing turned the crest, the screws of the ship were out of the water.

You could tell every time they were out because of the rotation, that they go faster. And then the thing slid down a mountain, that's the way it looked anyhow, and dove down into the next huge wave, enormous things, and dove right into it and slowly came up. And I'll tell you, that thing was in there and shook.

You wondered if it was still moving or what. There it trembled, but apparently it was moving all right, or the waves wasn't. And those waves come over that ship that even the water went down the smokestacks.

Out she came, up she tipped, screws out of the water, down she slid, dove into the bottom of the next mountain and just stood there like, I mean, so it seemed, trembling. And very slowly she shook the thing over. And what about the passengers? I was hanging on all night to a ring in the wall there in my bunk all night long, or it'd fall out.

Trunk would slide over with a bang, come back again all night long. That's right, no exaggeration. Water came down the stairways, smoke came down from the sea somewhere.

They locked different parts of the ship. And next day, the railing of the ship was lined with people. The worst had gone, but there was plenty left.

Literally, they were lining the rails, feeding the fishes. Amen. Some of them never made it and left things on the deck.

And the sailors were there sweeping the decks from the... You understand? And yours truly was sick. And I had to go for the railing like the rest and turned around to go back in. The lady came along in a hurry for the railing and did not quite make it.

I had a nice tail of blue, navy blue suit on. She came right for me and... Do you ever get seasick when you go through it? I mean spiritually. How people bring up their complaints and their criticisms and finding fault with this and that, with God, with the world, what have you? Well, God has a remedy here.

He is the remedy. The one, God is the same. The other one, in 45, that's Isaiah 45, 7, I form the light and create darkness.

In other words, God makes it. All things work together for good to those that love the Lord. We all know that.

At least we quote it. So if this is true, folks, then when we go through a period of darkness, then we ought to give God a credit for putting us into a situation in which He can do a new thing for us. Again, Isaiah 50, let such a one put their trust in the name of the Lord, His character, His integrity, what God is.

We can say, Lord, You allowed this. You permitted it to come my way. I sure am in the dark.

I'm thinking of a lady now. Her husband died within a year or something like that. Good woman, good Christian.

But that poor soul does nothing but bemoaning, questioning, questioning, is in a constant state of melancholy. I think she feeds on it. I think it makes her happy to think she's sad.

All she can talk about is of her miserable state. And it is bad. She said to us, I've never gone to see my husband's grave.

I can't stand it. And it's some time ago now. I don't think she's been there yet.

And you cannot talk to her. She just does not rise up. Why did the Lord, what am I going to do? And it's all true.

It's all true. I've got a house to be paid on. I can't get any work.

I have an adopted boy that's not right. And look at my situation. It's terrible.

What am I going to do? It's all true. But the poor soul either cannot or will not rise up to take a position in God. What she says is true, ever so true.

But it isn't going to help to bemoan and keep bemoaning the death of her husband. You can't keep that up. You can't afford it.

Or a wife, as the case may be, or a child, or any other situation. Why did it have to happen to me? It doesn't happen to many others. Look at that.

But why me? What have I done? You can't do that, you think. And people will stay away from you because they cannot take it. They have their own problems.

You know what I mean? Whenever you walk in, it's the very same thing like on the recording. That moaning, that crying, that why, why, why, why, poor me, me, me, I've been to the grave. What am I going to do? It's the same thing over and over and over and over and over and over and you cannot get through to the poor soul.

And finally people stay away. Nobody visits me. It's a killer to visit the poor soul.

And however sympathetic one might be, however true the predicament, we have to rise above it. There is no other way. God is the same.

He is in every situation. He has permitted, even though I can't understand it in any way whatsoever, rising up. All that I see will get into the ship.

God made it. In other words, God permitted it. I had a brother who died in Moscow.

He was shot in the war. My mother never got over it. I know a man whose wife died, preacher, I.G. And that man moaned and moaned and moaned and bemoaned and deplored the death of his wife till God had to rebuke him and let him know, this is a closed chapter, now forget it and go on, do your work.

Sometimes we need to be taken by the neck and get shook up or we'll go down into melancholy and sure defeat. I don't know who I'm talking to. I don't know why I'm so strong.

That's the way I feel. And don't think I don't know what it is in practice. Don't kid yourself.

Exodus 20, 21, And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. Look at that. Exodus 20, 21, And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Do you see something? God is not only in the light, God is also in the dark. He drew near, we run away. We are running after glory, but Moses knew enough about God that he knew in this darkness my God is, and he drew near unto the thick darkness, the very circumstances of dark in which he knew that God was.

So God is in it. And our fourth one here, to keep a faith in good. Now I'm not going to speculate, but I want to tell you a little something.

And I'm not in saying that trying to rationalize where rationalization is not appropriate. I have a sister in Germany who contracted polio before she was born. While her mother still carried, my mother still carried her, she had polio.

Now they didn't know it for many years, but finally as knowledge gained about polio, doctors told her that's what happened. My sister today is, oh, I don't know, how old is Gertrude's mother? 64, perhaps something like that. Well, I'm 69.

Next month, I would say my sister is 64 or 65. She is in a state home because she needs complete care. Nobody can do it.

My sister cared for her for many, many years until her health began to break partly because of it. And that Gertrude used to say to me, Walter, what good am I? All she does is sit in the home and exist at state expense for a thousand marks a month. And do you know what? The Lord is using that girl in a little ministry.

Now she cannot walk. Well, she can walk, but very difficult. Her hands are in, her feet are in, and she'll walk like this.

Sometimes she falls. Do you know what she does? She goes from room to room with other patients, reads to them the scriptures, has prayer with them, ministers to them. That girl reaches people that could never be reached by anybody else.

And she wrote me some time ago and said, Walter, I have a little ministry from the Lord. And so she goes around with a little Bible, sits down with those patients, and ministers to them. Now I'm not saying that that is why she was born that way.

I wouldn't go that far. I wouldn't even rationalize. To rationalize that would be foolish.

What do we know? But nevertheless, inasmuch as she is in that place, the Lord is using her with people that nobody would think them. Now a few things about Atreus as we go home. Oh, it isn't one I can't get.

Now, this Cyrus was told by God, I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places. Now, Cyrus became the conqueror of Babylon, the unconquerable city. Now, when God said, I will open before him, that is Cyrus, the two leave gates, God referred to the city of Babylon.

The city of Babylon was a large city. Had two huge double walls around it. It was impregnable.

There was no military power or combination that was able to take the city of Babylon. The walls of Babylon were so wide that 40 chariots could go side by side on top of the walls. They could engage an enemy in combat on top of the double walls.

The city had 24 main boulevards running from one side of the Euphrates, the city was half way on either side, across the Euphrates, and the 24 boulevards had strong gates of brass that were shut at sundown for security. Nobody could take the city. And yet God said, I will give him, I will open before him, the two leave gates.

Cyrus attacked the city and could not take it. There he was with his troops for a long time, but could not take the city. It simply wasn't takeable.

And then it is recorded in history that he claimed, and I think his claim was right, God gave him a dream on how to take the city. So following the dream, he withdrew all his troops outside the sight of the watchmen on top of the walls. He asked his soldiers outside the sight of Babylon to dig a ditch around the city on one side and another one around the city on the other side, but not bring the ditch right close to Euphrates, only near, so the dikes could be opened quickly.

Then there was a great three-day feast in Babylon where they were given to drunkenness and so forth. And Cyrus felt his time had come. So when the Babylonians were engaged in their festivities and felt secure because the Medo-Persian armies under Cyrus had withdrawn, they gave themselves to all kinds of looseness and carrying on.

And Cyrus asked his men by night to open the dikes between the canal they had built and the Euphrates. And lo and behold, the Euphrates flowed around the city. Troops were stationed on the northwest side and on the southeast side.

And as soon as the Euphrates had emptied into the canals around the city and came down again into the riverbed below the city, his soldiers came down through the dry riverbed after Euphrates. One army from the southeast, the other from the northwest. But there were strong gates also along the riverbanks where there also were walls.

And Cyrus knew he could never get in, no more than from without. But he ordered his troops to go in, and lo and behold, the gates were wide open. History cannot record what happened.

The conjecture is that the guards were drunk, the gatekeepers, and through neglect didn't bother to close the gates at sundown. So Cyrus's troops poured through the gates into the city and at that very time Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall. Thou art weighed in the balances and found one thing.

That was the night when Cyrus's troops poured through the open city gates that had been neglected in being drunk and took the city. That's how God fulfilled this remarkable scripture on behalf of Cyrus. Now then, in closing, what do we get here? In 45.3 of Isaiah, in five minutes I'll call it.

Well, you know, this is really late. I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches in secret places. I must add something here.

One of the enemies of Cyrus was Croesus, the richest man in the world and some believe to this day. Well, to take Babylonia, the other nations didn't like. They banded together to stop Cyrus but couldn't.

And the king of Lydia, Croesus, went to the oracle at Delphi to find out what would happen if he attacked Cyrus. And the oracle said that if he attacked Cyrus, if he attacked Cyrus, he will destroy a great empire. Croesus thought the oracle meant he's going to destroy Cyrus's empire.

But the oracle didn't say which. But actually he destroyed his own empire. And that's how God turned over to him the riches of the richest man in the world.

So through periods of darkness, God brings us into spiritual riches of the knowledge of God and His ways that we could not reach in any other way. And with that, the revelation of the I Am, you have that in verse

3, that He would know that He is good. And there is where we get a deep reality of the great I Am in our lives.

Matthew 10.27 says, What I speak unto you in darkness, that speak ye in light. What you get from good, while you are going through the dark, God will let you use later to minister to others who are likewise in the dark. I spoke on this in one place and the lady said, Brother Buechler, where did you get that message? I said, In the dark.

She said, I mean, what commentary did you find it in? Oh, I said, that's not in the commentary. That's in the experience. I guess that was the end.

Why do you think I can speak on this? And I'm convincing. I've gone through the dark more than once. And now you can help others with the things that we ourselves have been taught in the dark.

And finally, we'll let that go. Acts 16.25, Paul and Silas sang at midnight. Now they had been beaten bloody.

They were chained. Their feet were in the stocks. You can see those stocks in the Tower of London.

You can also see them in Rome there in Peter's prison. They have them there, too. I think they're there.

Stocks where they used to be tied, chained to the cobblestones. Chained by their wrists to the cobblestone floor. Beaten.

Hurt. They didn't grumble. They sang at midnight.

That the prison shook and liberated other prisoners. You know what? God wants to give us a song in the dark. Songs in the night.

Where even though we are going through deep darkness, He has given us such a reality of Himself within ourselves that even though our eyes might be stained with tears, we can sing in the dark. And it says that the other prisoners heard them. There are other people in the dark.

And when they see that we can sing in the dark, they get liberated as well as we. So here, folks, are some of the ways of the Lord in the darkness. And if you're not in it now, there's a mighty good chance you'll get in it someday.

And by the grace of God, hopefully He will remind you of some of these things so that you can hold steady in the dark without casting away your confidence and go through it and come out with traces of darkness you would have never obtained in any other way. Yes, sir.

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