

Lighting Candles in the Darkness

“Let your light so shine, that people will see your good works and honor your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

*“I want you to know brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.”
(Philippians 1:12)*

The Christian faith is always one generation away from extinction. What keeps it going? What makes the next generation stand up for Christ, like those do in our generation?

One is the powerful influence of suffering Christians like Paul. He was awaiting trial before the mad-man Emperor, Nero, who loved to burn Christians alive to light his gardens.

He had two choices: Curse the darkness he was in or light a candle for the Lord. He lit a candle by witnessing to the soldiers who guarded him. No matter how dark the night or how hard the road, God always has people who stand up for Him and inspire us to do the same.

A minister from Atlanta told of an event in one of his first country churches. He said one cold, rainy night he traveled the long miles to his little church to have prayer meeting. Drenched to the bone and shivering with cold, he lit the fire and turned on the lights. The time came for prayer meeting and no one came.

The young preacher was filled with disappointment, which led to discouragement. He sat down in self-pity and thought of the poor grade of Christianity which could not spur people to endure a little rain. He thought to himself, “What’s the use? I may as well quit. I’m doing no good anyway.” His flame was going out. His faith was dwindling! His religion was fading away.

Now in that church, was a man who was terribly crippled. He could not walk a step but went everywhere in his wheel chair. And he went in style. For on that wheel chair he had a motor, a bell, and a light.

The young minister’s despondency was interrupted by a noise outside. He got up, went to the window and looked down the street. Through the rain, he could see the faint glimmer of one small headlight. And above the rain, he could hear the faint sound of a little bell. That crippled man was coming to prayer meeting.

The preacher opened the door and helped him in. They read the Bible together, bowed their heads together, and that minister said, “We had the best prayer meeting I have ever been in before or since.” My friends, the “Word of the Lord” came to that young preacher that night and it came in a wheelchair.

Jesus is the light of the world. We are like the moon, which has no light in and of itself. It reflects the light of the sun. We reflect the light of the “Son” of God.

Brightly beams our Father’s mercy
From His lighthouse ever more;
But to us, He gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.
Let the lower lights be burning!
Send a gleam across the wave!
Some poor, fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.

Before the days of electricity, a little boy looked out the window. He saw a lamplighter with a ladder, going one by one to street lights on Main Street and lighting them. The little boy was from a farm and had never seen anything like that before. He yelled, “momma and daddy, come over here and look. A man is out there punching holes in the darkness.”

When tragedies come our way, we have the unique opportunity to stand up for Christ and punch holes in the darkness. I promise you, people will take notice.

“The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us strength. He strengthens us in troubles, so we can share that same comfort with others in trouble. We share in the terrible sufferings of Christ and in the wonderful strength He gives.”
(2 Corinthians 1:3-4)