

On March 13th, we all moved our clocks (or had them moved for us) back an hour for daylight Savings Time. When this happens, we notice a dramatic change in the daily light pattern. It stays dark when we are used to light in the morning and stays light when we are used to dark in the early evening. This event is noteworthy because it happens close to the spring equinox or first day of spring. The first day of spring occurs in the mid-point between the shortest day of the year in the winter and the longest day of the year in the summer. The days are already becoming longer when our brains must adjust to the new period of time when the sun shines. This can be disorienting for us who rely on the sun for our daily schedule and sense of time. However, it also can be a sign to us that soon the days will be longer and our nights shorter.

I personally love spring because not only does it mean new life and new growth, but also an end to long nights filled with darkness. We humans are diurnal creatures and are attracted to the light unlike nocturnal creatures which are attracted to the dark. We need prolonged sunlight for the chemicals in our brains which keep us mentally well and balanced. Just ask someone who works the nightshift, and they will tell you how hard it is to work at night and sleep during the day, it is a difficult and frustrating task. There are also those who struggle with seasonal depression in the winter, especially after the last Christmas tree is taken down and only cold and darkness remain.

Humans are not the only creatures that depend on light, plants require a certain amount of sunlight to grow well. There is a reason that some plants lay dormant in the winter besides the coldness of the season. Every plant requires a different amount of sun too. Some plants like full sun, some part sun, and some mostly shade. Plants, like us, depend on different types of light to thrive. Some of us like the long summer days, others of us wish for the moderate spring days.

In 1st Samuel, God assigns Samuel to replace Saul as king. Saul had become a tyrant and God rejected him. Samuel is concerned about this mission to anoint a new king because he is worried that Saul will retaliate against him. Yet, he goes to meet Jesse to find which of his sons has been chosen by God to be king. Samuel is quick to settle on the oldest and most striking in appearance, but God keeps telling Samuel no until Jesse must have his youngest son called from the shepherding fields. The Lord was looking for inward appearances while Samuel was looking for outward appearances. Samuel's eyes are open to David as the new king; God opens Samuel's eyes to see not only David's outward beauty, but his inward beauty as well.

For us, Jesus is the light that shines on us each and every day. It is true that we will often want to hide from the light and do evil. But Jesus offers the opportunity to illuminate all our false judgements and bad behaviors and not condemn us for them. Jesus offers the opportunity to shed new light on our lives, giving us hope for new beginnings. Spring is a similar process, where the dormant is allowed to grow and bloom, both the good and the bad, the weed and the flower. Alcoholics Anonymous' fourth step of recovery is to take a "fearless moral inventory." This step is to accept the things we have done wrong in order to make a change. God's light through Jesus Christ is integral to our transformation if we want our sins to be transformed by God's power and depth.

I leave you with a painting by Mykola Pymonenko, titled Easter Matins (Find credits go to Jack and Kay Phillips). Contemplate the spring light and the light of Jesus working in us this Lenten season as we wait for Easter morn!! -Pastor Ryon