

Natalie W. Bell
 Christmas Eve 2018

Light at Night

Yesterday at church I talked about the *power of darkness*.
It sounds strange, But aren't there things that we learn,
 that we can *only learn*, while in the dark?

It is only at night that we can see the *brightest stars*,
 or marvel at a *brilliant moon*.
 It is only at night that *light* takes on it's full *beauty, and power*.

Isn't this why we love a *candlelight service* on Christmas Eve?
 Because the light is exactly what we *need*—
 we need the *light of Christ, coming into our darkness*.

Because at Christmas, *especially* at Christmas,
Despite all the lights—on trees, and houses,
 we are often faced with *darkness*, right?
 whether it be in our world, our homes, or our hearts.

Because none of us has the *perfect* family,
 or the picture worthy, Facebook-approved Christmas celebration.
 It is a *wonderful* season, and a *difficult* one.

For most, ours is a *real Christmas*.
 Where the doctors have given us a scary *diagnosis*,
 or a *hospital bed* is where we ring in a new year.
 Where the *table* seems empty,
 because some we love are missing.
 And the *tree* seems smaller,
 because so many are not gathered around it.

Ours is a *real Christmas*,
 With prodigal *children*, and ailing *parents*,
job losses, and difficult *relationships*,
financial burdens, *loneliness*, *depression* and *addiction*,
 and plenty of *crazy relatives* that make the Griswalds look normal!

Ours is a *real Christmas*,
Where sometimes we *struggle to get out of bed* in the morning,
or to *keep our eyes closed* at night.

Isn't this why we need this *place*, and this time of *worship*?
Isn't this why we need the *Lord's Supper* ---our true food and drink?
Isn't this why we need the beautiful *scriptures*, and the inspiring *music*?

And isn't it's why we need the *candlelight*?
The light that reminds us *whose birth* we came here to celebrate,
and exactly *what Jesus does* in our lives.

He is the *light that pierces* the darkness.
He is the light that *shines even brighter* on a dark night.
And He is the one who *walks with us, every moment*,
through every single night.

Merry Christmas, friends.
May the *Light coming into the world*,
be the *light in your life*!
And for that, all God's people said, Amen.