

A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered Down

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

Lighthouse 2021

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. —John 8:12

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. —1 John 1:7

Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path. —Psalm 119:105

At Christmas we received a delightful gift for the house. It is a small decorative piece, a lighthouse, and yes, it lights up! This is a great item for this New Year season as it continues to offer brightness after the Christmas lights have been stowed away, and heaven knows we need all the light we can get this time of year. We Christians love the light for it is a symbol of Christ our light and life. All through the Scriptures God is revealed as encompassed by light, and this image resonates deep within us, for it is the Light of Christ which brings us a bright joy in this dark and downcast world. It is the glowing love of Jesus which gives us much needed warmth in this cold world of sin and loneliness. How beautiful the Light, and may your 2021 be a year full of light and hope which only Christ can give.

The lighthouse has long been a cherished and celebrated symbol of hope, but there is a certain twist to this story. A number of houses in my neighborhood have lighthouses displayed on their lawns, and this is intended as a celebration of our hope in Christ the Light. Countless churches and ministries across our country have chosen a name which includes the mention of lighthouse, as they seek to be a beacon of life and hope in their communities. One would suppose that a sailor would see a lighthouse as a sign of hope as it may be a first visual indication that they are approaching the shore. The kicker in this line of thinking, however, is that while one may view a lighthouse as a sign of hope, one would not want to steer their ship too closely toward that lighthouse! There is a big difference between a lighthouse beacon and the harbor lights, and one could say that the primary purpose of a lighthouse is to be a *repelling* light!

All this is said not to condemn the lighthouse as a modern Christian symbol or to urge folks to steer away from ministries with the word lighthouse in their title, and this cautionary purpose of the lighthouse is not alien to the Light as we find it presented in the Scriptures. The psalmist famously said, *Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path*, and here we find the Light of God presented in a cautionary way. A lantern or flashlight leads a traveler to safe footing by illuminating and warning

against jutting rocks, ruts and other troubles. Though warning us and steering us away from dangers, the Light ultimately serves a very positive purpose. In this New Year may the Light of Christ light our path, and keep us aware and diligent in the face of troubles ahead.

Let us pray for Light in 2021, and may this joyful radiance sustain us and give us joy. May this same light illuminate the dangerous rocks and reefs which will always be near. This is being touted as the year of great hope, and though the vaccine is on its way we still have a lot of virus to manage. This battle ain't over yet, and in the meantime may God reveal to us the looming dangers of depression, discouragement, worry and the self-centered kind of survival attitude which can so easily seize us. As the Light of Christ illuminates the dangers, may that same light strengthen us to resist the dangerous currents and to keep steering toward safe waters and secure harbors.

The lighthouse is shining brightly at our house. I am grateful for this gift and pray that this same beautiful and multi-purposed light is shining brightly in yours.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

May we all live in the peace that comes from you. May we journey towards your city, sailing through the waters of sin untouched by the waves, borne serenely along by the Holy Spirit. Night and day, may we give you praise and thanks, because you have shown us that all things belong to you, and all blessing are gifts from you. To you, the essence of wisdom, the foundation of truth, be glory for evermore. —Clement of Alexandria, 150-250