

# 20. Dark



‘The darkest hour is just before the dawn,’ they say and certainly, things often feel at their bleakest in the small hours. Before pandemic closed them, the doors of several Northern European cathedrals stood open throughout the night in recognition of this fact - a particular ministry to the broken and bereaved born in the darkness.

From early childhood on, we are programmed to be wary of the dark. In the human mind, dark is often dangerous, the repository for all things sinister, both literally and figuratively. A “*darkness over the whole land*” (Mark 15.33) is the backdrop for Jesus’ death, and we describe a sense of alienation from God as the ‘dark night of the soul’.

And yet, and yet... Once our eyes adjust to darkness, it is usually navigable, and this photo reveals the beauty to be found in it. What’s more, as Barbara Brown Taylor points out, “There is a light which shines in the darkness which is only visible there”.

Her book *Learning to Walk in the Dark* also offers the startlingly simple and hope-filled observation that “New life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark.”

## Today...

...help us to navigate the dark  
by finding you in it, O God.

**Amen**