



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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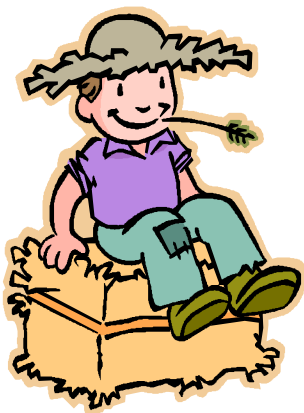
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Dear Friends,



The doctrine of justification by faith - a biblical truth, and a blessed relief from sterile legalism and un-availing self-effort - has in our time fallen into evil company and been interpreted by many in such a manner as actually to bar men from the knowledge of God. The whole transaction of conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless...

A. W. Tozer (The Pursuit of God)



When as a young teen-aged boy I became aware of my deep pain and of how dark life could become, I turned to God only as a refuge from the storm. I was almost like an endangered prey, running from what was to me a clear and present danger, but running to I knew not what. He may be powerful enough to save me, but was He good? Was He holy? I didn't think in those terms as yet.

After my initial experience of being saved, a new awareness came to me: I had been saved by a Someone who had a definite Mind and Will of His own and Who intended to take me to Himself and guide me in His direction. I was willfully resistant, making wrong choices over and over that led to private disaster after disaster. The One I had turned to at the beginning of my salvation never left. But He also never stopped making the same demand of me: my all! I would give it, thinking I had given my all, only to learn as time went on that there were deeper and greater levels of control I had not relinquished. He patiently loved me while waiting for me to surrender. And with each crisis (a place where the Cross encounters us) I found a new opportunity to choose Him over myself. And each time, there was a greater release of life, love, power, and courage to go higher and further in to Him.

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Somewhere along that way, I am not sure exactly when or where, I became aware that I was no longer struggling between my desires for Him to bless my choices vs. my desire for Him only. I just became aware somehow that I no longer was searching for a Power who could fix my life so I could live it my way. I had encountered the Power, all right! But in that encounter, I had come to understand Him as the Source of all that I had ever longed for. I began to know Him, and to be aware that I was also known, fully and completely, by Him. And in that relationship was everything I could ever long for in this life or the next.

I write all this to try to express a concern. In my encounters with people who are struggling with various issues, I only have one message for them all: I point to the Cross. I can only usher them into His Presence and encourage them to live from this place of deepening relationship with Father God with no reservations. Some do; some do not. And those who refuse to be willing to at least become willing to lay down their agendas, not only do not get well but seem to become worse! Encountering the answer and refusing it, asking it to altar itself to suit our terms, is in itself impossible. God cannot altar Himself, and will not. Our desire for Him to adjust for us is part of what needs to die in us so we can live. So in great love and mercy He remains the Immovable Rock we must crash upon. That inner scream which protests this utter relinquishment warns that if we give ourselves fully up to Him, we lose. It is the same old lie: God is not love, God is not good. So we keep

clinging our idols in His stead, and wonder why we are always in so much pain.

He has never come to destroy anything but sin and death. Whatever He demands of us is in order that He may kill it in order to save us. He is the Father who created family, so he is not ever seeking to destroy your family, but to destroy what is destroying family. He is the fountain of Personhood so He is never seeking to take away your identity but to ensure its true emerging. But as long as we believe we know better, and that He cannot ever be trusted with our treasures, we hold on to them till the rot in them eats into us and we and our treasures rot together.

Once we chose to BELIEVE that He is love and that He is good, then we will give up our right to ourselves, deeper and deeper, not caring how it turns out, because we know it will turn out better than we could have ever imagined.

*I know whom I have believed, and
have become persuaded that He is
able to keep that which I've committed
unto Him against that day.*

(II Timothy 1:12)

*And so we know and rely on the love
God has for us. (1 John 4:16)*



Book News

featuring **Jan Karon's**
Mitford Series (9 books)
& **Father Tim Novels (2 books)**

When **At Home in Mitford** first hit the book world, lots of people around here were of course very excited, because it was, after all, taking place in western North Carolina. I was happy for all concerned but not enough to read the growing series myself. I really thought they were 'chick flick' level books. Mary said they were not! I recently finished the first four books of the **Mitford Series**. I was wrong. They are funny, sometimes hilariously so, and they are warm and human. But I am finding them also to be profoundly wise and helpful in facing the battles of everyday life. If you are longing for a great alternative to stupid mind-destroying TV, and want to read something that is both entertaining and spiritually alive, then (guys, I mean you, too!) dig into the **Mitford and Father Tim** books, all eleven of them! Be ready for your heart to be captured even as life-changing spiritual truths quietly slip in to transform your own daily life. Mary has read them all (more than once) and says this: they only get better book by book, with the two **Father Tim** novels as the crowning glory of them all! Enjoy!

Some Closing Thoughts...



As we enter the seasons of Thanksgiving and the celebration of Advent, the world seems darker and our country far more confused and arrogant than ever. It would be easy to fall into one of two errors: to dive into the holidays and try to ignore realities around us, or to become so overwhelmed by the mess around us that we fail to celebrate right things. It seems wise to stay fully awake while giving thanks to God for His blessings, and ultimately for His unspeakable gift of the Incarnation of the Son of God into the earth. Jesus Christ has destroyed death by the power of His Cross and will return one day to complete the restoring of the world by the destruction of all evil from the universe. I refuse to hide from the call to the world, just as strongly as I refuse to allow the cry of the world to drown out my thanks and celebration of God's faithfulness and love. I'm sure you will agree. Thanks be to God! His mercies endure forever!



With Love,
Clay & Mary



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