**Sunday, August 9th, 2020**

**Psalms 18:28-29**

"You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

With your help I can advance against a troop, with my God I can scale a wall."

The Word of The Lord.          **Thanks be to God**

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Often, we find ourselves in the middle of problems, difficulties, confusion, and anxiety.

We can't see a way out.

We don't know what to do, or how to do what needs to be done.

We find ourselves in the middle of deep darkness without any hope of daylight.

You know the feeling.

Everything is going fine.

And then, suddenly all the lights go out, and we are shrouded in deep darkness.

We cannot see anything at all.

We trip and stumble into furniture which seems to have moved all by itself.

We find ourselves searching for a flashlight which isn't where we put it.

We look for a candle and a match to light it, so we can see and move easily.

In the darkness, lacking any light, everything is hidden and lost.

It is not only actual darkness which causes us to blunder around, tripping,

unable to see.

We have that same feeling of lostness, blindness, confusion, and despair,

when we cannot see the way out of problems and difficulties.

We are lost and distressed, unable to act and cope with our lives.

We need a little light so we can cope when everything goes wrong.

When all else fails, we turn to God and beg Him to keep the light burning,

to turn our darkness into light.

With God's help we can get through the unsurmountable problems.

We remember there is a way out, even when we cannot see it.

Sam was a construction worker hired to work on a high-rise building project.

He and his co-workers were working around the clock to finish the project as

quickly as possible, which meant they were often working in the dark of night.

Sam was busy fixing the edge of one of the walls twelve stories up.

The workers' lamps gave light to the immediate area around them,

            but shed little light in the larger area.

Suddenly Sam tripped over something in the darkness at his feet.

He lost his balance and fell over the wall.

As he plunged into dark emptiness, he managed to grab the edge of the wall

with his fingertips.

Desperately he hung on hoping that somebody would discover his drastic situation.

He was in total darkness, barely clinging to the wall.

He yelled as loud as he could for help,

but the noise of the machinery drowned out his cries.

No one could hear him.

No one was going to come to his aid.

Soon his arms began to grow weak, his fingers began to slip.

He tried praying, but no miracle occurred.

As his fingers lost their grip, he let out at groan of defeat, and with a cry of horror he fell.

He fell exactly 3 feet.

He landed on a scaffold which had been there all the time.

He had not seen it because of the darkness.

When we are blinded by pitch darkness, we cannot see the way out.

It is easy to believe there is no way out.

When we face various crises in life, we often feel we are all alone,

desperately doing all we can to save ourselves,

crying out for help yet feeling unheard,

until finally we lose all our own strength and let go.

Often, we give in to fear and discouragement because

we do not know or see that we are safe in God’s hands.

We do not see because of the darkness that surrounds us –

           the darkness of doubt and unbelief.

In the midst of deep sadness, boredom, fear, and grief,

           we let crushing despair overwhelm us,

           we lose our purpose and meaning of life.

But when we remember to turn to God, and let his light show us the way,

           we can make a huge difference in our lives and the lives of those around us.

Seven-year-old Rebecca enjoyed running up to her room on the second floor,

and watching the old lamplighter make his way down the street.

Every evening at dusk the lamplighter would come down the street, carrying a lantern and a pole. He would make his way back and forth across the street,

lighting each street lamp.

When the lamplighter disappeared into the twilight,

everyone could see where he had been by the circles of light left behind.

Rebecca's mother followed her upstairs one evening.

Mom asked Rebecca what she was doing.

The young girl replied: "I'm watching the lamplighter punch holes in the darkness."

God's light punches holes in our darkness.

When we look around us we can see where God has been

by the light he has left behind.

The darker life becomes, the more holes we need punched in our darkness.

Everyone around us has dark days.

Perhaps we ought to be about punching holes in their darkness,

so the light can shine in their lives.

Even a little bit of light can chase away the gloom and sadness, the anxiety and fear.

AMEN