

Father of Lights

by

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A tale of Illumined Nations

TEXT

- James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow, or turning."
- John 1:4,5 "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."
- Genesis 1:3,4 "God said, "let there be light", and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good."
- Proverbs 4:18 "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."
- Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."
- Matthew 5:14 "Ye are the Light of the world."
- Luke 11:35 "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness".
- Ephesians 5:13 "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for what ever makes manifest is light."
- John 5:35 "He was a burning and a shining light: and you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."
- John 12:36 "While ye have light, believe in the light that ye may be the children of Light."
- Ephesians 5:8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as Children of Light."

## Father Of Lights

"And Maka sat in a circle with the other students teaching them saying, 'There once was a man who was in the dark. He stumbled in the darkness. He fell against something hard, a pole. His hands felt the smooth surface. How frustrated he was! How he hated the darkness! In his fury he smashed his head against the pole. His limp body sagged to the ground. Another man came stumbling in the darkness. He too found the pole. "Surely this is an omen from God," he thought. By carefully examining the pole he discovered a switch. "What can this be," he wondered? He flicked the switch, nothing happened. The man was so angry he too threw himself against the pole and died. A third man bumped into the pole. "What can this be?" he questioned. He marveled at the smooth surface, and soon found the switch. With a deft click he threw the switch. . . again nothing happened. "Perhaps if I climb UP the pole." He began to pull himself up the pole. Ten feet. Fifteen feet, still nothing. At fifty feet, just as he began to slide back down he came to an immense glass globe. He felt the the globe with his hands. As he pulled away he noticed there was something inside the globe. He began furiously rubbing the glass. Soon he was engulfed with a blinding light. He finished the job and climbed back down to the now lit up surface. He was living in a beautiful garden, a group of people surrounded him saying, "You are the light bringer, the chosen one." To which the man replied, "I am not the light. I just wanted to SEE THE LIGHT."

There are over forty references to God being like LIGHT in the Bible. Do you know what light is? NOONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT LIGHT IS!! Did you know that? Scientist still wonder if it is tiny Photons (little light particles), extremely fast waves, or a combination of both. LIGHT is and was the first three in one. For God is the Father of Lights. Are you familiar with Kirlian photography? It was invented by a Russian. He supercharges a metal plate then makes an image from the electromagnetic radiations of our body. We glow in a very real sense. The spectrum of visible light is actually quite small. Under certain theories Xrays and Sound waves are actually light waves slowed down. So WHAT?! So something we take for granted we have no idea about. Something absolutely critical to our being, without light there can be no plant life. Without plants all the animals die---and we're next. We do not SEE the light, we are the light.

Where there is light there can be no darkness. I believe Jesus saw Darkness as BAD ATTITUDE. Doing things because we feel we HAVE to rather than WANT TO. Jesus is the Light of the World. We SEE things because of him. We see other's suffering, as well as the beauty He created. We are like a giant light pole in the darkness. Many have light bulbs but they're not screwed in tight. Others have let their shades get so dirty no light can get through. A few allow God's glory to shine through them. The more transparent, the more light. The less we think in terms of 'us and them' and more like HIM the brilliance becomes dazzling. The Pharasies were interested in making their lamps very ornate and beautiful. They put so much cover around the light that their temples became gloomy. THEY WERE GLOOMY. Their light was DARKNESS.

There has to be a difference about the Christian way. We have to shine. We do not have a choice. If there is light in us, we must radiate. What if there is low energy? How do we 'pump ourselves up?' By being quiet. Making the monkey chatter in our heads stop, for just a few seconds. Think on His divine lumination. His light that pierces every pore and cell of your body. We also see His Light in ACTION. Light is not only a particale, it is a motion. An EMOTIONAL experience. Does God make you FEEL GOOD? Should He have to? He wants His children to walk in the Light. If his Children are happy they are walking in the Light. If they are grumbling whiners. 'some other timers' they are stumbling into poles in the DARK.

A Christian cannot stumble in the DARKNESS. The Christian is a Mighty Pole of Light! But if he is dirty others will stumble into him. Other seekers. Yet these are purely by chance. No one bumps into a pole in the Dark ON PURPOSE. Pain hurts. They stand accused, we, the mighty light poles abuse them. "See our strong, smooth surface, see how finely we are crafted. See how we are not damaged by your thin skinned body." The ironic fact is they CAN NOT SEE!! When it is DARK our eyes do not function! Unless we illuminate the whole area with our GodLove spirit, we will be more HAZARD than HELP.

Is it better to be a burned out light bulb than no light bulb at all? The true fact is our LIGHT BULB will BURN OUT. We are going to DIE. We cannot be turned on again. We have a LIMITED time on this planet. Are we living in such an habitual groove that we are blind to HIS LIGHT all around us? I've nearly been killed twice. It's not fun to think, "I'm getting ready to die." It's scary. Both times my fragile BULB was spared. I don't know why, I just know HE DID. I live because HE WANTED ME TO. It was his power that saved my life.

He loves me. He wants me to be SHINY. To resonate with his light.

I believe we can keep our bulbs clean, but once they're dirty---someone else has to help clean us off. Have you ever been in a house where all the light bulbs are dim? The people living there have GOTTEN USED TO THE DARKNESS. They've forgotten what it's like to live in a BRIGHT ENVIRONMENT. As the glass shade darkens, we begin looking through ever darker lenses. As we allow less light to escape, the more difficult it becomes for the searchers. Those who have never heard much less seen of the light. Who will clean our bulbs? Jesus is THE ace Maintenance Man. Why do you think He was a carpenter? No one can keep Him out of the house. Bolts and locks are easily unscrewed or cut through. He knows how to FIX THINGS. The ironic part is, as it gets darker we forget there was even a need for light in the first place. We do things by feel. . . if it feels good, we must be going in the right direction. OF course those in that state have to feel the broken bottles, just to make sure they're there. They get cut, bad luck---it really wasn't my fault. It seems pretty light in here to me.

Light is relative. But LIGHT IS LIGHT. How much light is up to us. We will be completely full but just giving off a dim glow. I hate the concept of 'carnal Christianity'. It's such a NON SEQUITOR. How can Spirit be CARNAL---material? It just doesn't follow. It's like someone saying, "turn off all the lights----it's too DARK IN HERE!" But we TRY to be GOOD! It's not OUR FAULT? Then whose fault is it when we hurt somebody's feelings? Did you know that 75% of communication is derived from TONE OF VOICE? We can say the right things in a very wrong way. The tongue is like a shotgun blasting light poles. How quickly it can snuff another's light. "You mean you don't read your Bible EIGHT HOURS A DAY like WE DO? Oh you poor pathetic excuse of a Christian you are. Please don't rub off on my spiritual perfection. God must look on this and want to gag. How much is ENOUGH? When will we be PERFECT like HE is? When we start thinking less ME and more HE. We think we are SO GOOD, we don't even notice it's getting so DARK we can't even see the end of our NOSE!

Have you ever wondered why we even had to have light? Without Darkness we would not even

know there could be a lack of light. God is no DUMMY. He knows there is plenty of evil in the world. LUCIFER means Angel of LIGHT! He was the most beautiful--and he knew it. But his was a BLACK LIGHT that did not illumine. It made things glow with an UNNATURAL LIGHT. And God threw him out, even though for the most part he wasn't all THAT bad. Don't you see!? We act as bad as Satan did! He tried to KICK GOD OUT! When we flood ourselves with darkness the light cannot stay. When we are not aware of anything unless it directly benefits US, we are a candle under a bushel of our own desires.

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James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights, with who is no variableness, neither shadow, or turning."

What is a gift? Do we EARN gifts? Do we PAY for gifts? No! But can we ASK for gifts? I think we can. Our Father is the ultimate in consistency. As we study the apostles we discover that many had 'up and down' spiritual growth. God is ALWAYS on the UP AND UP! He is the great SON that we REFLECT. Many people on first learning of Astronomy are amazed that the Stars are not UP but OUT! There are Stars all around us, not just over our heads. Stars are even BELOW US! I think many Christians believe that Heaven is UP and Hell is down. The Kingdom of Heaven is WITHIN US. It is a KINGDOM of light. God does not CHANGE. He is not suddenly going to decide he doesn't LIKE US ANYMORE. He is not going to take back his dying for you. But LIGHT can not go through wall. Unless it's a LASER. If God is REALLY inside of you, HE will BLAST HIS WAY OUT if necessary. Of course that's pretty hard on the bulb. . It might also hurt INNOCENT <sup>BY</sup> STANDERS. One of my favorite lines of poetry is by Dylan Thomas. His father was dying of Cancer. He wrote a piece for him. The last lines are "Rage, rage against the dying of the light." Just as I was nearly killed, I raged against the dying of MY LIGHT. This life, his light, is precious to me because I know LIFE IS THE PERFECT GIFT and it is FROM ABOVE.

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John 1:4,5 "IN Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Light was a NATURAL BYPRODUCT of Jesus' life. He didn't have to think, "Hmmm, I think I'll shine a little bit today---it's Saturday, time to go to church. Why not?" No Way! Jesus was a BEACON not a FRIGERATOR LIGHT. He didn't close his door and GO OUT! When I was in high school two things or phrases influenced me greatly, one was 'do your best,' the other was 'the DARKNESS makes you scared.' If I was AFRAID to talk to a certain person about Jesus, it was the Dark side of me that made me scared. I was afraid I might bump into something HARD while I was wandering around in the dark. Maybe they wouldn't LIKE me any more. Do YOU get ANYTHING out of CHRISTIANITY? ANYTHING at all that you consider IMPORTANT? Or is it all LINES AND BLUFF to you? What a clever actor we can be. How we have EVERYBODY fooled. We've even almost CONVINCED OURSELVES! The Pharisees certainly had. Paul was convinced he was doing God a BIG FAVOR by hacking all these GODLESS CHRISTIAN BLASPHEMERS into tiny pieces. How GOOD He thought he was! There are stories of men being trapped for days or weeks in caves without any light. When they finally reach the surface they must be

extremely cautious of even the faintest flashlight otherwise they will be permanently blinded. Saul as he journeyed down the road was confident of his great 'light'. Yet when his eyes flashed on the REAL THING he was knocked down with blindness. It wasn't that he couldn't see before, he just realized how blind he really was! Imagine being God's best buddy, or so you imagine, then suddenly having this dramatic revelation that you are actually ABUSING GOD! That he isn't particularly 'choked up' about the "supremo job" you thought you'd been doing. Now everybody knew that there wasn't a person who took religion more seriously than SAUL! And he was even a ROMAN CITIZEN, a member of the most powerful nation on the earth. Everyone (except the early Christians) just knew this was a priest heading for the 'big time'. "See how faithfully he reads the Torah, See how much time he spends working with the Rabbi, See how he loves to kick those CHRISTIANS! I tell you Jahweh must be very proud indeed of Saul of Tarsus." God revealed a small fraction of his glory and Saul was driven to his KNEES. Reduced to the status of a helpless BABY. Our eyesight is the most highly developed sense in the Human Body. Nearly 30% of our brain is related to vision. We process over 500,000 bits of information from our eyes EVERY SECOND! Saul must have been truly humbled. The road was rough and rocky. He must have stumbled many times. "watch to your left Saul. More to the right. Be careful. . . . here let me help you up." What good did all his knowledge of the Bible do him then? He knew the scripture, but HE COULD NOT SEE.

Whatever is not Light is DARKNESS! There is no middle ground, no 'half-particles' of light. They are completely different. One sees the glass half full, the other half empty. It is the same glass. In the darkness we cannot fathom the garden of delight, the Kingdom of Heaven around us. The darkness cannot imagine what it would be to be LIGHT. It has not the foggiest reason why these Christians are so happy. By their LOVE shall they be known. Do we let our night light, our veritable LOVELIGHT shine? For God is LOVE, a BEACON of AFFECTION. We must be known for our RIGHT SPEECH. OUR RIGHT ACTIONS. For our faith is shown in our ACTIONS not in our faith alone.

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Genesis 1:3,4 "God said, "let there be light", and there was light. And God saw the Light that it was good."

It is God's choice that we have light. God didn't need the light. He can see in the Darkness. He even knows what's going on in HELL. He sent the light because of us. If we were all perfect like Jesus is He wouldn't have had to be nailed on a cross with big blunt nails. Do you feel responsible for the bad things that you do? Even if they're only 'little things'---like teasing somebody about their age, or height or weight. . . . Jesus said if we offend the law in just the tiniest bit, we are guilty of all. Jesus would not have had to die if it wasn't for the bad things I DID. I am responsible for his death. I was hammering in the nails. I was yelling for his head---who does he think he is anyway?! I was mad at him! Yeah, put him up on that cross, it'll serve him right" Yeah but what did HE do?" Well I'm not sure, but it must have been hideous or our most holy HIGH priests wouldn't be so mad at him.

Religious people are mad at EVERYBODY. Moslems are extremely religious. Pray 6 times a day. . . ceremonial washings. . . special chants. Yet their religious leader the Ayottolah Khomeni marches children over land mines to clear the way for his troops. And the KIDS are glad to do it. Dying for ALLAH! Death of Children in the Name of GOD!! We are living in the days of a Modern Pharoah. And who is good enough to be spared ALLAH'S wrath? We are all desperately sinning animals. We like doing bad things. If we didn't like them, we wouldn't do them! We sin because WE WANT TO. Noone makes us bad. We get our own lens dirty by our PRIDE. The more others see Jesus in us, the brighter we seem. The more brilliant our spirit is the more special we seem. Why? Because a bright light attracts attention. Everyone is familiar with the phrase "pay attention". Who do you pay attention to? How much money do you have to pay?

When people see our light do they think it is good? A good GOD shining through?

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Proverbs 4:18 "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

A man was walking down the street at night. He came up to a light pole. Another man was obviously looking for something on hands and knees.

"Can I help you?"

"I've lost something very valuable."

"Did you drop it here?"

"No. Down that alley."

"Then why are you looking here?"

"I can't see over there."

The darkness is not fair. The carnal man is not just. The poor will remain poor always. We live on a competitive plain. We believe in WORK but rarely TEAMWORK. Sure we'll work together, if it does us some good. But if we're made to look bad by the others' efforts we will come to resent and even hate the other workers. Cain's sacrifice was not accepted because of his ATTITUDE, not because he brought lettuce and tomatoes. We get upset because we think I PERSONALLY am not getting a fair deal or enough praise, or attention or money or whatever. We are rarely upset because something is getting in the way of God's kingdom! We get mad when our EGO IS BRUISED. I think most people love themselves much more than other people, and much much more than they love something as nebulous as 'God'. That's why Jesus came, he wanted to make GOD PERSONAL. Jesus was GOD that they could see, touch and smell. He was GOD. And HE is inside of US. If you are a CHRISTIAN you have GOD inside of you! You have the same power in you that raised Him from the DEAD! I'm lucky---he saved me from death. I didn't have to die. I don't think Jesus raised from the dead because He wanted to, or under His own power. God wanted Him to LIVE AGAIN, to PROVE the reality of GOD'S IMMENCE and TOTAL POWER. God does not mess around. He does not play dice with the UNIVERSE. He has a plan, a path---it is total light. It shines more every day. The longer you stay on the path the clearer it becomes to you. How easily things fall into place when you're on his path. All those good and perfect GIFTS! God's will is not a thing but a person. His

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Being a instrument of light is not a passive thing. Light does not keep to itself. It by nature fills the whole room. Even the smallest candle can be seen in a totally dark auditorium, if we can see it, light is there. And the Human eye is such a finite instrument! Owls have ten times the light/dark contrast ability that we possess. Our twilight is their noon day. Do you know those Owl like Christians? They see so MUCH LIGHT even in the most dismal situation---THERE IS LIGHT. They carry that light around with them. As they cleanse the importance of 'I' into the image of 'Him' they radiate. People can SEE.

What do people see? Our great FAITH? They see the GOOD WORKS that result from our FAITH. Even though we can never DO ENOUGH to earn our salvation, we can be alert to ways we can help. One of my least favorite phrases is 'they never asked for my help.' Why should they have to ASK? Do they have to ask you to turn on the LIGHT inside of you, or does it escape naturally, of it's own volition? The greatest gift of all the spiritual gifts is LOVE. And LOVE HELPS! Love takes an interest and the lowest person has something to offer GOD. I always get a bit uneasy when I say something like, "the lowest person". For me to say that, I have to throw a rock, and Jesus never did that. Never. You know how people were stoned in those days? They were put in a pit and BIG ROCKS, small boulders were thrown down. Not little 'water-skipping' rocks but big, heavy, bone crushing, ROCKS.

When we do these good deeds that show that our faith is not dead, we must try to do them in secret as much as possible. Let your Father in Heaven reward you in secret. If man heaps accolades and medals on your chest you can bet your bottom dollar that is the only reward you will receive. Do not seek MAN'S GLORY! When I was in college I played in a professional Rock Band. I had so many people tell me what a great person I was. How well I played. . . on and on it came. Flattery is a form of idol worship. It is also a very addictive opiate. It puts you to sleep as to how things really are. Other guitarists know the tricks too. It is so easy to fool the neophyte. The simple things look complicated. Playing behind your back? "Wow that must be hard!" An absolute piece of cake. To 99% of the population on this planet LOOKS ARE EVERYTHING. That's why it is so easy to fake people out! But be careful about who is being fooled. Man is a rationalizing animal. Can you imagine the twisted reasoning that Hitler used to massacre millions upon millions of JEWS. Yet are we in the modern Western World much different? We kill the third world by our misanthropic apathy! <sup>we</sup> Do <sup>we</sup> really show our light to the suffering 3/4s of the world? I read an amazing analogy. Suppose the WHOLE WORLD 13 Billion people lived in just a small town. 22% of the population lived on a hill while the rest sweat it out in the dry valley. The hill toppers control over 80% of the world's wealth and energy and food. The people in the valley make as much in a year as the people on the hill manage in a week. How do you think the valley people think of the Hill top types? And we're from the country that "trusts in God"(with our MONEY clearly stating it.) I grew up with hungry people. Not like, 'I skipped breakfast and lunch, and now I'm really HUNGRY' but stomach bloated intense pain. Hunger makes people just DISAPPEAR. How angry I get when I hear our Government destroys millions of tons of



grain, 'just to keep the price up.' God must be outraged!! How can this Country be so BLIND. I love America. We do more that all the other countries combined. But what a pittance it STILL IS! We give them the 'crumbs from the crumbs'. Thank God He loved US more that WE LOVE THEM. How lucky we are that these poor people won't be our judges. OR WILL THEY? For who sees (or doesn't see) if it's not OTHER PEOPLE?

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Matthew 5:14 "Ye are the light of the World".

You and Me. WE ARE THE LIGHT. How can non-Christians see God if not through US?! I've heard it said by other Christians that they read the Bible to see GOD'S Face. I read other Christians to see God's face. Jesus HIMSELF said that WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. We are HIS Ambassadors. I have traveled around the world a bit. Very few Americans travel in Nepal and India. Most hold their travelling to Europe and South America. I became very aware that I was one of the very few Americans many had ever met. In a real way I WAS AMERICA to them. All of our population was being judged by my actions.

I'm a missionary kid. I grew up in Kenya. I had Indian friends who were hindu and moslem, as well as orientals that were buddhist. When I got back home I had a hard time figuring out who these 'Godless Hindus and Moslems' were. Surely it wasn't MY FRIENDS that were going to HELL. Surely MY GOD wouldn't kill them. That's what I was being told by people that had never even met a Hindu or Moslem. Didn't have a clue where they were coming from. I found it very difficult to believe that any HINDU was going to be saved from seeing the Christian's light that I knew. I speak from experience. I attended a "church" that was primarily Indian that were hindus. This 'community center' is now Parkland Baptist Church. It's come a long way since the days we used to sit on the floor and sing Gujarati songs. "Avo jagana, lokah sagarya, iso raja, bolaveh che." See, I still remember it. I'm a singing kinda guy. It makes me feel shiny.

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Luke 11:35 "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness."

Star Wars is probably worth more dollar revenue that 1/3 of Africa. Seriously. The movie was basically Buddhist. Did you know that? That big force that flows through you. . . Gatauma Buddha said that centuries before Lucas was ever born. This force can easily slide into darkness. They develop such an intensity that they don't even realize how far off base they've actually come. Buddha's "eight fold path" is similar to Jehovah's "ten commandments" and Jesus' "sermon on the mount" The Hindu religion is based on good works and Karma. How we will PAY for our misdeeds. All these major religions have good ideas. Only Jesus was willing to die for the sinners. He was the only way we could make the quantum jump into God's arms.

Did you know that Thomas Jefferson was an Agnostic? He once said "if Heaven is going to filled with the Christians he knew, he would rather go to hell!" I've often wondered about that statement. . . . After these Christians die, will God change them into perfect beings? Why doesn't he do that NOW? Why do we have to wait till we die? Do you think

most Christians will be happy when they're perfect? Happier that they are now? Why? No pain, or sorrow? All that stuff? We are bad because we WANT to be bad. Will God take away our freedom of choice when we're in Heaven? Will we still get to do BAD THINGS if we want to? "But," you may say, "when we're perfect, we won't have the urge to sin." How many times did Jesus teach about the NEW LIFE/NEW BIRTH? OLD MAN IS GONE. NEW MAN IS HERE. If we still feel this desire to sin maybe we should ask ourselves just what stage of development we're in-----FETUS OR ADULT?

Sin is such a tricky thing. It's easy not to drink, smoke, chew or fool around with girls that do. "Not doing" things is easy. Doing them is even easier. But acting like Jesus Christ is a totally different ball game. Can you imagine the Baptist ire being rancled as Jesus performs his first public miracle and turns barrels of water into WINE? I believe this HEAVENLY BREW did not drunken. I do think there was some good times though. Jesus saved the day! When is sin not sin? Sin, my friend, is always sin. We miss his perfect part. Sobriety does not a mature Christian make. Many are stone cold sober yet utterly asleep to what's going on around them. How the things they say affect the people nearby. How cutting they can be! Such indignation! Yet who has not sinned? If God threw a rock at us everytime we even THOUGHT something bad, how long would we last? Maybe we would take the whole thing more seriously if God did use such blunt methods. But you know why he doesn't? Because we're just like a BAD DOG. Oh yeah, sure, he's such a good boy while we're around. . . but as soon as our back is turned----- the stupid animal is back in the GARBAGE CAN. What good is our religion if God always has to slap our wrist? I get a bit confused when I hear someone say, after a catastrophe---"what did I do to deserve this?" As if God was kicking this poor shmuck around. God give only two kinds of gifts---GOOD AND PERFECT. Disaster doesn't fit in either of those two categories. You know why God wants you to be GOOD? Just so it will make HIM happy? NO! Bad things catch up with us! IF we slam somebody, you can count on somebody lying in wait to slam YOU! We reap what we sow. But this is a Cosmic (and sometimes Comic) equation! If we do GOOD things---happy circumstance tends to fall in our laps. The doors open, miraculously. Yet for God who controls so many of the strings (may we say ALL?) these condition ALWAYS WORK OUT. Always. He is without FAIL. He is without TURNING OR SHADOW. God does not look for the ANGLES. He's not trying to make a buck of you! Many times I get the impression that young Christians think, "but if I give it ALL up, there won't be anything left for me!" IDIOT!! You are SON OF THE KING!! It's All His. It was all His, even before you 'gave it up' to Him.

A classic line in the Star Wars trilogy was when Yoda was teaching Luke the ways of the FORCE. Yoda set up a particularly difficult task. Luke seemed flustered then said, "I'll TRY." To which Yoda replied, "there is only Do and NOT DO. There is no TRY." Voltaire is one of my favorite philosophers. One of his main concepts is Self Will or Volition. He said, "If you do not do something, it is because you do not want to do it badly enough." This particular line has meant a great deal to me. How badly do I want to live like JESUS?

Gautama Buddha was often asked to "show me the way to be enlightened." Gautama took the

young chela by the arm and led him to the water's edge. He asked the student to look into the water. As he bent over Buddah seized the boy's head and held it under the water. The lad began to struggle, at first moderately then furiously. Gautama let the frantic boy up. "Why did you do that Master?" the boy asked. "When you seek enlightenment as desperately as you wished for air---then you will find enlightenment." It is a matter of HOW BAD WE WANT IT.

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Ephesians 5:13 "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for what ever makes manifest is light."

The word to 'manifest' means to make 'appear'. What was not there before, is there now. The man who cleaned the light pole had no idea he was walking around in a garden. The light made God's beauty manifest. The more we SEE the more we understand He has done for us. What SLIMY SINNERS we are! Why would God send his Son for US? Because He loves us. We are lucky ducks! We didn't have to sink or swim---He hauled us in!

God is interested in our well being. Bob Marley was a devout Christian, his concerts were more like spiritual revivals than rock shows. One of his most popular songs is about how God takes care of you, "don't worry about a thing, every little thing is gonna be awright." And the funny thing is HE takes care of the big things too.

Jesus often taught in parables. His story of the prodigal son is one of the best known. I always thought it interesting that when the young son asked for his inheritance the Father gave it to him. Surely THE FATHER must know what the son was going to do with it! He gave it because he was asked to. The older son gets really upset when his younger brother returns. "Father! You're accepting that crummy brother of mine?! And giving him a BIG PARTY? Why did you never do this for me?" To which the Father replies, "it was all yours, you just never asked." The older brother was being taken care of. God didn't let him suffer one iota---but if you're not ready to catch the cake it may end up right in your face!

Ask Him for our daily needs. I think He enjoys being asked (and thanked). It's like the Father who will always take care of his children, but how much more pleasant the job is if they APPRECIATE IT!

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John 5:35 "He was a burning and a shining light: and you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

This is Jesus talking about John the Baptist. John was a holy man. Yet he was utterly humbled in the presence of the Messiah. And John was not popular with everybody. Especially Herod and his new wife (his brother's exwife). Herod eventually had John put to death. His head was cut off and put on a platter. I always thought it would have made a good movie to have John's head suddenly start preaching from the platter! I guess God thought that was a bit gross---it was much more effective to raise the whole body.

Many people rejoice in John's light. He was the bringer of the PreGospel---the Good news was just around the corner. How John's heart must have leapt when he saw the Spirit of God come down on Jesus! He surely was ready to die happy after that. People will rejoice in the light that we give off. They are happy because we have a cheerful influence. But

BEWARE!! If you hang around Gloomy, constantly griping types it will effect you! It is so EASY to see everything as a personal torture. What Christian Martyrs we think we are. 'Dad gum RED LIGHT! Now I have to wait a whole three minutes! Crud!!!' 'Why is this such a long line?' "Poor me!" At least we're not dead! We must really believe we are of mega-importance if we get upset over little things like this.

When we shine, people will smile. Other people are our mirror. If we want to see how we really are, "to see ourselves as others see us", we must look at other people's reactions. Are people glad to see us? Or do they find excuses to leave as soon as possible?

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John 12:36 "While Ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.  
Ephesians 5:8 "for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk  
as Children of Light."

Our Father is the Father of Lights. Not just one light, but many. For we are his flames. About forty years ago a very familiar Christian phrase was "Burn out for Jesus". Nietchze once said "the candle which burns twice as bright lives half as long." It is our decision how bright we want to burn. Jesus decided that he wanted to die for us. He made a choice. He didn't have to go back to Jerusalem, in fact many of his disciples wanted him to 'lay low' just for his own good. Jesus was not ruled by fear, by darkness. His was a focused and utterly clean lens that magnified God's glory into incredible levels of power. He could have saved himself at ANY time. HE WANTED TO DIE FOR US. His was a light that was hung on a cross for all to see.

We are his children. Do the young burn as brightly as the Father? There must be a system of growth. One doesn't become a beacon over night. Yet Light cannot be DARKNESS. We must be his true children that walk in the light. We do the enlightened works, the good deeds for the helpless. In this way others may see who is our Father, as well as who His children are.