

NO DIVINE ECLIPSE

(James 1:17-27)

Intro: Poor, poor Pluto.

- Week and a half ago.
  - #2500 members of the International Astronomical Union.
    - \*Voted to demote the planet Pluto.
      - +From full planet status.
      - +To the newly created category of dwarf planet.
        - =Keeping company with the likes of 2003 UB313.
          - Sounds more like a license plate number.
            - #Than a name.
            - Kids will have to memorize this.
              - #For their science tests.
- News articles detailing Pluto's sad fate.
  - #Were accompanied by diagrams of our solar system.
    - \*Huge sun.
    - \*Planets.
      - +Of varying size.
      - +Of varying distance from the sun.
- Two characteristics of planets.
  - #Orbit around the sun.
    - \*In "years" of varying lengths.
  - #Spin around on their own axes.
    - \*In "days" of varying lengths.
      - +Never-ending cycle.
        - =Day and night.
        - =Light and darkness.
- But the constant is the sun.
  - #Always burning.
  - #Always shining.
  - #Always in the center of things.

In the Epistle of James.

- God is like the sun.
  - #Who does not cause darkness by turning.
    - \*James 1:17.
  - #Who is always there.
  - #Who is always shining.
    - \*There is never a divine eclipse.
- We are like the planets.
  - #Who are sometimes in the light.
  - #Who are sometimes in the darkness.

I. Our Pony Express Ride Comes To An End Today.

A. Five Weeks Ago We Began Our Stewardship Program.

1. I used the first half of James 1:17 on that day.
  - a. "Every good and perfect gift is from above."
  - b. "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift is from above."
2. It all begins with God.
  - a. "We love because God first loved us."  
-1 John 4:19.
  - b. "We give because God has first given to us."

B. What Was True At The Beginning Of Our Ride Is True At The End.

1. I'd like to focus on the second half of James 1:17.
  - a. "Every generous act of giving, with ever perfect gift is from above."
  - b. "Coming down from the Father of lights, who does not cause darkness by turning."  
-God doesn't change.  
-God doesn't turn the lights out on us.
2. God loved us then.
  - a. God loves us now.
  - b. God will love us always.
3. God blessed us then.
  - a. God blesses us now.
  - b. God will bless us always.
4. God was generous to us then.
  - a. God is generous to us now.
  - b. God will be generous to us always.
5. God shone his light on us then.
  - a. God shines his light on us now.
  - b. God will shine his light on us always.

II. So Why Is It That Sometimes We Feel Like We're In The Dark?

A. Hospital Calls This Week.

1. Lance had surgery on Monday.
  - a. Two rods placed in his back.  
-On either side of his spine.
  - b. Bone grafts.  
-Taken from his hip.  
-Used to repair his shattered vertebrae.

2. On Tuesday.
  - a. Lance had a mask over his eyes.
  - b. Between:
    - Surgery.
    - Medication.
    - #He wanted to shut everything out.
    - \*Including the light.
3. On Thursday.
  - a. I knocked on the door of his hospital room.
  - b. When I opened it just a crack.
    - To peek inside.
    - Room was totally dark.
    - #Drapes were closed.
    - #Lights were off.
    - \*It was 1:00 in the afternoon.
  - c. Paula turned on the lights for my sake.
    - So that I could see where I was going.
  - d. But the darkness was an apt metaphor.
4. Pain has a way of darkening our days.
  - a. Physical pain.
  - b. Psychological pain.
  - c. Emotional pain.
    - Pain has a way of turning us in on ourselves.
    - It's hard to see the light.
    - We feel like we're in the dark.

B. Sometimes There Are Storm Clouds That Darken Our Days.

1. Several weeks ago.
  - a. I turned on the Cardinal baseball game from St. Louis.
  - b. Immediately I knew something wasn't right.
    - Skies outside the ballpark.
    - #Were pitch black.
    - It was a 7:00 game.
    - #It looked like it was midnight.
    - I know the sun sets earlier in St. Louis.
    - #Than in Oklahoma.
    - But it's not that dark at 7:00.
    - #Not in July.
  - c. That night there was a terrible storm.
    - 60-70-80 mph winds.
    - Trees blown down.
    - Electricity knocked out.
    - #400,000-
    - #500,000 homes.
    - \*Without power.
    - \*Left in the dark.

- d. Two days later.
    - Another storm.
    - #As bad as the first.
    - Some people who had gotten their lights back on.
    - #Lost power again.
    - Others hadn't even gotten their lights back.
    - #From the first storm.
  - e. Electric Company told people.
    - “This isn't going to be fixed in a few hours.”
    - “This may take days and weeks to repair.”
  - 2. That's the way life is for us sometimes.
    - a. The wind comes sweeping down the plains.
      - It's not always a gentle breeze.
      - It's a genuine:
        - #Day into night.
        - \*Kind of storm.
    - b. Maybe it's:
      - Our health.
      - Our job.
      - Our finances.
      - Our kids.
      - Our marriage.
      - Death of a loved one.
        - #Boom!
        - #Lights go out.
    - c. We struggle to get back on our feet.
      - Boom!
      - Along comes another storm.
  - 3. It's awfully hard to see the light.
    - a. When the skies are filled with storm clouds.
- C. Sometimes The Darkness Is Of Our Own Creation.
- 1. How is it that we on the earth experience night or darkness?
    - a. Is it that the light of the sun gets turned off?
      - No.
    - b. It's that our part of the earth.
      - Turned away from the light.
  - 2. That's what our sin does.
    - a. Sin turns us away from the light.
    - b. “This is how the judgement works. The light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil.”
      - John 3:19.

3. James has his own description of the darkness.
  - a. When we are not:
    - Quick to listen.
    - Slow to speak.
    - Slow to anger.
    - #James 1:19.
  - b. When we are hearers of the word.
    - But not doers.
    - #James 1:22.
  - c. When we talk the talk.
    - But don't walk the walk.
  - d. If all God expected of any of us.
    - Listen to the word.
    - #We'd have fulfilled our Godly duties.
    - \*By noon on Sunday.
    - We could go about our business our way.
    - #Rest of the week.
    - \*But that is:
      - +Turning away from the light.
      - +Walking in the darkness.

### III. But God Is A God Of Light.

- A. God Created Light.
  1. In the beginning God said:
    - a. "Let there be light."
    - b. And there was light.
    - Genesis 1:3.
  2. God created:
    - a. Sun.
    - b. Moon.
    - c. Stars.
- B. God Sent His Son Jesus To Be The Light Of The World.
  1. Gospel of John.
    - a. 8:12.
    - b. 9:5.
  2. Oh, did that light shine!
    - a. Sick were healed.
    - b. Hungry were fed.
    - c. Dead were raised.
    - d. Storms were stilled.
    - e. Sins were forgiven.

3. But it looked for a moment like the light would go out.
  - a. It got awfully dark on Good Friday.
    - Dark as night.
    - Dark as sin.
    - #Our sin.
      - \*Which nailed Jesus to that cross.
    - Dark as death.
    - Dark as the grave.
  - b. Light was extinguished.
    - Or so it appeared.
4. But on Easter morning there was a "Son rise."
  - a. "The light shines in the darkness."
  - b. "The darkness has never put it out."
    - John 1:5.

C. Light Of Christ Continues To Shine.

1. When we repent of our sin.
  - a. Repentance is more than saying:
    - "I'm sorry."
    - "I messed up."
    - "Forgive me."
    - #That's confession.
    - \*Confession has its place.
  - b. In Hebrew.
    - Word for repentance literally means:
      - #Turn.
      - #Turn around.
      - #Return.
      - #Do a "180."
      - #Stop going the direction we were going.
      - \*Instead go in the direction.
      - +God wants us to go.
    - It involves:
      - #Doing what the planets do.
      - \*Turning away from the darkness.
      - \*Turning back to the light.
  - c. Light of Christ shines.
2. When we are:
  - a. Quick to listen.
  - b. Slow to speak.
  - c. Slow to anger.
    - Remembering that God gave us:
      - #Two ears.
      - #Only one mouth.
    - Suggesting we ought to do more:
      - #Listening than talking.
  - d. Light of Christ shines.

3. When we are doers of the word.
  - a. Taking care of orphans and widows.
    - James 1:27.
    - Those who can't take care of themselves.
  - b. Keeping the food pantry filled.
  - c. Collecting toiletries and underwear for ex-offenders.
  - d. Cleaning up our property on work day.
  - e. Using our time and talents.
    - As the Holy Spirit:
      - #Calls us.
      - #Directs us.
  - f. Light of Christ shines.

Concl: Light shines.  
-In bread and wine.  
#Light for our souls.

Every good and perfect gift is from above,  
-From the Father of lights,  
-Who does not cause darkness by turning.

No power outage.  
No eclipse.  
-Light of Christ shines.  
#And shines.  
#And shines.