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A Light Has Shined

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Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10–11)

The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

Heaven is no further away as when angels appeared to shepherds in the field. In 2021, Sara Pascucci received a letter on February 3rd reprimanding her for still having Christmas decorations up. The anonymous letter read: "Take your Christmas lights down! It's Valentine's Day!!!!!" What the author of the letter did not know was that Sara's father had put up the Christmas decorations and unexpectedly passed away a few weeks later. The lights were still up because Sara's family was grieving the loss of her dear father. When Sara's neighbors heard what happened, many decided to put up their Christmas decorations so she would not feel so alone. Sometimes, we have no idea what someone is going through, but we can choose to be a light through an act of kindness and compassion during dark moments.

In Isaiah 9, the prophet writes down a prophecy and mentions the future restoration of Galilee, with the epitome of renewal through the coming Messiah. The darkness spoken of here includes spiritual darkness, which is even more perilous than physical darkness since it only leads to hopelessness and despair. However, even in the darkness, the people of Galilee would behold a great light. The seeds of hope would be planted in the ground of turmoil through the great light of the Gospel. The coming of Jesus would dispel gloom with comfort, joy, truth, and salvation.

During this Christmas season, we are reminded that we can find treasures in the darkness through the light of Jesus. Jesus was born in the darkness of political oppression and religious barrenness, but instead of shouting at the darkness, He lit a candle of hope. The presence of darkness can fool us into thinking that our circumstances can never change and there is no future hope. However, darkness is no match for the light in any season. Sometimes, we need to keep the light of God's Word hanging on the doors of our hearts long after the season of Christmas is over. People may think it is strange to keep the light of God's peace hanging during times of loss or faith during times of fear, but as Sara's story highlights, you never know what someone is going through. Your faithfulness can remind them that they are not alone; they, too can experience the light of Jesus in their times of darkness.

In commenting on the angelic announcement of Jesus' birth Ellen White writes, "Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near." May we be reminded this Christmas that God is near even in the darkness, for He has shone a great light through Jesus.

REFLECTION

1. How does Sara Pascucci's story highlight the importance of empathy and understanding in our interactions with others, especially during challenging times?
2. What lessons can we draw from Jesus' example of lighting a candle of hope during darkness?
3. Consider the quote by Ellen White and the idea that "Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song in our common walks of life." Reflect on your own experiences and how the awareness of God's nearness, especially during difficult times, can bring comfort and hope. How does this perspective influence the way we navigate challenges and support others in their journeys?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND RESOURCES

- Follow @ministryandmissios on Instagram for updates on events and programs, and it is also a place where you will find encouraging messages. Also, [check out our website](#) for many new resources.
- Talk with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.