

Good morning everyone! Well at least its morning. To all you at home you're probably sipping on a cup of coffee, maybe your second of the day and kinda chuckling thinking about all of us who got up and warmed up our cars in this subarctic unhuman tundra earlier. Well I believe you might you might be right in your chuckles because this is a little crazy but I think this also gives us a chance to reflect on how much better times are when it's not like this. Like in the middle of a of a perfect July day. Breeze coming off the lake, toes in the water, sun beaming down. I know you can picture it, but I'll make it even better. Your surrounded by friends and family, it's been a great day doing all of your favorite summer activities, you've eaten some amazing meals, and you know there is a great bonfire in store for later with smores. And to top all off, just the creme de la creme, you're at Camp having had that perfect day.

That's right camp, where every day is a new experience, where you get to be yourself with friends, family, and your creator. Where there's staff to guide your kids through bible studies and games and times for you to relax and reenergize. Now I'm serious folks, sign up for camp. Lynn Kellerman will be speaking a bit more later on Family Camp but there is a camp for every person who is listening to my voice. There is an opportunity for all of you to reconnect and rediscover yourself and your God at camp.

I truly believe that. I speak to my own personal experiences when I speak about Camp. It's a special place that is completely different then out here in the normal world. It always ended up being something that you want to hold onto, something that changes you, that's transformative, something that connects you more with our God.

There are so many stories I could tell. That's one of the problems with camp really, ever week your there you come back with more memories and stories to share.

I think about when I was a counselor and, on the weekend, we would swim out to the raft at sit out there and watch the stars and moon rise, where everything would be perfectly still on the lake for just a moment and you would swear that you were in the middle of a sphere, surrounded by some infinite ball of stars, galaxies, nebulous, moons and other planets.

For that moment everything was limitless. You never wanted it to end. You stopped talking, you held your very breath so that the raft didn't move. Every muscle froze. And it was perfect. This is was a miracle, this is what God is capable of.

But then the inevitable always came, the slightest breath of wind, a passing boat, someone moving on the raft, broke infinity and we were left in reality. And there was nothing we could do to bring it back.

Another fond memory was our night hikes. Taking those youth into the dark was always an experience unto itself. Every one of those kids, boys', girls, young or old, always complained when you told them to shut of their flashlights, every time. Its like the had no trust. And then I would tell them that we were going to be marching straight in to that black hole on the edge of the woods in front of us, and another round of complaints sounded down the line. But they did. They grabbed hands and we marched in. You ever been in under a dense canopy in the middle of the night? Best way I can describe it is that it's only a hair better then when I went down in a mine tour as a kid and they shut

off the lights. That was the darkest I've ever experienced but this was close. In there, your relying more on your other senses to get you through, more than your eyes, and every person is just trusting the person in front of them to be leading them on the right path and warning them about roots and rocks.

But the very best part was when we burst out into the meadow. As we came around the last curve and broke through the thick brush line there would be a round of gasps and ooh and awes.

You'd see to the horizon, you'd see the dew on the ground sparkling, the grass waving in the breeze like you were looking over the ocean. And you would look up and clearer than you'd ever seen them before, in a number beyond count or imagination, where these perfect brilliant sparks of light. And if the moon was out you'd swear it was brighter and bigger than the sun.

After a devotional we would over to the campfire and warm up and talk and be together, while we were separated from everything else in the world. It was so peaceful, warmed by the fire and the presence of our God.

And we never wanted it to end. We would add another log on the fire, we would start a new conversation to try and try to extend what we had, but the inevitable would always happen. Sleep would take us one by one, most often right next to the fire instead of in the tents pitched not too far away. And we would dream dreams almost as good as the night we had. And morning would come and we would be wet with dew, bitten by clever bugs, and tired from staying up too late.

It doesn't seem so hard to picture this scene of Jesus from today's gospel. In the midst of a dark night on a lonely hilltop, the clouds part and a miracle happens, this perfect once in a lifetime moment happens, and what else can Peter want or pray for but for this moment to last forever. But the inevitable happens, the clouds rush in, the light dims and we all must leave the hilltop.

I hope what you didn't hear from me some simple ridiculous hallmark saying we need the dark to better understand or see the light. The problem was never the light. The problem is us. The light is always just as bright. The light was and is always there. The light has always been perfect and the light never changes.

The light is inevitable. The light is undeniable. The light is what lasts and never dims. It is always there. That is our God. Every day of our lives we end up chasing after this perfect experience, only to have it right in front of us and do nothing but fear that it's going to fade. Our God is HERE. Our God will not diminish. The place where we find God is right here right now, whether it's here at church or at home or at camp, we are here together with our God. That will not change. If we think the stars are dimming, or the lights are less dazzling, or the fire is dying, that's just us, it's not God. Our God burns brightly forever Amen.