**Defeating Dark Days**

**John 12:44-46 TLB**

“Jesus shouted to the crowds, ‘If you trust Me, you are really trusting God. 45 For when you see Me, you are seeing the One who sent Me. 46 I have come as a Light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in Me will no longer wander in the darkness.’” (John 12:44-46 TLB)

* **What darkness are you facing?**
* King David-- *"I have cried desperately for help, but still it does not come."* (Psalm 22:1 GN)
* Job-- *"I hoped for happiness and light, but trouble and darkness came instead."* (Job 30:26 GN)
* King David-- *"Lover, friend, acquaintance - all are gone. There is only darkness everywhere."* (Psalm 88:16 LB)

**God’s Light For Defeating Our Difficulties:**

* King David-- *"You, Lord, are my light; You dispel my darkness!"* (2 Samuel 22:29 GN)
* *“I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose--I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]”* (Philippians 4:13 AMP)

**To Dispel Darkness We Must Use His Strength To:**

**BLESS Rather Than CURSE.**

* *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse!”* (Romans 12:14 NIV)

**To Dispel Darkness We Must Use His Strength To**

**RELEASE Rather Than REHEARSE.**

* *“To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do.”* (Job 5:2 GN)
* *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”* (Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT)

**To Dispel Darkness We Must Use His Strength To:**

**NEUTRALIZE Rather Than NURTURE.**

* *“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”* (Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV)
* *“You are only hurting yourself with your anger...”* (Job 18:4 GNT)

**To Dispel Darkness We Must Use His Strength To:**

**UNLOAD Rather Than UNRAVEL.**

* *“You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon him, for You are His personal concern.”* (1 Peter 5:7 [PHILLIPS])

**Connect Group Discussion**

**Understanding:**

* What does John 12:44-46 teach us about God/Jesus?
* What did Jesus mean when He said, “For when you see Me, you are seeing the One who sent Me,” in verse 45?
* What does it mean to fully put your trust in Jesus? (vss. 44 & 46)

**Digging Deeper:**

* When you face “dark days” in life, what is your typical reaction?
* Pastor Mike mentioned getting “stuck” in the problem(s) or offenses from others. What contributes to being “stuck” in the “dark days”? How do you get free from being “stuck” on the problem or offense? (See also Ephesians 4:31-32)
* What are some ways you can “neutralize” bitterness and anger that contribute to “dark days” in you life?What happens when we hold on to bitterness and anger?
* What did Pastor Mike mean when he said to “unload” your problems, anxieties, etc.? How do you do that according to the Bible? (Give Scripture references)

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?