

Midnight Photography

For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. Luke 12:2-3

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Hebrews 4:13

INTRODUCTION:

The word photography pertains to light and it means taking pictures by the use of light. In 1800 AD the first attempt was made at taking pictures. But it took two French men twenty-six years to develop the first silver plate which they used to take photographs. The invention of the daguerreotype in 1826 AD marked the beginning of photography as we know it today. The next great forward step in photography came with the invention of the tintype. After the tintype of which we all are familiar, George Eastman invented the roll film which made the Kodak

Company a reality. Because of the Kodak Company all Americans have become familiar with photography. But I wonder if you are aware of the many new advances in the field of photography, which have come into existence during the past few years?

Man Today is Seeing the Invisible of Yesterday

Today airplanes fly at dizzy heights all over the world. Many times they are so high it is impossible for the pilot to distinguish everything on the ground below. But with modern day photography he has nothing to worry about for with a powerful camera a picture can be taken which will reveal every detail on the ground thousands of feet below.

Ships are constantly crossing the seven seas of this world. In days gone by if heavy fog came or if a severe storm struck the ship would often be in danger because the captain could not see ahead. But today there are no worries. If it's fog or a storm the captain calls for the ship's photographer who takes a picture and in thirty seconds that picture is developed and the captain can then see seven and one half miles ahead through the fog or storm!

Not so long ago photography came out with a new invention even more amazing than the others I have mentioned, and it is called "Midnight Photography." It is the art of taking pictures in complete darkness. Beyond the light that we see all around us there is also invisible light. Midnight photography is the art of taking pictures by the use of this invisible light. You have probably visited a shoe store where you can place your foot in a machine and through the use of lights see how your foot looks inside the shoe. Ultraviolet light is used in that machine to enable you to see right through the shoes. Infrared light is the invisible light used in taking pictures in complete darkness.

Infrared light is susceptible to heat and so midnight

MIDNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

photography works on the principle of heat. The photographers have invented film which responds to heat. You could take an old flat iron, the kind Grandma used to iron clothes with, and heat it on the stove. Then if you would hold this hot flat iron next to a camera loaded with infrared film, the heat would provide invisible light and a picture could be taken in complete and total darkness.

During World War II, they took pictures during the bombing raids in London and other English cities. Common sense tells you they didn't run around with flash cameras, flashing pictures. The photographs that were taken during those total blackouts were taken with infrared film in total darkness and that's where the nickname came from: "Midnight Photography."

GOD'S ETERNAL MIDNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

One day I was reading the word of God and I came across this statement of our Master, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house tops" (Luke 12:2-3). When I read those words I thought to myself, "There it is! That's God's midnight photography!" God sees what we do in secret and reveals it openly. He hears what we say in darkness and reveals it in the light. Hebrews 4:13 states, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Christmas Eve 1949 found an old bedraggled looking woman walking the streets of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She held a tin cup in her hand and was begging for money. The people of Pittsburgh, feeling the spirit of Christmas, gave generously to the old lady. But soon the police department was informed and a car

picked the old lady up and brought her to headquarters. When she arrived at headquarters, even the policemen felt sorry for her and decided against locking her up over Christmas Day. They decided to give the old lady some money, some decent clothes in place of the rags she wore, and then let her go. When they mentioned giving her some clothes in place of the rags, the old lady became very excited and argued that she didn't want any clothes. This aroused suspicion and two ladies who worked at the police force in Pittsburgh were called in. They took the old lady off in a side room and forced her to remove the rags she wore and in exchange they gave her some very nice clothing. After examining the rags not more than five minutes they discovered two thousand and ninety three dollars in cash that she had sewed up on the inside of the rags. And so the thing she had hidden in secret came to light and she was exposed openly before the people she had deceived.

This story illustrates perfectly the thing Jesus was talking about when he said, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

A. Men of the Bible Could Not Hide From God

Adam and Eve found out hundreds of years ago in the Garden of Eden that God is a midnight photographer. God told Adam and Eve, "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). When the serpent tempted Eve she believed that God could not see her and when she gave some of the forbidden fruit to Adam he felt God was not watching. Later on in the cool of the day, when the lengthening shadows of darkness began to fall across the earth God came walking through the Garden. Adam and Eve tried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden. But they soon

MIDNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

discovered that it is impossible to hide from God. They found out that God is The Great Midnight Photographer always on the job, always taking pictures of the things we do in secret and then He reveals them in the light.

Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, also found out the hard way that God is a midnight photographer. The Bible tells us, "And Cain talked with Abel, his brother, and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him" (Genesis 4:8). Cain thought that no one would know and that God did not see. When God spoke to him and said, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" Cain replied, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). Then God revealed to Cain that He knew all along and that He was the midnight photographer, who sees everything because He said, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10).

Achan, the soldier in Israel's army also found out the hard way that God is a midnight photographer. The children of Israel were preparing to take the city of Jericho. God had warned them, "And the city shall be accursed — and ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourself accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it" (Joshua 6:17-18). But when the walls fell flat and the soldiers marched in to take the city, Achan found himself all alone for a moment during the heat of the battle and he saw among the spoils a Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. He coveted that rich treasure and took it and hid it in the earth beneath his tent. Everything was all right for awhile and Achan thought he would get away with his disobedience, but he forgot that God, the great Midnight Photographer, was on the job, as always, taking pictures of the things we do in secret. When the Children of Israel fought their next battle at the little city of Ai, they were utterly defeated. Joshua and the elders of Israel fell on their faces before the Lord in a great prayer meeting. This is one time

God broke up a prayer meeting and putting it in our modern day language God said, "Why are you lying here on the ground praying? Sin is in the camp!!! That's the trouble!!" Joshua lined up the people and man by man they were brought before him. When Achan stood before him, God showed him the picture of Achan's sin. Joshua said, "Make confession and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me" (Joshua 7:19). When Achan had confessed his sin, Joshua sent messengers and they ran to the tent and found the accursed thing. Achan was stoned and burned with fire when God, the great Midnight Photographer, revealed in the light that which was done in secret.

King David is another who discovered long ago, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." While David's soldiers were fighting, David arose from bed one night and walked upon the roof of the king's house. He saw a very beautiful woman and after inquiring about her, found that she was the wife of one of his soldiers. David took this woman into his own house and committed the scarlet sin of adultery. He thought no one would ever know. But, when the woman conceived and sent and told David, "I am with child," he began to plot how he would continue to hide his sin. After all methods had failed, David sent Bathsheba's husband into the thick of the battle and caused him to be deserted by the other soldiers and Uriah was killed. After adding the sin of murder to adultery, David still thought no one would find out. But, he had forgotten God, the great Midnight Photographer. God, who is always on the job taking pictures of our secret deeds, showed the photograph to Nathan the Prophet. Nathan fearlessly came before the King and pointed his finger at David and said, "Thou art the man! Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife" (II Samuel 12:7,9).

"You cannot hide from God though mountains cover you,
His eye our secret thoughts behold!"

Gehazi is a name many have missed in the reading of the Old Testament scriptures. Gehazi was the servant of Elisha the Prophet. Naaman, who was the captain of the host of the king of Syria, came to Elisha to be healed of leprosy. Elisha directed him to go to the Jordan River and dip himself in the water seven times and he said after the seventh time Naaman's flesh would be clean. After Naaman obeyed the voice of God's prophet, his leprosy left and his skin became pure like the flesh of a little child. With great rejoicing Naaman returned to Elisha's house to thank him and to give praise to God. He offered gifts to Elisha, but Elisha refused them and said, "Go in peace." Gehazi, the servant, determined in his heart to have those gifts and so he ran after Naaman. When he had overtaken Naaman, he said, "My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments." II Kings 5:22 Naaman gave him two talents of silver and two changes of garments and as Gehazi started back home, I imagine he chuckled to himself saying, "Boy oh boy! This business of being secretary to a prophet isn't bad at all. A few more deals like this and I'll be sitting pretty." But as soon as he returned, God, the great Midnight Photographer, who is always on the job, showed the photograph of Gehazi's sin to his master Elisha. Elisha came in and stood before his servant and asked, "Where have you been?" Gehazi answered saying, "I have not gone away at all." Elisha reminded him that he had lied and because of his lie, "the leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever" (II Kings 5:27). Once again we see, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

B. Words Never Die

In Matthew 12:36 Jesus said, "But I say unto you, that every

idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Now I must confess that I used to think that statement was figurative. I used to think Jesus didn't mean what He said. But now I believe He meant exactly what He said!

Marconi has come up with a brilliant opinion and if he's right it helps us understand how easy it will be for God to accomplish this seeming impossible task of keeping track of all our words. Marconi states that every individual is different as to the wave length of his voice. No two individuals in the world have the same wave length to their voice. Marconi also states that every word that we speak goes out into its own wave length and starts circling the earth. Marconi says that our words never die, but keep traveling the circle of the earth in their wave length. He says scientists are working on an instrument similar to a radio. If and when this instrument is perfected, we can tune in and hear Plato teach philosophy although he's been dead hundreds of years. We can tune in and hear Jesus Christ deliver His Sermon on the Mount. We can tune in and hear Lincoln deliver his Gettysburg Address. Think of it, our words never die! They live on forever! Now whether Marconi's idea is true or not, I don't know. But I do know what Jesus said is true! If Marconi's idea is right, don't you see how easy it will be for God to cause us to give account of ourselves?

Three summers ago, we were the guests of Mr and Mrs Virgil Brock, the famous song writers, at Winona Lake, Indiana. During the week we visited there, a famous scientist named George Speaks was lecturing at the tabernacle on the Winona Lake grounds on the subject, "Science and the Bible." Each lecture brought out the fact that there is no disagreement between true science and the word of God. On Tuesday night, when we walked into this great tabernacle which seats around 10,000 people, we noticed George Speaks on the platform as he pointed a little cone shaped instrument at different ones in the audience. Later on in the evening, during his lecture, he made reference to

MIDNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Matthew 12:36, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." George Speaks said the scientists used to laugh at that verse and say, "How ridiculous." But he said the scientists do not laugh anymore for they all are saying, "How wonderfully true the Bible is."

Then he held up the little cone shaped instrument and told us it was a brand new invention and that it listened in on people's conversations when they didn't know it. He said, "I was pointing it at various ones throughout this audience before services began tonight and wherever I pointed it, it heard what you were saying or whispering and recorded your conversation on this tape recorder." Then as he pointed to the recorder, he took steps toward it and said, "I will now play the tape and let you hear what you were saying." When he made this statement, I noticed six people who jumped up and left the tabernacle in a big hurry!!! They were ashamed of their words and couldn't stand the judgment. What will happen when God brings out the record of our lives and puts it on His great recording machine to play it back!! "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Midnight photography, is it impossible? Listen to this: Date Line August 25, 1972, "An American Air Force helicopter flew a hazardous course over the mountains of Vietnam yesterday, while one of the crew swept the deserted area with a camera. The red dirt roads were empty, but when the hundreds of feet of film were developed they showed tanks and lorries traveling down the road. Researchers said, "They had passed that way 24 hours before, yet there was still time to photograph them 24 hours after they had gone." Does it sound impossible? The very latest infrared photography outfit that the airplane was carrying can actually take a picture of something after it has happened and after it is gone. Think of the avenues and opportunities that this is going to open up. Bank robberies, twelve hours after it has happened or twenty-four hours after it has happened they

can go in and photograph who stole things. Think about it, just imagine what all can be done when this type of photography is fully developed. Photographing things after they have already happened, yes we have already done it last August 24, 1972. Do you doubt the words of Jesus? "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

C. God Knows You Are a Sinner

Sometimes I have met with people and when I would speak to them about their personal need for Christ and His Church, they would throw back their shoulders and proudly say, "I'm not ashamed of my record." Have you ever made such a statement? If so, you must have a mighty short memory! Suppose I had a movie of your life. A movie that would show everything you've ever done from the time of your birth to this very moment. Suppose it was a talking movie containing every word you have spoken along with your deeds. And suppose I would announce that I was showing the movie of your life in a public theater tomorrow night! I'll guarantee one thing, you would not be there to see it! You would be halfway to China by tomorrow night if you knew your life was to be seen by everyone. None of us are proud of our records! "For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:22-23).

D. Christ's Blood Blots Out the Bad

You cry out then, "Oh! What can we do? If God knows every secret of our lives and if God knows every word we have spoken and if He is going to bring all of this out in the open, we can't stand a judgment like that. None of us can. Isn't there some way we can change the photographs? Isn't there some way

MIDNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

we can erase the bad words from the record?" The answer to the question is, "Yes." There is a way to change the picture. There is a way to get rid of the evil words.

That's why the Lord Jesus Christ left Heaven and came to this world. We were all sinners and were condemned, but Christ came to save us. He came to change the picture and change the record.

If you have ever taken home movies, you have probably had my experience. When 100 feet of film come back from being developed and you hold it up to the light to look at it, you may come across 5 or 10 feet that is clear as water. No image is visible on the film. If that happens you are disappointed and groan. It means that section of the film is ruined. Not enough light. You may come across 5 or 10 feet more film that is black as ink. You groan again. Too much light. It's ruined. So what can be done. Why you cut out the bad parts of the film and splice together the good. After all the bad parts are cut out and all the good is spliced together, you have one continuous film that can be shown from beginning to end without embarrassment. That is exactly what the Lord Jesus will do for you and me. Our lives have been ruined by sin and we would be ashamed for anyone to see them. But Christ is willing to cut out the bad and splice together the good so that in judgment before God, only the good can be seen. Jesus promised, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). And again the Bible says, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Date Line: April 1972, from the St Louis paper, A MOVIE CAMERA THAT FORGETS. Have you heard about it? "A movie camera that forgets has been invented by a retired Air Force colonel, Colonel Keller. The camera records pictures on a circular belt of phosphorus coated tape. But, if you don't like what you took, then you can erase these pictures with infrared light making the film reusable again." Isn't that exactly what

the Lord Jesus Christ is offering to do for each one of us? Yes, he is offering to take away all of our sins. To remove everything that we have done, everything that we have said that is wrong, that we are ashamed of, and give us new life. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." When our old sins are washed away and forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ, He goes even further than that, He then credits His righteousness to our account and when we stand before God, God does not see our old sins, they have been forgiven and forgotten, God only sees Jesus. II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

If you have an old, worn out, yellow, faded photograph in which you can hardly distinguish the picture, you can take that photo to one of our modern photography shops and through a special process which they call superimposing, they can restore your old photo to a new clear cut picture which looks as though it was taken yesterday. Again, that's what Christ will do for us. He is willing to take your old, worn out, sinful, stained, dirty lives and superimpose His perfect, holy life over our sins. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

If you have a photograph which has blackness in it where there should be whiteness, you can take it to a photographer and he will immerse it in a chemical solution which makes the black turn white. This is called reverse photography. Again, this is what Christ will do for us. He wants to make our black sins white as snow. If we will trust Him in faith, repent of all sin, accept Him publicly and be immersed, His blood will change our black sins and they will be forgiven and forgotten forever. God

MIDNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

promises, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). And again Jesus says, "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

Two years ago, while engaged in a revival with the church at McAlester, Oklahoma, we were permitted to visit the two penitentiaries. There were nearly 2,000 men in the men's part and I am not sure of the exact number of women in their part. This was an experience never to be forgotten. We visited the room where they have the electric chair and heard the guard tell stories of prisoners who had died there. After visiting this part of the prison, we left and upon leaving we saw a young man about 25 years of age with a big smile on his face. Most of the other prisoners were gloomy looking and this one fellow was such a contrast that I remarked to our guide, "What's that fellow so happy about?" The guard replied, "He's got something to smile about." I asked, "What do you mean?" The guard said, "Just two days ago that fellow was on Death's Row awaiting execution in the electric chair, but yesterday the governor changed his sentence from death in the chair to life imprisonment!" When I heard that I could see what the guard meant and I knew why the prisoner was so happy.

INVITATION

And dear friends, there is real cause for us to rejoice and be happy for we were sentenced to die forever in Hell. We were lost and condemned because of sins. God was going to bring out every secret deed and reveal every idle word, but Jesus forgave it all. Have you accepted this wonderful pardon by receiving Christ as your Savior in complete obedience? If not, do it today.

The Old Leaf

He came to my desk with quivering lip, the lesson was all done. "Dear Teacher," he said, "I have spoiled this old leaf. Could I have a new one?" I took the old leaf all stained and blotted and gave him a new one all unspotted. And smiled into his sad eyes as I said, "Do better now my child." Then I went to the throne of God with quivering soul. The old life was almost gone. "Dear God." I said, "I have spoiled my life. Can you give me a new one?" And God took my old life all stained and blotted and gave me a new one all unspotted, and smiled into my eyes and said, "Do better now my child."

Mother's Photo

Dwight Moody used to tell about a girl over in London who ran away from home. She went down into the slums of London and became a very wicked and violent sinner. It broke the heart of her dear Christian mother and this dear old Christian mother wrote letter after letter begging the girl to come back home. All of the letters were ignored. They came back, "addressee unknown," "refused," "return to sender." Finally in desperation, the dear old lady made a personal trip right down into the slums of London. She was physically unable, but she exerted herself to her very limit, she searched everywhere trying desperately to find even a slim lead as to the whereabouts of her daughter, but she could not. Finally, her strength was gone and there was nothing she could do except to leave and go home in utter despair. Someone finally had pity on the old lady and when they saw that she was giving up, they went to her and said, "Sometimes we have seen your daughter go into that house." They pointed to a house of shame across the street. Broken hearted, the mother went across the street and entered the house and she took a photograph of herself and she wrote across it,

"My daughter please come home." She just signed it, "Mother." She left it hanging on the wall and she returned home. Three days later, the girl stumbled into this house of vice and the first thing she noticed upon entering, was that photograph of her own mother hanging there upon the wall. She had been able to ignore the letters, had even refused to open them and read them, but she could not turn her back upon this photograph of her mother's face. It drew her closer and closer, just like it was a magnet and finally she was close enough to read the message, "My child please come home, signed Mother." Dwight Moody says she did go home, it was the undying love of the mother that drew the daughter back home where she found forgiveness in the arms of her mother.

The Photo of God's Love

I have done my very best to try to hold up before you, the photograph of God's undying love and concern for your soul, it's the picture of Jesus, His Son, hanging upon the cross of Calvary bleeding and dying for you, so that He might say to you, "I love you, please come home."

Let us bow our heads and pray, Our Father, we are thankful for the many wonderful, loving and divine warnings of scripture. We are thankful for the warning that there is nothing hid that shall not be known. We are thankful for the warning that for every idle word we shall have to give account in the day of judgment. Oh God, how we thank thee after warning us that thou hast made a way of escape from this judgment by sending Jesus to be our Savior. We pray for everyone in this audience who has not yet taken Christ, the escape from sin. We pray that they will come and accept Him not only as Savior, but as Lord of their lives, this very night. Bless every man and every woman and every young person who needs to come, that they might step forward right now and confess His name and to be buried with

MY FAVORITE REVIVAL SERMONS

Him in baptism and have their sins forgiven so that they will never again have to fear this judgment. And those who need to place their membership with the church because they have moved here to this town, we pray that they will come. For we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.