

## 1 The Power of Light

## 2 Introduction

- As anyone who's lived through an extended power failure knows, light is a resource most of us take for granted until it's unexpectedly absent.
- When a blown transformer takes down our little corner of the power grid, sunset imposes a darkness so deep it weighs heavily on the soul.
- In fact, many people this time of year experience a form of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) that produces a mood disorder that can be very serious.

## 3 Signs & Symptoms of SAD

- The signs and symptoms of this disorder are several and may include one or more of the following . . .
  - Feeling sad, grumpy, moody or anxious.
  - Losing interest in your usual activities.
  - Eating more and craving carbohydrates, such as bread and pasta.
  - Gaining weight.
  - Sleeping more but still feeling tired.
  - Having trouble concentrating.

## 4 Who Gets SAD?

- Anyone can get SAD, but it's more common in:
  - Women.
  - People who live far from the equator, where the winter daylight hours are very short.
  - People between the ages of 15 and 55. (The risk of getting SAD for the first time goes down as you age.)
  - People who have a close relative with SAD.

## 5 Causes of SAD

- SAD is sometimes called winter depression or seasonal depression.
- While experts aren't sure what causes SAD, they think it may be caused by a lack of sunlight.
- Lack of light may:
  - Upset our "biological clock," which controls our sleep-wake pattern and other biological rhythms.
  - Cause problems with serotonin, a brain chemical that affects moods.

## 6 Treatment of SAD

- The treatment for SAD or the classic winter blues may surprise you.

- While it does include medication, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and the hormone melatonin, the chief form of treatment is light therapy.
- As long as the “Lightbox” filters out ultraviolet light, light therapy or what is also called phototherapy can help greatly with people overcoming winter depression.

## 7 **Living in Darkness**

- Now, imagine going without a sunrise for half the year!
- Imagine living in a sort of shadowland, in which dawn is but a distant dream.
- Noonday in such a place is not much brighter than twilight elsewhere.
- This is the daily lot of the remote Norwegian village of Rjukan, west of Oslo, in the mountainous interior of that wintry land.

## 8 **Rjukan, Norway**

- In the early 20th century, an industrialist named Samuel Eyde was seeking cheap hydroelectric power for a new fertilizer plant. Rjukan's location suited his needs exactly.
- Eyde's factory offered plenty of employment, but at a certain human cost.
- The steep mountain walls made Rjukan a gloomy place.
- During the long Norwegian winters, when the sun barely rises over the horizon, the people of Rjukan live in perpetual twilight.

## 9 **Rjukan, Norway**

- The effects on the human spirit were predictable.
- Rjukan was a dark, depressing place to live.
- Eyde gamely tried to make things better, constructing workers' houses as high up the mountain slopes as possible.
- Eyde even constructed a cable-car, so his workers and their families could make occasional forays upwards, into the sun.
- BTW - Sunset tomorrow in Rjukan will be 3:11 PM.

## 10 **Let there be Light!**

- In 2013, at a cost of nearly a million dollars, three immense mirrors were constructed atop the surrounding peaks.
- Carefully situated to catch the maximum amount of sunlight, their angle adjusted throughout the day by solar-powered electric motors.
- Rjukan's mirror array now reflects winter sunlight down into the valley.

## 11 **Let there be Light!**

- The change in the quality of life has been dramatic.
- Even the mirrors' opponents have been won over. "I thought it would be a waste because we have a lot of bad weather here," Robert Jenbergsen told The New York Times.
- "But when we got the sun, you could see the happiness it brought. We had never seen anything like that before."

## 12 **The People Rejoice!**

- What was once a parking lot in the village's center has become a town square, a bustling hub where neighbors pause to socialize.
- This rarely happened in winters past, when villagers hurried from building to building with downcast eyes, collars raised against the bitter wind.

## 13 **The People Rejoice!**

- When the mirrors were first installed, townspeople delightedly donned sunglasses and unfolded beach chairs in the parking lot, tilting their faces upwards toward the light.
- Now, benches grace the sunniest spots.
- The town is considering installing a fountain to make the square even more of a gathering place.
- The citizens of Rjukan once walked in darkness. Now -- thanks to the high-tech wizardry of their mountaintop mirrors -- they see a great light.

## 14 **The Dawning of Hope**

- The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. (Is 9:2 NIV)
- The prophet Isaiah never knew a Norwegian winter, but he didn't have to.
- Anyone who's ever lived through a dark night can appreciate the cheering properties of light.
- Looking hopefully to the birth of a Messiah—who would rule over his people with justice and kindness—the prophet compares this good news to the return of the sun.

## 15 **The Promise of the Messiah**

- For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Is 9:6 NIV)
- Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. (Is 9:7 NIV)

## 16 **The Light of the World**

- This Messiah was not only to be the hope of Israel, but according to the New Testament the savior for the whole world as well.
- He who would give not only a revelation on how to have eternal life but a hope for a new world that would be based on true justice and righteousness.
- When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12 NIV)

### 17 **The Light of Life**

- The “light of life” is a very interesting term and is actually used throughout the Bible
- In the New Testament, it is a byproduct of walking with Jesus that helps us to keep ourselves in God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will.
- Without it, we walk in darkness and lack the spiritual discernment we need to please God and enjoy His goodness and presence in our lives.
- In fact, it was one of the chief purposes for which Christ came and is no doubt another reference to the Holy Spirit.

### 18 **The Work of the Holy Spirit**

- But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26 NIV)
- “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:12–13 NIV)
- Jesus came into the world to be a light so that light could shine in our hearts and push out all darkness.

### 19 **The Power of Light**

- Light from the sun, is radiant energy and is a tremendous source of power for human use.
- Some of us actually use that power to heat our homes and run our machines.
- But greatest of all is its effect on life and health.
- Plants won’t grow in the shade and us humans need light to keep us emotionally and physically fit.

### 20 **The Sun of Righteousness**

- What the sun is to the earth, Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, is to us.
- He brings life, warmth, health, energy, and power to those who accept and follow Him.
- On top of all of this, “the light of life” that Jesus gives is stronger than death for it keeps us in the truth so that we can stay under God’s grace and power.

- For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Cor 4:6 NIV)

## 21 True Light

- One of the chief purposes for Jesus coming to the earth was to be a light of revelation of God’s truth, so that people no longer would have to live in ignorance and darkness.
- However, not everyone wanted to see this light because they weren’t lovers of the truth after all—and so stayed in the darkness.
- Yet those who receive Him (the true light that gives light to every man) he gave the right to become children of God—born of the Spirit—vessels that will have the light of life shining inside them.

## 22 Conclusion

- Just as light is the best therapy for the winter blues or for those who live in the shadow of darkness, so is the coming of the Sun of Righteousness for our souls.
- Christmas is not just about a birth of a baby, but the coming of one who would be the light of God’s truth for the world.
- Everyone on the side of truth—those who no longer want to live in darkness will listen to Him.
- They will find “healing in His wings” and a path that will lead them to eternal life, both now and in the ages to come. Amen