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Shining the Light of God's Word in the Capitol Psalm 119:105

West Virginia is blessed with many caves which many people enjoy exploring. In June of 1990, Gary Lutes decided to take his two sons, ages 13 and 9, caving in New Trout cave located in Pendleton County. Though an avid, experienced caver, he broke several cardinal rules on the trip which nearly led to disaster. His greatest mistake was a failure to let anyone know of his plans to enter the cave. One of the most important rules of caving is that each member of the party must carry three sources of light. Gary was carrying all the spare carbide, water, and alternate light sources in a single pack. During their exploration, he set the pack down to negotiate a tight spot. Inexplicably, their lights began to fail, and they had trouble finding the pack. One by one the lights went out and the explorers found themselves stranded in the pitch dark. Since Lutes had not informed friends or family of his intent, it took a couple of days to determine they were missing. A neighbor noticed the car near the cave entrance and finally notified authorities. 5 ½ days later rescuers finally entered the cave expecting to find dead bodies. Amazingly, Gary and his sons were alive, though suffering from dehydration and hypothermia. This account vividly points out the importance of a dependable source of light in such a severe environment.

In a spiritual sense, the world in which we live is a dangerous and treacherous place. Without a guide to give us clear and sure direction, we are bound to fall into any number of life's pitfalls that confront us. It is this guidance and direction of which Psalm 119:105 speaks:

Your Word is lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.

Before we study this verse, let us read this section of this Psalm extolling the wonders of God's Word:

Nun

*105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.*

*106 I have sworn and I will confirm it,
That I will keep Your righteous ordinances.*

*107 I am exceedingly afflicted;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.*

*108 O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,
And teach me Your ordinances.*

*109 My life is continually in my hand,
Yet I do not forget Your law.*

*110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.*

*111 I have inherited Your testimonies forever,
For they are the joy of my heart.*

*112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, even to the end.*

THE PRACTICAL PROVISION OF THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD

Our verse compares God's Word to a "lamp" and a "light". In a day when there were no streetlights and all travel was done on foot, a good light would have been essential for any journey. The Bible often speaks of the spiritual realm in terms of "light" and "darkness". This is particularly true of

the Apostle John. In chapter 1 of his gospel he writes: **"In Him (Christ) was life, and life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."** (1:1-2); **"There was the true light, which, coming into the world enlightens every man."** (1:9). John goes on to record Jesus' own words in 8:12, **"Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."**

The world in which we live is indeed like a dangerous cave or a treacherous wilderness. Without a guide to give us clear direction, we are bound to fall into any number of pitfalls that await us. This guide, God's Word, is the "lamp" and "light" of which the Psalmist writes. In that day some would wear a small oil lamp strapped to their ankle to provide illumination when walking at night. God has provided the light we need to guide us in our lives. The term "Path" points to the general direction we travel leading to an ultimate destination. Referring to "Feet" helps us realize God has given direction for every step of our lives, the attitudes, actions, and choices we make daily. Let us consider how God has provided light for life's journey in His Word.

The Light of God's Word Provides Direction

On a journey at night a light is essential to show us the direction we must travel to reach our destination. God has given us His Word to show us how we must live if we are to reach the end of life's journey safely. This is true of our salvation and our eternal destination. The Word of God is **"...able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."** (2 Timothy 3:15). The Scriptures reveal to us there are two destinations,

heaven and hell. The Word makes it clear that each and every one of us has sinned and broken God's law so that we are under His wrath and judgment. The Bible vividly describes those who are without Christ as "spiritually blind". (1 John 2:11; 2 Cor. 4:3-4). Those who reject the gospel are declared to be "in darkness" (Eph 5:8; 1 John 2:8-9; Col 1:13). Yet we also find that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, "**Who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**". (2 Cor. 5:21). When we turn to Christ in repentance and faith, at the Cross our sin is laid upon Him and His righteousness is given to us, and our eternal destination is changed. At this point we are "**rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son**" (Col. 1:13). Many seek salvation on many other paths, but the light of God's Word reveals to us this is the only "path" that leads to heaven.

After pointing us to the way of salvation, God's Word also shows how we are to live in a way that is pleasing to God. In the Scriptures we find commands and principles which will guide in the decisions, trials, and challenges we face on a daily basis. Paul encourages us, "You were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." (Eph. 5:8-19). John also challenges us that "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

The Light of God's Word Provides Correction

A good light will show us when we have strayed from the trail and how to get back on the right path. God's Word will show us when we have strayed from His way and what we must do to make things right. When we sin God will use His Word to work in our hearts to convict us and show us where we have sinned. (1 John 1:9). Paul describes this practical provision of God's Word in 2 Timothy 3:16:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...

God's Word is profitable for teaching; it shows us path we are to follow. It is profitable for reproof; it warns us when we are off the path. It is profitable for correction; it shows us how to get back on the right path. And it is profitable for training in righteousness; it shows us how to stay on the path and successfully complete the journey.

The Light of God's Word Provides Comfort

It is probably human nature to not really like the dark. There may be nothing worse than being lost in the dark. What a comfort when in the dark to have a good dependable light to show the way. I can only imagine the comfort and relief Gary Lutes experienced when he saw the lights of his rescuers. We all face "dark" times in our lives. Illness, trials, financial setbacks, or family difficulties can be dark and discouraging periods in our lives. But in the Word, we learn that no matter what comes in life, the child of God has a mighty, loving, Heavenly Father Who is at work in and through every situation. This is a light that can bring comfort in the most difficult of times. (See Genesis 50:19-20; Romans 8:28)

THE PERSONAL RESPONSE TO THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD

Though God has provided light to the world through Jesus Christ and through the Bible, many choose to reject the light. Jesus Himself pointedly spoke of this:

19"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." John 3:19-21

Each of us must examine our response to the light of God's Word. Are we seeking the light of God's Word which He has provided for us? Do we believe what the Scriptures have to say about our eternal destiny and God's claims upon our lives?

CONCLUSION

Gary Lutes' trip almost ended in tragedy because he lost the light needed for that dangerous journey. How can we make sure we use God's Word as a lamp and a light for our lives? How do we "shine the light of God's Word" on our lives and in the capitol? The rest of Psalm 119 gives us the answer. We read of the desire to read, study, know, and understand God's Word. We see the commitment to apply God's Word to life. We are challenged by the pleas for God's help to understand and follow the Scriptures.

Let us seek to constantly shine the light of God's word on every area of our lives.

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

Thursdays, 12:00 PM

Senate President's Conference Room