



“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

Lighthouses and the Bible

In one of the churches I was visiting, I had the pleasure of meeting the publisher of a magazine about lighthouses. He gave me a complimentary copy and I enjoyed it immensely. Like many Christians, I often see spiritual parallels with lighthouses, Jesus, and His church.

Jesus said, “I am come a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness” - John 12:46. Lighthouses were originally used to guide sailors to the harbor entrances. Likewise, Jesus is the light that guides and purchases our entrance into the safe harbor of God the Father’s loving arms.

The use of lighthouses was eventually expanded to include warning of navigational hazards in the water. Following the true beam of Jesus’ light also preserves us from the spiritual dangers of false ideologies and deception.

Jesus also likened His disciples to lights – “You are the light of the world,” and compared them to cities on a hill that can’t be hidden, and candlesticks that give light to all that are in the house, (Matthew 5:14,15).

Each believer whose heart has been set ablaze by the fire of God’s Word and His Spirit is like a lighthouse that shines for the welfare of those seeking spiritual shelter from the stormy turmoil of life in this temporal and unpredictable world.

In the early days before modern improvements and technical aids, lighthouse keeping was a dangerous and difficult occupation. The light had to be maintained continuously for the safety of the ships. Many lighthouse keepers, their families and their assistants lost their lives in the line of duty as hurricanes swept over the islands; and sometimes even poorly constructed towers would tumble into the sea in severe winds. The stories I read of their devotion to their work and the safety of others was truly inspiring. Lives were at stake, and they refused to abandon their posts.

Likewise, when I read about those in Jesus’ service who dedicate their lives to serve in the mission fields, and who are martyred for refusing to deny their Lord who gave His life for them, their stories fill me with inspiration and encouragement. These dedicated believers shine their lights in a darkened world, enduring unimaginable hardships to gather others into the safe shelter of faith in Christ.

All believers, no matter what capacity they are called to serve in, share the same glory for faithful obedience.

I read about a lighthouse keeper’s wife, Maria Bray, who had to take over her husband’s job when he could not return home because of a ferocious snow storm that descended upon the twin lights of Thatcher’s Island, Massachusetts in 1864. Maria had to climb one hundred and fifty-six stairs to maintain the light in the one tower, then trudge three hundred yards through howling winds and driving snow to repeat the same

service in the other tower, which she did for three days and nights. Just thinking about it makes me out of breath.

Then I ponder the lives of the circuit riders who faithfully mounted horses and rode long distances to minister to handfuls of souls in congregations scattered across the frontiers and wildernesses of the early days of America, shining their lights in spite of the various perils and hardships.

Today, many lighthouses are being decommissioned and are no longer needed because of the advent of modern navigational devices and automated replacements. Many of these unique and wonderful structures are being given away to non-profit organizations, or sold to individuals to be maintained as historical sites, or made over into restaurants and bed and breakfast inns. Those re-conditioned lighthouses are still serving a purpose, although their lights are no longer needed to direct sailors to safe harbors or warn them away from unseen perils in the sea. However, Christians can’t afford to allow themselves to be decommissioned, for as the days grow darker as the Bible predicts, their lights are needed even more desperately. Souls are drowning and need to see the light of Jesus, and lives are being shipwrecked without the steady beam of Truth that only the Christian can offer through Christ.

Like the lighthouse, our lights must beam continuously for the spiritual welfare of others, no matter how difficult it becomes to maintain that light. I think about the picture I saw of an aging sixty-something Asian pastor and his wife wading in the night down the middle of a creek, holding high a torch to light their way to minister to believers in a persecuted underground church. The image of the dedication of those lighthouses for Jesus challenges my complacency.

In Jesus’ parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) He recognizes those who have maintained the precious light of His Truth no matter how hard the storms of this life may have battered them. When Jesus comes again, He will gather to Himself all those lights of His that have shone so faithfully in His service and have never compromised their faith or denied their Savior. These are the lighthouses that He recognizes in the darkness that He rewards and restores to shine as glorious lights in His kingdom. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” – (Matthew 5:16).

Keep your lights shining brightly, children. Lives are at stake, we can’t afford to abandon our posts.



Purpose

...Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. – Titus 2:14

Contained within the Apostle Paul's letter to Titus, at the end of a sentence that is segmented into five verses; we are given the summation of the purpose of Jesus' sacrifice.

In the first verse of this sentence we are told that, "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (11). Then we are shown that His grace teaches us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, (12). Righteous living should be the natural response to the gospel. And while His grace works within us, we are keeping our eyes upon "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (13). This is the hope that keeps us walking upon the waters of this life; we walk with our eyes focused on the promise of Jesus' second coming.

Then in the last verse we learn that the purpose of our redemption from all iniquity is to "purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" (14). Out of all the darkness and evil that imprisons this world, it is God's intention that those who have responded to the gospel would be a special people set apart to shine as holy lights to glorify the God who redeemed them. Then as these lighthouses of hope, holiness and truth shine their beams across the turbulence that evil creates, those who are being tossed by tribulation, may see the light and desire to come to the shelter of its embrace.

When we understand the significance of our purpose; to be set apart by the righteousness that is formed within us through our union with the Lord, (for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), how can we bear to live in any way that would thwart God's purpose for our lives?

Too often believers forget that while we have been saved from sin and condemnation, the purpose of our redemption is to be purified from sin. God has made us righteous through faith in Jesus' atonement so we can have eternal life, but His Holy Spirit continues to make us holy so we can be the people God has intended us to be; conformed into the image of His son. We can't afford to allow the lights He has ordained us to become be diminished by the influences of the world around us.

Remember your purpose, children. Fight to maintain a holy witness for the Lord who loves you and died to save you. Resist through His Spirit, the lusts of your flesh that can keep your light from shining as brightly as it can be. The brighter your light shines, the greater your witness will be for the Lord. Let Him fulfill His purpose in your life and let His holy light in you become a bonfire.



Missionaries

I saw that a documentary about evangelical missionaries and their attempts to reach isolated people groups, produced a flurry of negative comments,- "Leave those people alone!" "Missionaries shouldn't be trying to change their cultures," etc.

People don't understand missionaries and why they do what they do, because they don't understand the Gospel.

When the body dies, the soul, which is the person of anyone, who they are, is released from the body. The soul cannot leave this dimension and enter heaven, God's dimension, unless the soul has been unified with the Holy Spirit, which is God's Spirit of eternal life. God put His Holy Spirit into the blood of Jesus because He is the only one holy enough to contain it. He died to remove our sins so we can receive the Holy Spirit of Eternal life when we believe that Jesus died for us and rose from the dead.

Bible prophecies are 100% accurate. Anyone who says they are not has never studied them. When the prophecies predicting the eventual destruction of the planet are fulfilled, the souls who have not been unified with the Holy Spirit will be trapped in an outer darkness. Jesus said that there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13,25:30).

Missionaries are motivated by the desire to save those souls and give them the opportunity to have eternal life by sharing the gospel. To them, they are on a lifesaving mission. Many of them have suffered tremendous losses of loved ones and material possessions in order to serve others.

Any legitimate missionary, no matter what denomination, isn't interested in getting people to join their particular religious organization, they only want to get people into the kingdom of God.

One can choose to reject the missionaries' message, but when we understand that they are trying to save lives for eternity, we can respect them for their work which is a labor of love.

If You need a Lift

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ – Ephesians 1:3

If you need a lift, spend a few moments out of your busy day and read the first chapter of the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. There you will be reminded that you are blessed (verse 3), chosen, (verse 4), adopted into God's family (verse 5) accepted (verse 6), redeemed and forgiven through the blood of the Messiah Jesus (verse 7), and someday you will be gathered with all your brothers and sisters in Christ out of this evil world into our promised secure haven of our Father God's loving embrace (verse 10).

We are reminded that no matter what losses befall us in this life, we have an incorruptible inheritance waiting for us in Heaven. Then read Paul's prayer for you (verses 17-19) and receive the wisdom to know that every word the Lord has written through him is true. Newsletter Copyright 2024 by H.D. Shively