

THE LOWER LIGHTS

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"Brightly beams our Father's mercy
from the lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping
of the lights along the shore."

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YOU NEED JESUS

Are you interested in hearing the gospel of Jesus? If not, perhaps it is because you do not see that you need what Jesus is able to supply. Follow me through John's account of the life of Jesus and I will show you how He is the answer to all that is lacking in your life. Jesus is:

Water for your thirst (Jn 4:7-15): A woman of Samaria made the same long trip day after day to draw water from Jacob's well. When Jesus offered her water which would forever quench her thirst, she jumped at the chance. Immediately, she asked Him to give her some of that water. But, Jesus was speaking of a lasting spiritual satisfaction, which man cannot find on his own, as his sin constantly mars his relationship with God, robbing him of all joy and peace, leaving him forever "thirsty". You need to drink Jesus' living water.

Bread for your hunger (Jn 6:35-63): Jesus miraculously gave bread, which the ancients called "the staff of life", to 5000 men (and women and children besides) to show them that He is the "bread of life". He said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." Many of His disciples forsook Him after this statement. They thought He meant that they must literally eat His body and drink His blood. He meant rather that men must partake of His sacrifice on the cross if they are to enjoy spiritual life, an eternal relationship with God. You need to eat this Bread.

Light for your blindness (Jn 9, cp. 8:12, 3:19-21): A blind man who Jesus cured could see what the Pharisees refused to see. He told these "blind" men, "Here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes."

But the Pharisees put him out of the synagogue, choosing to ignore the obvious, that Jesus is the "light of the world". He provides all who *want* to see with the spiritual understanding necessary to examine themselves to make sure that their actions are approved by God. You need this Light.

A Shepherd for your guidance and protection (Jn 10): Men who live their lives as they please are like sheep which, when left to themselves, will graze on the same spot until there is nothing left. Jesus promises that if men follow His leadership they will not find themselves in the ruts caused by the destructive habits of sin, but will find pasture and an abundant life. If men will, as sheep, only listen to the Shepherd's voice, He will also protect them from "strangers" and "wolves" of false teachers who would destroy them. You need this Shepherd.

Resurrection for your body (Jn 11): Jesus raised Lazarus after he had been dead for four days, proving His claim that He is "The Resurrection and the Life". Man needs hope. In the middle of life's struggles, He needs to know that this life is not all there is. He needs to know that death will not end his relationship with God, but that, through the power of Jesus, he will be able to truly have "eternal life", an eternal relationship with God. You need the hope of this Resurrection.

Do you see your need for Jesus? I hope that thinking about your need for Jesus has sparked an your interest in His gospel. **Shannon Shaffer of Greenwood, IN will be with the church from September 23-28 to preach the gospel of Jesus. Shannon will be speaking Sunday at 10 AM and Monday-Friday at 7:30 PM. Won't you join us?**

A FREE GIFT!!

The title of this article probably caught your eye. The advertising industry recognizes the appeal of the word "free" and uses it to much advantage.

If the church were to offer a "free" new car to everyone who came to worship next Sunday, we would not be able to hold all the people. How tragic it is that something of much greater value, not that we have to offer, but that God offers, is not even given consideration by most- "the free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

It is impossible to begin to understand, much less appreciate, the "free gift" which God has offered without first seeing man's need for it. All of us have sinned and are deserving of death (having our relationship with God forever ended- Rom 3:23, 6:23). We can't repay God for what we have done to Him so that we can enjoy His fellowship (Mt 18:24).

Out of God's great love, Jesus died for us, paying the debt that we could not pay, giving us life (an eternal relationship with God- Rom 5:5-11). This story illustrates the high cost of this "free gift":

In the summer of 1937, John Griffith, the controller of a great railroad bridge which spanned the Mississippi River, took his eight year old son, Greg, with him to work. At noon, John put the bridge up for some on-coming ships. Then he led Greg to the observation deck to eat lunch.

Soon John was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He had forgotten the

1:07 express for Memphis. He raced back to the control tower. Just as he was about to pull the lever to close the bridge, he caught a glimpse of a horrifying sight - his son had fallen from the observation deck into the great gears that operated the bridge.

There was no time to free Greg. What to do? If John pulled the lever, he would crush his son between four tons of grinding steel. But, four hundred people were on the train headed for the river!

John heaved the lever of massive gears. The Memphis Express thundered across the bridge. With tear-filled eyes, John looked into the windows of the passing train. Businessmen were reading newspapers, conductors were looking at their pocket-watches, ladies were sipping coffee, while children pushed long spoons into dishes of ice cream. In agony, John cried out to the train, "I sacrificed my son for you! Don't you even care!" Nobody heard.

God, who sacrificed His Son by the horrible death of crucifixion so that men might live (1 Pet 1:1:18-19, 2:24), must many times cry out to earth, "I sacrificed My Son for you! Don't you even care!" So many are living without thought and without appreciation of God's free gift. His gift is conditional. To receive it, men must respond in faith by obeying Jesus' gospel (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 16:26). Sadly, most fail to respond, choosing to live as they please and to receive the wages for their sins one day in hell, rather than let Jesus pay what is due for them (Rom 6:23). Don't *you* turn down God's free gift!!