

“YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH”

2019 Teen Camp – Athens, TX

Location: Lone Star Camp

Date: Tuesday, July 9, 2019

Time: 9-10am (*Study will start at approximately 9:15am*)

Christian Living Theme – “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).

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Introduction: Have you ever been in total darkness? If you have, you know what it feels like. If you have not – there are only a few ways on earth to experience total darkness.

One way is to take a trip to southern New Mexico and visit Carlsbad Caverns National Park. While there you can take a mile-long, Ranger guided tour, to the deepest portion for the caverns accessible to visitors, 830 feet below Earth’s surface. This is one of the few places on Earth where you can experience complete darkness. During the tour your Ranger will turn out the lights so you can experience a “blackout.”

At that moment you will feel completely absent from any source of light. You will experience total darkness.

Darkness is defined as the absence of light. In total darkness, of course, there is no light at all.

So at that point in the tour – whether you were totally blind, or not, would be inconsequential. Because both the seer of darkness and the non-seer experience total blackness, alike. Both an open-eyed subject in a totally dark room and a blind subject in an illuminated room lack the stimulation of rods and cones for which light is responsible in normal vision. You may wave your hand in front of your face – but you will see nothing at all.

The point is – we need light to see!

The very first thing God made during Creation Week was LIGHT!

Genesis 1:3-5: V3 “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.

V4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

V5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

The theme for Christian Living Classes this summer is...

Psalm 119:105 “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

What does this verse mean? How does this relate to you? Let's see!

Lamp to my feet – The Hebrew word means a light, lamp, candle. The idea is, that the Word of God is like a torch or lamp to a person on a dark night. It shows them the way: it prevents them from stumbling over obstacles or falling down precipices, or wandering off into paths which would lead into danger, or would turn them away altogether from the path of life.

A light to my path – Is similar in meaning. It is a light which shines on the road that one treads, so that they may see the path and any danger which may be in their path. The expression is very beautiful, and is full of instruction.

The one who makes the word of God their guide, and marks its teachings, is in the right way. They will clearly see the path. They will be able to mark the road in which they ought to go, and to avoid all those by-roads which turn off the main path – often at a very small angle, so that there seems no divergence. This man or woman will see any obstruction which may lie in their path, any precipice or cliff down which, on a dark night, one might fall. You and I need such a guide to cast light upon the path, and the Bible is such a guide.

“Not only does the Word of God inform us of God's will, but as a light on path in darkness, it shows us how to follow the right and avoid the wrong way.

The world is in “spiritual darkness”! They simply have no lamp to light their path. They are spiritually blind. Unable to understand spiritual truth. They are in total darkness!

I Corinthians 2:9-11, 14: V9 “But as it is written: *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

V10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

V11 For what knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one know the things of God except the Spirit of God.”

V14 “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

This is why the “world” is in spiritual darkness! They do not, they cannot, understand spiritual things.

That is why they “call evil good and good evil.” But we do know better – because we have a sure foundation upon which to base our beliefs – the inspired Word of God – the Bible!

Isaiah 5:20 “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness...”

Question: You may have wondered. Why don't we preach the Gospel from door-to-door like other professing Christians do?

From a quick reading of **Acts 20:20** – one might assume that the Apostle Paul went from house to house in order to preach the Gospel of the kingdom to the unconverted. But when we read the entire paragraph, beginning with verse 17, we can understand the intended meaning.

Acts 20:17-20: V17 “From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the *elders of the church*.

V18 And when they had come to him, he said to them; ‘You know, for the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you,

V19 Serving the Lord with all humility, and with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;

V20 How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publically and from house to house.”

Paul was preaching to leaders of the church in their own homes. He was not going from house to house attempting to teach whoever opened the door.

Another misunderstood scripture is **Acts 2:46** “So [the 12 apostles and other disciples] continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”

Notice that these people were all in harmony. They continued daily with *one accord*. They were *all* of the *same* belief. This is simply talking about people who *ate together* as one might have close friends over to his home. It says nothing about preaching to strangers.

In this instance, many had congregated at Jerusalem from many nations in order to attend one of God's annual festivals – Pentecost. Because they had traveled a long distance, and because they had no home in Jerusalem, the brethren who lived there invited them to come to their homes to eat. (Eating an ordinary meal is referred to as “breaking bread” in the *King James Version*.) The converted brethren ate in the homes of other converted brethren – they were not preaching in the homes of the unconverted.

The Apostle Paul had his own hired house at Rome where he “received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God” which Jesus had commanded His true servant to preach (**Acts 28:30-31**). Paul did *not* go from house to house preaching to disinterested sinners and unconverted people. He preached to them in the synagogue. He went into private homes to instruct people *only after* he knew he was welcome. He knew the principle of **John 6:44**. Certainly Paul *did visit* the homes of those seeking counsel and information about God's Word. But it was *by request* of the people concerned.

The Gospel is proclaimed by God's true church today, and anyone is at liberty to listen or not to listen by changing the station. The Gospel is also being published and sent free of charge to all

who *request* it. Also, as in the example of the New Testament, we go into the homes of people who request that we do so in order to counsel with them. But we do *not* go uninvited into the homes of people in order to try to persuade and teach them Bible truths.

We should *never* attempt to force God's truth on anyone. In **Matthew 7:6** – Christ showed that the truth is too precious for that.

We might turn the question around and ask – “Should we invite into our homes just anyone who is going from house to house trying to persuade us to accept his form of doctrine?” Here is God's instruction: “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him” (**II John 10**).

In conclusion, we are not to go preaching from house to house. Neither are we to accept into our homes any peddlers of religion who might show up at our door. This is the example of Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles, and the Apostle Paul.

The truth is – that God is not calling everybody at this time. Everyone who has ever lived will have their opportunity for salvation, but God is working with only a few now. You are privileged to be among those few God has called now.

The world is in darkness, they are spiritually blinded to the truth – and they don't even know it. Satan has deceived the whole world (**Revelation 12:9**). He and His ministers are deceitful.

II Corinthians 11:13-15: V13 “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

V14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

V15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

Many false ministers teach that God's Law is done away. It was “nailed to the cross.” They are in darkness.

But you have God's Word to light your path, it is a lamp unto your feet. You can understand spiritual things! How is this possible that you can understand the truth and they cannot?

I Corinthians 7:14 “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.”

What Paul is saying, is that children with one believing parent may learn about God and come to Christ. They are able to understand and know the truth. They have been “called.”

God says you are “holy”. You are sanctified. Sanctified means – “set apart”.

God's Spirit is with you – and once you are baptized and have had the 'laying on of hands' – it will be in you. Just as it was, for Christ's 12 disciples!

John 14:15-17: V15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

V16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever –

V17 The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells **with you and will be in you.**"

If you have no parents in the Church – and you are here, it could be that God is calling you individually. Be sure to make your call and election sure (**II Peter 1:10**).

The key to understanding God's Word – is the Holy Spirit! The lamp is fed with the oil of the Spirit.

Parable of the Ten Virgins

In **Matthew 25:1-13** – the Church of God is pictured as 10 virgins who go out to meet the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Five of these young women were foolish because they neglected to provide oil for their lamps.

Oil – is symbolic of God's Holy Spirit. Surely any individual who lets their supply of oil diminish will surely see their "light" dim and finally go out.

When we understand **Proverbs 6:23** – "For the commandment *is* a lamp, and the law a light..." – we see that these virgins (perhaps representing half the Church) had an understanding of God's law. However, through neglect of Bible study and prayer – essential elements in watching and waiting for Christ's return – their lamps are in danger of going out. They lacked spiritual oil – God's Holy Spirit.

The shortage was not caused by the supplier. We are responsible for the lack of oil. God tells us in **I Thessalonians 5:19** – "Do not quench the Spirit." ***When we do not allow God's Spirit to lead us we resist its influence. It's like smothering a fire.*** Remember God gives His Holy Spirit "...to those who obey Him (**Acts 5:32**). So we must allow God's Spirit to lead us and obey God's laws if we hope to have an abundant supply of oil in our lamps.

God tells us that He is more than willing to give us His oil – but He also wants us to ask Him for it (**Luke 11:13**).

It is our responsibility to ensure that we have sufficient oil for our lamps to function. Failure to be a light means falling short of being a Christian. The five wise virgins did keep their lamps trimmed. They were prepared to meet the Bridegroom, making sure their lights did not go out.

How valuable is the truth?

We should not know the way, or how to walk in it, if the Scripture like a lamp did not reveal it. God's Word, like a light guides us by its instruction.

Psalm 19:7-11: V7 "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

The law of the LORD is perfect – **Romans 7:12** "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

The law – is the Torah, which means "instruction: or "direction."

V8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

V9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

This passage (**verses 7-9**) present six words for the law of God – **law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgments**; six evaluations of the law – **perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true**; and six results – **converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, enduring forever, and righteous altogether**.

V10 More to be desired *are they* than gold. Yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

V11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *and* in keeping them *there is* great reward."

More to be desired are they than gold – The value of the Word of God (and the understanding of it – cannot be compared with any other desirable thing – even fine gold! It provides the key to wisdom, joy, and most importantly, eternal life!

Proverbs 8:10-11: V10 "Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold;

V11 For wisdom *is* better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her."

What wisdom offers is of inestimable worth, far more valuable than **silver** and **gold**; no gems or other desirable things may be compared with it.

What should we do with the understanding and wisdom God gives us?

Don't – Cast Your Pearls before Swine

Matthew 7:6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces.”

This is an analogy Jesus used to show how people who have not had their minds opened by God to receive spiritual understanding will often react when they hear the true Gospel. Put another way, Jesus was teaching His disciples not to try to convert those who are not yet being called (**John 6:44**). Such people are likely to respond by treating God's truth like dirt. Just as a pig would trample fine pearls into the mud because it doesn't know any better and cannot appreciate such worth, the person whose mind is not yet receptive cannot grasp the awesome value of the truth. To them, the truth would be meaningless and would be discarded. They would just trample it underfoot, so to speak.

While we should never attempt to force God's truth onto any person, we should certainly “But sanctify the Lord God in your heart, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear [gentleness and respect]” (**I Peter 3:15**). In other words, it is right to explain what we believe when someone sincerely asks us. Such interest may indicate that God is opening the person's mind.

Notice how, at another time, Jesus used pearls to express the value of the truth and of God's Kingdom. He said:

Matthew 13:45-46: V45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,
V46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

God wants us to treat His truth like a priceless gem.

In this parable the merchant was seeking “goodly pearls.” Since the pearl of great price represents the Kingdom, we must conclude that here is a person searching for spiritual truth.

We have been offered that pearl of great price – we know of the Kingdom of God and how to achieve salvation. We understand God's Master Plan of Salvation and His Word has made plain the path that leads to LIFE! Do we recognize the value of what we have within our grasp?

Conclusion: Physically speaking – we take light for granted because it is everywhere, or at least, nearly everywhere. Its complete absence is unsettling as you will find out if you have the opportunity to turn out the lights in a cave far below Earth's surface. Thankfully we don't have to live in the darkness.

Let's use the lamp God has given us to light the path of our lives. Because without light we have no reference for where we are, or where we are going.

Psalm 119:105 – is a true picture of our path through a dark world.

When darkness settles down upon and all around us, the Word of God, like a flaming torch, or a lamp in the night, reveals our way. Thank God for His Word and live by it – for it casts light upon the path that leads to LIFE!