**LET THE LORD LIGHT YOUR LAMP**

**PSALM 18:28**

 The thing that makes a candle what it is, is its ability to receive light, and by burning itself to transmit and share that light.

 God is the great light of this universe, and those that are even beyond ours.

 In fact the Bible states in I John 1:5, “*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*”

 That is the one great central fact which keeps mankind from despair,— the assurance that *at its heart* the universe is not dark but bright; it is bright with wisdom, bright with power, and bright with love. It is man's supreme blessing that he has this kinship with God.

 Yes, it is a dark world, but God’s light came penetrate the darkest cavern.

**I. LIGHT FOR THE SINNER**

 However dark his nature may have become through sin, our nature is still such a kind that *it can* be lighted from heaven's torch.

 There has never yet been discovered any man or any tribe of men who did not have this power or capacity to receive divine illumi­nation.

 This is sure evidence that God has made of one blood all that dwell on the face of the earth, and however *marred* or *hurt* or *darkened* by sin the souls of some may be; there is yet that in their nature *which may be* lighted up by the Spirit of God. **(ILLUS: take white candle and black candle and show that it doesn’t matter how *good* or *bad* you are God can still light your candle.)**

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 L.A. Banks tells the story of Tamil David from Ceylon, India. He was born in South India in 1853. His father was a mission agent, his mother was a school mistress who when she was young had worshiped idols. All his an­cestors had been idol worshipers. His father died when he was only two years old, and he was brought up by his mother till he was six­teen.

 He was a very self-willed, bad boy, and at sixteen *ran away* from India and drifted to Ceylon. There this little black runaway fell in with the very worst of people and became an adept in every evil way. He *drank* and *gam­bled* and *partied*. He became a bartender and was a liquor-seller for several years. He hardened his heart against everything he had known in his youth; for years he *would not answer* his mother's letters. But finally his mother, with the wonderful tenacity of a mother's love, got track of him and went to Ceylon in search of him, and *persuaded* him to go back to South India with her. After a while he was married. His wife had been converted to Christianity a little while before. She was a good woman and his love for her led him to salvation. One day she gave him Bunyan's “***Pilgrim’s Progress***,” and it got hold of his heart. His wife kept *praying* for him, and *conviction* seized upon his soul. One day he was walking along the street in Colombo, when suddenly his conscience spoke to him, so sharply that it was almost as clear as if he had heard a voice, “*David, David, you are wrong.*” He tried to silence the impression and forget it, but the conviction that he was wrong grew deeper and deeper. He said to himself, “*I am not wrong*,” but all the while he knew better, and it did not lift the burden from his heart. He went home and told his wife, and said: “*I am very, very sorry; my heart is breaking. What a wretched and miserable sinner I am!”*

 She said, “*Praise the Lord!*”

 He said: “I *tell you I am very miserable and you say,* ‘*Praise the Lord!*’ *What makes you say that?*”

 She replied, “*I know it is all right now. My Lord has answered my prayer.*”

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 David did not understand her, but said: “*What am I to do now? Tell me how I may get clear of this burden, this heavy load on my conscience. I can hardly breathe, I can't eat, I can't sleep. Please tell me the way.*”

 “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

 “*I know that, but what is it to ‘believe’?*”

 She did not know how to explain. She had the blessed experience, but she did not know how to explain it.

 David said: “*Is that all your creed? You don't know how to lead a poor sinner to Christ?*”

 She was very sorry, and cried because she could not help him.

 He found some tracts, and in one of them he saw a verse of Scripture which came home to his heart. It was from Paul's letter to the Romans: “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* (4:5)” The man who believes finds salvation; that was the message it brought to him. Then he got an­other verse from Isaiah, “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* (53:6)”

 The word “***hath***” caught his eye. Hath, hath, hath, hath!

 The Lord put this on his heart: “*David, on whom did the Lord lay iniquity?*” “*On Jesus.*”

“*Whose iniquity?*”

“*The iniquity of us all.*”

“*Are you one of that ‘all’?”*

“*Yes, I am one of that ‘all.’*”

“*If you are, where are your sins?*”

“*On Jesus.*”

“*Who put them there?*”

“*God put them there.*”

“*Whose sins?*”

“*David's sins.*”

“*On whom?*”

“*On Jesus.*”

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 As soon as he saw that his sins could not be on him and on Jesus at the same time, the thought came to him, “*If my* ***hat*** *is on the* ***peg*** *it cannot be on my head at the same time.*”

 That made it clear at once, and he said: “*Praise the Lord! God says it, I believe it, I have it!*” He went and told his wife. He said, “*I have got the truth; I have got Him.*”

 Then his mother was converted, and after­wards his brother and others of the family were saved. Everybody that lived in the house was converted, and they began to sing and pray and shout so much that the heathen man who lived next door said, “*Go and live somewhere else; we can't stand your shouting.*”

 But David was past making angry then. He said gently but rapturously, “*We may quit the house, but we can't give up praising the Lord.*”

 And what God did for Tamil David He is *ready* and *willing* to do for you.

 There is light for the sinner in Satan’s grip and in their sinful state, but there is also light for the saint who is *shriveled*, *sad*, *scared*, or *sorrowful*.

**II. LIGHT FOR THE SAINT**

 Even the children of the day sometimes need candlelight. In the darkest hour light will arise; our candle shall be lit by Heaven’s flame.

 David was saying here, “*Thou wilt revive and comfort my sorrowful spirit, and not leave me melancholy; thou wilt* ***recover*** *me out of my troubles and* ***restore*** *me to peace and prosperity; thou wilt* ***guide*** *my way, and make it plain before me, that I may avoid the snares laid for me; thou wilt light my candle to work by, and give me an opportunity of serving thee and the interests of thy kingdom among men.*”

 Some lady has said, “It had been one of those days on which everything goes contrary, and I had come home tired and

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discouraged. As I sank into a chair, I groaned, “*Everything looks dark, dark.*” “*Why don’t you turn your face to the light, auntie,*

*dear?*” said my little niece, who was standing unperceived beside me. “*Turn your face to the light!*” The word got me thinking. That was just what I had not been doing. I had persistently kept my face in the opposite direction, *refusing* to see the faintest glimmer of brightness. She did not know what healing she had brought. Years had gone by since then, but the simple words have never been forgotten, ‘*Turn your face to the light.*’”

 To turn to the light sometimes you have to turn from your *problems*, *circumstances*, and *situation*.

 Nature itself teaches us this.

 It is worth noting how plants and trees *turn to* the light; how bleached vegetation becomes if it be *shut up* in darkness.

 Sir James Wylie, late physician to the Emperor of Russia, attentively studied the effects of light as a curative agent in the hospital of St. Petersburg, and he discovered that the number of *patients* who were cured in rooms properly lighted was four times that of those confined in dark room. These different results are due to the agency of light.

 God is able to light your soul on fire!!! He is able to lift your spirit! HE IS ABLE TO LIGHT YOUR PATHWAY!

**III. FOR SERVICE**

 Matthew 5:14-16, “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*15 *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” **(GET A LOT OF CANDLES AND LIGHT THEM)**

 Proverbs 20:27, “*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*”

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 **The question is, are we lighted candles?** Away in the north there used to be a lighthouse that has no light at all in it; but yet it shined, because a light that burned upon the shore reflected into the lantern far out at sea. All very well for the lantern, but it will not do for us; we must have the light *within* ourselves.

 **But we cannot light ourselves.** Jesus must light up our souls by giving us His Spirit, and when He does this then we can give light *to others* and get more light *from Him*. If He does this for us we must continue burning. Jesus desires this, and also that we should burn properly.

 George Whitfield said he hoped he “*should die blazing, and not go off as a snuff.*” And remember that our lighted candle may light another candle, and yet have as much light as it had before.

 God uses one soul to help and bless another soul. In the diary of Thomas Carlyle there was a sketch of a candle that burned as it wasted. Underneath Carlyle had written, “*May I be wasted, so I be of use.*”

**CON:** Now there is one thing to which I specially desire to call your attention, and that is that the candle, in order to receive the light from the *match*, or the *lighter*, or the *torch*, must yield itself to the light. There is no way to shine except by burning ourselves.

 Though we were created as the candles of the Lord, we have the power to refuse to give our hearts up to be lighted by heaven's fire. Indeed, we may, if we are foolish and wicked enough to do it, *lend* our hearts to be lighted by the devil’s fire (PETER), and *give forth* a sinister flame that will make the darkness deeper not only for *ourselves* but for *every one* who is influenced by us.

 It is a sol­emn and awful reality that we have the power even to thwart Almighty God in his efforts for our salvation and blessings. God will not forcibly take our candle and light it at the heavenly fire. We must yield it to His hands through our own decision.

 L.A. Banks once heard Mr. Moody relate that at the close of a meeting one evening in Chicago, he inquired: “*Are there any here who would like to have me remember them in*

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*prayer? I would like to have them rise!*” A man arose, and when he saw him stand up, Mr. Moody said his heart leaped in him for joy. He had been anxious for this man for a long time. He went to him as soon as the meeting was over, and took him by the hand, and said: “*You are coming out for God, are you not?*”

“*I want to*,” he replied, “*and I have made up my mind to be a Christian, only there is one thing stands in my way.*”

 “*What is that?*”

“*Well, I lack moral courage.*” Naming a friend of his he said, “*If he had been here to­night I should not have risen and I am afraid when he hears I have risen for prayer he will begin to laugh at me, and I won't have the moral courage to stand up for Christ.*”

Moody said, “*If Christ is what he is repre­sented in the Bible, he is worth standing up for; and if heaven is what we are told it is in the Bible, it is worth our living for.*”

He said, “*I lack moral courage.*” And the man was trembling from head to foot.

 Moody thought that he was just at the thresh­old of the kingdom of heaven and that one step more was going to take him in, and that he would take the step that night. He talked and prayed with him, and the Spirit seemed to be striving mightily with him, but he did not yield his candle to receive God's light. Night after night he came to the meetings, and the Spirit still strove with him; but just that one thing kept him back — he lacked moral cour­age. At last the Spirit of God, who had striven with him so mightily, seemed to leave him, and there was no more striving. He *left off* com­ing to the church, was off among his old com­panions, and would not meet Moody in the street; he was ashamed to do so.

About six months afterward Mr. Moody got a message from him, and found him on what he thought to be his dying bed. He wanted to know if there was any hope for him at the eleventh hour. Moody tried to tell him there was hope for any man who would accept Christ. He prayed with him, and day after day he visited him.

 Contrary to all expectations, he began to recover; and when he was convalescent, find­ing him one day sitting in front

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of his house, he sat down by him and said, “*You will soon be well enough to come up to the church, and when you are, you will come up; and you are just going to confess Christ boldly, are you not?*”

 “*Well*,” said he, “*I promised God, when I was on what we thought to be my dying bed, I would serve him; and I made up my mind to be a Christian; but I am not going to be one just now. Next spring I am going over to Lake Michigan, and I am going to buy a farm and settle down. And then I am going to be a Christian.*”

 Moody said, “*How dare you talk in that way! How do you know you are going to live till next spring? Have you a lease of your life?*”

 He said, “*I was never better than I am now; I am a little weak, but I will soon have my strength. I have a fresh lease of my life, and will be well for a good many years yet.*”

 Moody said, “*It seems to me you are tempt­ing God.*” And he pleaded with him to come out boldly.

 “*No,*”he said. “*The fact is, I have not the courage to face my old companions, and I can­not serve God in Chicago.*”

 The evangelist said, “*If God has not grace enough to keep you in Chicago, he has not grace enough to keep you in Michigan.*” With all the energy of his soul he urged him then and there to surrender himself completely to the Lord Jesus, but the more he urged the more irritated the man got, till at last

He said, “*Well, you need not trouble yourself any more about my soul; I will attend to that. If I am lost, it will be my own fault. I will take the risk.*”

 Moody left him. Within a week a message came from the man's wife. Going to the house he met her at the door, weeping. He said, “*What is the trouble?*”

 “*Oh, sir, I have just had a council of physi­cians here, and they have all given my husband up to die; they say he cannot live.*”

 Moody asked, “*Does he want to see me?*”

She replied, “*No*.”

 “*Why did you send?*”

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 “*Why*,” she said, “*I cannot bear to see him die in this terrible state of mind.*”

 “*What is his state of mind?*”

 “*Why, he says that his damnation is sealed, and he will be in hell in a little while.*”

 Mr. Moody went into the room, but when the sick man saw who it was he turned his head away.

 Moody gently inquired, “*How is it with you?*”

 Not a word; he was as silent as death.

 He spoke the second time, but the sick man made no response.

 Moody bent over him and looked him in the face and called him by name, and said, “*Will you not tell me how it is with you?*”

 He turned, and fixed an awful deathly look upon him and, pointing to the stove, he said, “*My heart is as hard as the iron in that stove; it is too late, my damnation is sealed, and I shall be in hell in a little while.*”

 Moody said, “*Don't talk so, you can be saved now if you will.*”

 He replied, “*Don't mock me, I know better.*”

 Mr. Moody talked with him, and quoted promise after promise from God's Word, but he said not one was for him. Said he: “*Christ has come knocking at the door of my heart many a time, and the last time he came I prom­ised to let him in, and when I got well I turned away from him again, and now I will have to perish without him.*”

 When Moody saw he could do no good talk­ing, he fell on his knees by the bed.

 The sick man said, “*You can pray for my wife and children; you need not pray for me; it is a waste of your time, it is too late.*”

 Moody tried to pray, but it seemed as if what the man said was true — it seemed as if the heavens were brass over him. He rose at last and took the man's hand, and it seemed to him that he was bidding farewell to a friend that he never was to see again in time or in eternity.

 He lingered till the sun went down, and with the day his life went out in darkness. The wife told Mr. Moody that the

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end was ter­rible. All that he was heard to say after the evangelist left him were these fearful words: “*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.*” There he lay, and every little while he would take up again the awful lamentation, “*The harvest is passed, the sum­mer is ended, and I am not saved.*” And just as the sun was sinking behind those western prairies, he was going into the arms of death. As he was expiring, his wife noticed that his lips were quivering, he was trying to say some­thing, and she bent her ear down to catch the last whispered words, and all she could hear was, “*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.*” **He died with those words on his lips.**

 God save any one here from making that awful mistake! This man might have had the light of God, but he would not yield himself to be the candle of the Lord. The same precious opportunity comes to you tonight. How are you going to deal with your opportunity?

 **It is time to quit promising and time to start acting.**

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