

CRAZY DARK

-Ryan Parsons-

When I was a kid, our family went on a vacation somewhere in the Southwest. Along the way, someone got the “bright idea” to go on a cavern tour. I couldn’t figure out what was so fascinating about walking down some winding path into a hole in the ground. As it turned out, the most memorable moment of the tour wasn’t the dripping water, glimmering pools of water, or the rock formations. The memorable moment was when the tour guide had everyone stand very still, and then...he shut off all the lights.

I think I have been forthcoming about my aversion to the dark. I’m not a big fan. While I had had some experiences with darkness already, I can authoritatively say that nothing compares to “underground cave” dark. It was a crazy dark that felt constricting and suffocating. It was so dark that I held my hand out in front of my face and waved it around. However, neither I nor anyone else could see it. Some of you are thinking, “I would have just taken out my cell phone and turned on the light!” But, we didn’t have mobile phones back then, much less ones with LED lights. Underground that day, we didn’t have any alternative illumination options. As I stood there fidgeting in the stifling darkness wishing for a light-switch and a serious tour guide, I finally looked down at my wrist and saw the hands on my non-digital watch. Its tiny hands had little glow-in-the-dark strips on them. They seemed to cut through the darkness like a beacon on a dark night. For the next few moments, they became the thing that grounded me, oriented me, and gave me hope that the dark would not prevail.

I think we have all been reminded recently of how constricting and suffocating darkness can be. Sadly, we have become reacquainted with dark valleys, and clearly, we don’t like it. At times the absence of light feels deeply oppressive, and at others, it causes us great panic. Yet, even in the darkest dark, there is a light. How could David say: “Even though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I will fear no evil” (Psalm 23:4)? Because, the one who was with him could drown out the darkness for “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5), and His word is a guiding lamp and a light (Psalm 119:105).

Darkness certainly concerns us, and it isn’t pleasant to endure. Yet, we can walk through any circumstance with confidence because, as Paul reminds us: “God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6). The light never fails against the darkness.

May you be blessed with illumination as you navigate your path this week.