

Fourth Sunday in Lent

FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

John 3:14-21

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Analysis by Robin Morgan

14And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

18Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

20For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. 21But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

DIAGNOSIS: Same Old Darkness

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Using the Rheostat*

We human beings use the rheostat to lower our electric lights for a variety of reasons: the movie is beginning, the concert's

about to start, our romantic dinner is ready. But it's when we begin to keep the light low so our faults aren't visible that a problem is building. We don't want our deeds to be exposed and so we turn the lights down, preferring to stay in the darkness.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Stumbling in the Dark*

When we turn down the light to keep our faults hidden, we aren't believing in the Son of God, nor in the eternal life that God has prepared for us. We're not trusting that no matter what we may have done or not done, God has sent His Son into the world that the world might be saved through Him. Instead, we're trusting that if no one can see our evil, it's as if it doesn't exist.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Judgment in Our Darkness*

Those who do not believe that God sent the Son of God into the world to save it are condemned already. God's judgment remains when we stay in the darkness and we can do nothing on our own to change our situation.

PROGNOSIS: New Light and Life

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal solution) : *The Light Is Lifted Up*

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so that the people could look to it and live, so the Son of God was lifted up on the cross that we might live. He took our darkness and our evil deeds onto Himself and died. In place of the darkness and judgment we have earned, He gives us His Light, His Good Deeds, His Eternal Life. God sent Jesus into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save it through Him.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *Believe in the Son of God!*

With the light shining all around us, we see the Son of God for who He is—God's love in the world for us. Our deeds, our very lives, are transformed as we trust that He is the answer to our prayers, He is the One God sent so that we might have eternal life. We don't need to hide in the darkness, fearing exposure, we can come out into the Light and bask in His presence. He has taken our darkness into Himself and given us His own brilliant Light.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *True Deeds*

As we walk in the Light, our deeds will change to reflect the One who has taken us as His own. We are no longer hiding in dim corners, but manifesting His love and sharing His light with all those that we meet. Exposure of our faults no longer need frighten us because we know that God through Christ has already reconciled our accounts. Our light can stay turned up brightly so that the world can see how we have been blessed by the God who loved the world so much that everyone who believes in Jesus may have eternal life.