



# Elaine Bickel

Child of God ~ Servant of God's People

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## Daily Devotion

### The Light

Gary was not a person I spent much time with, but I cherished the moments I did spend with him. He was a wise man. He was a kind man. He cared about kids and what happened to them. He was willing to do whatever he could to make Christ's love real and understandable. I vividly remember the day Gary walked into my office to say he wanted to do whatever he could to help provide scholarships for financially challenged families who wanted to attend St. Paul Lutheran School. His idea for helping was a golf outing. He was willing to organize, promote and completely take responsibility for the outing. His children were raised, but he cherished the education they had received in our Lutheran School. He wanted to everyone to have access to the Gospel. The last time I spoke with Gary, we spoke only briefly about the golf outing. Mostly we spoke of his grandson, Bryan and of the happy prospect of a second grandchild. Gary was an elder in our church and the two of us were attending and the two of us were attending a meeting at a nearby congregation. Gary had offered me a ride home when plans changed for the person who had given me a ride to the meeting. As we drove along in Gary's sparkling clean gray Chevy Silverado that day I thought of how blessed Gary was. He had a wonderful wife. He had two intelligent, talented and respected grown children. Shortly, he would also have two grandchildren. Retirement was on the horizon. He was in good health. What more could a man want? Little did I know I would soon be notified of Gary's death. On his way to Florida to deliver baby furniture for his second grandchild, he stopped at a Day's Inn near Atlanta, Georgia because it was raining too hard for him to be safe to continue the drive. When Gary drove into the parking lot of that hotel, someone noticed he was alone. Someone noticed his nice truck. On July 2, just before midnight, Gary made his way to the front desk, paid his bill and headed to the truck to move his things into the room. Upon entering the room he was not able to locate the light switch. Finally he abandoned the search for the light switch near the door and headed for the light switch in the nearby bathroom. Since there were lights in the parking lot, Gary had left the door of his room open to help him find the restroom light. He found the light, turned it on, turned and looked into the eyes of the man who would take his life that night. Gary died 20 minutes after midnight. In a way, Gary died because he couldn't find the light fast enough. But the good news is the Light of the World had found Gary. Gary was never in the dark about the Light of the World. The Light of the World was his Best Friend. Gary was not alone that night. His Best Friend was with him. His Best Friend carried him home when all the world thought he was dead. Now, Gary is more alive than he has ever been. He might not be driving a Chevy Silverado, but he walks on streets of gold. He might not be with his beloved wife, Rosie, but they will be together forever one day. Thanks to Gary and Rosie's faithfulness, those grandchildren have parents who will raise them in Godly ways so they too will spend eternity in heaven. No one understands unjust murder better than God. He personally experienced it when His only Son died. No one understands darkness better than God. His Son's death was the darkest day in history. He bright love pierces the darkness and gives us hope in a hopeless world. Our hope is not in this world, but in the world to come. Our hope is not in health, wealth, family, retirement or grandchildren. Our hope is in God and God alone. "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light...have nothing to do with fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them...Be careful then, how you live—not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:8, 15-16. The prince of darkness is always trying to destroy us. satan (I refuse to capitalize his name even when it is at the beginning of a sentence) tries to discourage us. He shows us dark deeds and asks, "Where is your God?" While satan tries to taunt us with these words, God seeks to comfort us with those very same words in Psalm 42. The Psalmist writes, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me, 'Where is your God?'" Later in the Psalm we read, "I say to God, my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning oppressed by the enemy?' My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying all day long, 'Where is your God?' But the Psalmist does not stop there. He concludes with these God inspired words, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God." Make Light of satan's darkness! Sing praises to God in the darkest hours and you will find Him Lightening your burdens. He will carry your load. He will carry you. By God's grace we are blessed to know where the Light is and because of Jesus, the Light of the World, we will live forever where there will never be any darkness!

By Elaine Bickel