

# Evanescence

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Note: not a complete transcript

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"A sixteenth century monk, Saint John of the Cross once coined a phrase that described a place of profound spiritual desolation. A dry place where your soul thirsted, where your soul cried out, yearned to be satiated, and he called that place, the 'dark night of the soul.' think that's got a good goth metal feel to it. It was a state of mind that was defined by a deep sense of loneliness, of even lost-ness. Where you feel this dense, burdensome cloud on top of you and you can't get away. Where you cry out words like those that we just heard, 'I'm so tired of being here [suppressed] by all my childish fears. [And if you have to leave], I wish that you would just [leave]. Because your presence still lingers here and it won't leave me alone. These wounds won't seem to heal, this pain is just to real, there's just too much that time cannot erase.' Or words like these, from a psalm, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, left me, why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, [and am not silent?] Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there's no one to help. The 'dark night of the soul' is a place of broken-ness, and its important to know that a key definer of that place of broken-ness lie in the scope of relationship. It s a place where abandonment is experienced; where the presence of the one still lingers on, a place where the void left by someone's absence just won't leave you alone. Where you just can't forget what you once had, what it once was; the memory of the beauty of that time just haunts you in the 'dark night of the soul place.' Now those kinds of places and voids can occur on so many relational fronts. I read the paper this week and thinking about this message and the 'dark night of the soul' and I wonder if the world is cloaked in a cloud an I see the wars and the fighting and the bombs in the subways and the starving and the dying and the hatred, and you yearn for something more. And I hear stories of families. [I] talked to a man this morning and his family, just wishing that his marriage could go well and just get along; yearning for whole-ness in that place. That people could respect each other, or within a dating relationship where you once had something and it was so beautiful to be embraced by that person's love and how its lost. Or even in ourselves like, 'who in the world am I? What in the world do I have to do with my life and why do I feel sometimes so painfully alone?' And maybe even more profoundly, we find those voids in our relationship with God, like Saint John did. 'Where are you God?' I feel so lost. Why have you forsaken me?"

Dark nights are part of the human condition, things are not the way things they're supposed to be. We live in a reality on multiple levels where we desperately want something back. We want it to be the way its 'supposed' to be; the way it once was.

Section 3: And Saint John knew a lot about the dark night of the soul. He started young. When he was a little kid

he lost his dad, and throughout his life it was a reality again and again; one that he wrote of. But even as he wrote about it, he didn't write about it primarily as a negative thing. In fact, for him, even though its a hugely tough place to be, he saw it as a very positive thing, a gift. He used the words 'sheer grace.' Now why would anybody see those places in that kind of way? Well, listen to some lyrics he once wrote about the 'dark night of the soul.' He said: 'Oh guiding night, oh night more lovely than the dawn/ Oh night that has united the lover with his beloved/ Transforming the beloved in her lover.'

The reason he saw it as a gift, as a grace, was because he saw it as the precursor to the opportunity before which we draw closer to God, deeper into the divine center that God is. Its as if he understood the depth of yearning that we have to go to sometimes; we have to go to, because its the only way, in a deep, profound and true way that we find the answer. Thirst is a gift that leads us to living water. Pangs of hunger deep within our guts act like a teacher, saying 'you need to be fed.' The emptiness of our existence that we sometimes feel, it need filling. The darkness needs light, and it drives us to that place. The bottom line is [that] you and I, and everyone in this place needs life. And we all need love.

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When Ben Moody, the writer of that song, 'My Immortal' was asked why he wrote all of the songs on the album; what they're about; the purpose of his music; he said 'as far as spiritually, the message that we as a band want to convey more than anything else is simple. God is love. He is a just God, but he is also a gracious God.' And now Ben has it right on his view on God. God is the lover that Saint John talked about who will transform us in our dark places. He will lift us up, he will bring us back to life, and it all starts with God meeting us in the 'dark night of the soul' reality. Ben said in another interview, the writer, 'He knows you better,' talking about God, 'He knows you better than you know yourself and he understands, understands how you feel. I am a Christian, I still have pains, I still have fears, I still have sorrow. I wouldn't be alive if I didn't. The beautiful thing about my relationship with God is that He understands all that, and He has shown me what life is really for. God understands.'

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Through the words of the prophet Jeremiah, 'my eyes pour out tears. Day and night, the tears never quit. My dear, dear people are battered, bruised, and hopeless.' God understands and God will respond. A few quotes from some psalms and a prophet: "You keep track of all my sorrows, God, you collected all of my tears in your bottle; you've recorded each one. Every single tear you've cried [is] in his book. For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one, he has not hidden his face from him or her, but has listened to their cry for help. God will wipe the tears from every face, he'll remove every sign of disgrace; from his people, wherever they are, yes, God says so. And the way that God does that is by giving you, Himself. The ability to know God in some mysterious, profound gift of grace from the hand and heart of God way; He has the ability to reach out and touch the face of God. As you're being held in God's embrace intimately, in such a real and profound and true way; He is present and He is real. There and here, He is now."

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