

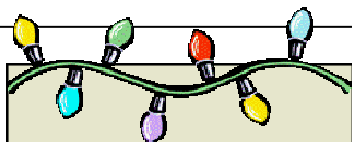


NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends...



*Sow for yourselves righteousness,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unplowed ground;
for it is time to seek the LORD,
until he comes and showers righteousness on you.*

Hosea 10:12

*Love your neighbor as yourself...
And do this, understanding the present time...*

Romans 13:9-11

Do you ever have days when you feel the moments evaporating, with nothing meaningful in them? Have you ever looked at the unfolded years behind you and wondered what they were for? Were they just long vast empty days seemingly devoid of any purpose? You ate and slept. You must have done some form of routine activities. You learned to tie your shoes and bait a hook. You paid bills or played games or brushed teeth, took out trash, and somewhere in there learned to read and write. You worked a job. You laughed and cried. But what was it all about? How can any of it have any meaning? Why is life so crammed full of periods that seem not crammed full of... nothing? What is God after?

Mary is wisely fond of reminding me that time is a gift. We don't kill time. We *fill* time. We honor the gift of time by spending it well. One of my students used to say that time you enjoy wasting is

never wasted time. I seem to remember (more than a sane person should) details of my early years. I could be accused of retrospectively imposing on the past meanings I only gleaned after adulthood. But I don't think so. I think as I have grown closer to the Lord He has helped me shine the light of meaning and fullness on the past, giving it a richness I could not see while in it. I had to gain distance from it in order to see it. The good became far better, and the bad things were made good not by changing history, but by revealing the huge action of redeeming grace at work in spite of the evil to bring forth the good. Receiving forgiveness for sin turned the sinful past into a garden of gratitude. Seeing the good for what it truly was, transforms pleasant memories into rich sources of thanksgiving and worship. The past seems to become retroactively enlarged and enriched by our becoming awakened in the present to the true meaning of the past. That means all of life is in a constant state of creative glory - and in both directions. He is the Alpha and the Omega. The future is bright with the promise of God but the past is even growing bright with the revelation of redemptive restoring healing light. The Deep Magic works backward and forward.

God is not interested in stacking stuff up - no barns filled with souvenirs. He is always actively at work bringing forth goodness, beauty, and truth, all for the sake of Love. He is building a scenario for relationships; He is forming beings that have a huge capacity for loving. I often wonder if what we think from our tiny perspective as history coming to the end of things, is actually coming to the beginning - the end of the beginning instead of the beginning of the end. There is an awful (and I use that word literally) lot of undeveloped real estate out there. What is it for? God is extravagant but He is not capricious or wasteful.

Once there was a child who was born in near poverty to a young couple of no standing or means. He lived like every other one of his generation. Mundane inauspicious activities turned childhood into the teen years that slowly gave way to young adulthood. When it was time for him to leave home, he never went more than thirty miles on foot from his parent's world. He ate and slept, conversed with friend and foe, interacted with his tiny country's relatively tiny internal affairs, and took time to care for others who had lived uneventful, uninteresting, unsung existences. The great outer world, so full of renown and splendor, where all the action was, filled the historic stage with writings, events, and histories we all read about and have to memorize in schools. Yet this young unknown nobody became known by taking time with all sorts of other nobodies.

Let's go beyond the bobbles and bustle of the holidays by finding time to sit and contemplate what God considers meaningful, what He puts His seal of approval on, where you will find Him active in the affairs of men and women. *The center of the universe once upon a time was a manger.* The center of God's focus and pleasure may be on you sitting wondering if you or your mundane

life and activities matter. God does not measure value by size. He does not measure people by accomplishments the world praises, good as some of those works may be. *He measures everything by relationship. Where love is, there He is. Where He is, there is love.* When the present veil that hangs between us and Reality is finally removed and everything receives its true identity, you will get to see what was happening in all those seemingly empty moments. So don't despise the day of small things. Don't see time as your enemy - never kill time. Rather, see time as your friend - fill time. It is a gift from God to each one of us.



Stoop down Adore... Come, see, for He is seeking thee.



THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE

Stoop down
Adore, and let
The light of Glory pour
Upon thee.
Come, see,
For he is seeking thee.
So small and yet so wise
Creator of the world, He lies.

Oh, let thyself be found...
And joy abound.

by R.M.,
A nun of Burnham Abbey



Merry Christmas!
Clay & Mary



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