

THE LAMP
By John F. Hall

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” -Psalm 119:105

The three-owl lamp on my desk in the foyer is unusual, but it has no historical or sentimental value. I put a “barn lamp” on the desk to take its picture because this lamp has historical and sentimental value. The Psalm cited above was written more than 2,400 years ago. How can something that old have any relevance in today’s world? As you read on you may be surprised at the answer to that question.



In very ancient times if people did not have access to a donkey, horse or camel, they had to walk to reach their destinations. If they travel at night they carried a lantern (lamp or candle) to light their way lest they stumble and fall. Sometimes we can all use a little light on the dark and troubled path that we have to tread. Paula’s grandfather, G.C. Towler, once owned the barn lamp shown in this story. He would use it at night as he walked from his house to the barn. Prior to the early 1950’s, few rural homes and farms had any electricity. The barn lamp was invented by Robert Dietz in 1853. I painted the barn lamp with gold colored spray paint to cover up the rust.

Psalm 119, verse 105 was written by King David in 444 BC. He used the image of a lamp to convey the meaning that God’s Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light to our path. In 1924, a Baptist preacher named Homer Grice took verse 105 and 11 and created words for the pledge to the Bible, “I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God’s Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.”

In 1984, Amy Grant and Christian singer-songwriter Michael W. Smith collaborated on a spiritual hymn titled, “Thy Word.” Michael originally came up with the song’s melody and some words for the chorus straight from King David’s Psalm. Amy Grant sat down with a notebook and pen and wrote the lyrics to the song. She did this alone in a cabin in the middle of a large ranch. I tend to believe that she had some inspiration from Christ as she wrote those lyrics.

The song has two main verses, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. When I feel afraid, I think I’ve lost my way, still you’re there right beside me. And nothing will I fear as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end.” The second verse is a little shorter, “I will not forget your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering. Jesus be my guide, and hold me to your side I Will love you to the end.”

My humble Words do not do justice to this hymn. You can go on the internet to YouTube and listen to Amy Grant and Michael Smith sing this hymn. Sometimes when you feel lost in this life, read the lyrics and listen to the words. How majestic is Christ’s love for each of us?

John F. Hall

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