

BETHELITE

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Learning to Walk in the Dark: A Lenten Invitation

As we enter the season of Lent, we often think of it as a time of solemnity, repentance, and reflection. Yet, what if this season is also an invitation to embrace the darkness—not as something to be feared, but as a place where God is profoundly present?

Barbara Brown Taylor, in her book *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, challenges us to reconsider our understanding of darkness. Rather than equating it with fear, sin, or despair, she invites us to see darkness as a space of deep transformation, where faith is not diminished but refined.

In many traditions, darkness is not an absence but a presence. In Hebrew, חֹשֶׁךְ (Choshech) is the same darkness that covered the waters at creation—out of which God spoke light into being. In Japanese, 幽玄 (Yūgen) describes a profound and mysterious beauty hidden in the unseen. In Arabic, قس غ (Ghasaq) refers to the deepening dusk, a time of peace and quiet reflection. And in Finnish, *Hämärä* reminds us of the soft dimness of twilight, a space between day and night where mystery and clarity meet.

Lent is a season for *Hämärä*—a space between what was and what is to come. It is a time to trust that, even when we cannot see the way ahead, God is already there.

In scripture, darkness is often the setting for profound encounters with God. Abraham steps into the unknown beneath a star-filled sky. Jacob wrestles with God through the night. The Israelites walk through the wilderness guided by a pillar of cloud and fire. And on the cross, as midday darkness covers the land, Jesus breathes his last—only for the greatest light to come three days later.

This Lent, we invite you to learn to walk in the dark with us. During our Lenten book study we will explore this theme directly, using Barbara Brown Taylor's insights to guide our reflections. Through worship, study, and conversation, we will consider

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Pastor Lauren Wrightsman