

Commentary: Look for the light on a sea of darkness

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Twice a week, I work at a second office. The early, before-rush-hour drive is relaxing. There are only a few vehicles on the road.

I usually drive in the slower lane so I can think a little. I've had a lot of good conversations with myself and God on these early morning drives.

Sometimes, my mind will default to thinking about what I just read in the news that morning, which usually is pretty negative. So, in order to keep my early morning thoughts open and positive, I have learned to avoid looking at the news before I leave for the office.

I have done some of my best thinking on these morning rides to work, similar to what others have said about getting their best ideas while in the shower, on the toilet or taking a walk.

Light in the darkness

The other day while I was driving, I began to think about faith. What is faith? Why faith? Some people say they have faith in a business venture but then proceed to fail.

The Bible speaks of walking by faith, not by sight. Some people say they have faith in a God of love, but live fairly selfish, self-centered lives.

Anyway, I was thinking like this while driving to work.

There were ominous black clouds overhead, and it looked like a storm was coming my way. I already could see rain pouring down out over the ocean.

While driving under this gathering gloomy darkness, a tiny pinhole opened in the thick black clouds, and a slender sunbeam pierced through the tiny hole and onto the dark ocean surface below. A small circle of ocean instantly lit up and sparkled.

That sunbeam was just gorgeous piercing the darkness, and the tiny spot of glistening ocean made me forget about the approaching storm and the rest of the ocean that lay in darkness.

I was so taken and captivated by the splendor of the tiny circle of light, I forgot about the darkness. The darkness was still there, but it didn't affect my outlook anymore, because I was drawn to that sunbeam, that scintillating circle of light.

The light of the world

I couldn't help but see this as a metaphor for the times we live in.

There is no end of the darkness, selfishness, gloom and doom in the news, in our world and in our lives.

But there is also that gorgeous, wonderful, enthralling beam and circle of light in Jesus—that gorgeous beam of beauty, kindness, love, tenderness and selflessness that pierces the darkness and changes the focus of our thinking and our lives.

So, although I didn't finish the conversation with myself about faith, that momentary incident seemed like a partial answer: Focus on the good and positive, no matter how dark the world around us is. Focus on the beams of good and the acts of kindness, love and hope that pierce our darkness. Think on these things.

“Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is

any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Robert Ritzenhein, after retiring from full-time missionary service, lives in Japan, organizing Christian programs for area rest homes, and is the yearly Santa at his city’s hospitals. The views expressed in this opinion article are those of the author.