



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,



I possess an inward certainty about you, confident that He Who is the initiator of the good work within you is also the One Who executes its completeness as mirrored in Jesus Christ, Who is the light of day. He is the fullness of time.

(Philippians 1:6) Mirror Study Bible

Now, we all, with new understanding, see ourselves in Him as in a mirror. In Him every face is unveiled. In gazing with wonder at the blueprint of God displayed in human form, we suddenly realize that we are looking into a mirror, where every feature of His image, articulated in Christ, is reflected within us! The Spirit of the Lord engineers this radical transformation; we are led from an inferior mind-set to the revealed endorsement of our authentic identity.

(2 Corinthians 3:18) Mirror Study Bible



Martin Luther said many great and helpful things. The following quote is NOT one of them: *We are merely snow-covered dung.* His inaccurate metaphor of our redemption in Christ is sadly rooted in the false idea that humanity is basically evil, and that only a legal covering can hide our dung selves. This takes on many other forms in various Christian traditions, but it all ends up meaning the same thing: *I am a total glob of evil, and my only good is given to me by sheer grace.* It is true that our only ultimate good is given by grace alone. But does God give grace to dung? Or is He after something else by that grace?

Is it right to think of ourselves as not only fallen and broken, but actually fully and hopelessly evil? It is true that if left to ourselves, we seem to be certain to degenerate towards destruction. After all, there are so

many examples of human evil around (and in?) us, and the facts support an ever increasing evil. Paul tells us that **evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13)**. Yet, if we think that any good coming from ourselves or those around us is really just snow dripping off the dung, all kinds of weird religious false notions form from that idea. You have no doubt heard examples. For instance, how many times have I heard people say, after doing some good thing, “Oh, it wasn’t me; that was only the Lord.” That sounds humble and reverent, but it is not right. The good that comes from you is **you** doing good. God is **in** you giving energy to it. But it is **you** doing it. He is within us to energize us for good. We are not holy robots any more than we are snow-covered refuse! Somewhere in all this there is a human being, created by God in His image, and for His glory whom He declared good at His original intent, and whom He intends to restore and more, to glorify (see **Romans 8**).

A far more biblical (and psychologically) correct metaphor is from Oswald Chambers when he refers to man as **a glorious ruin**. Yet, when we look at the ruin through the snowy dung theology, we will not see ourselves correctly. We will miss the glory. The Bible never treats fallen man as dung. (A few poetic proof texts do not count.) The dung is sin. Man is not sin. Yes, sin has ruined man’s glory, but nevertheless, man is still a glorious ruin, beloved by His Maker, in store for redemption. If we are thinking biblically, we will see that there is glory, we will see the fallen ruins, and we will see the grace that covers us like snow, but not as a heavenly disguise. Grace does not come to merely hide the stink. **For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.** It doesn’t say it has fallen to hide the horror. It has appeared in order to do what? To teach us to **deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself His own special people, empowered for good works (Titus 2:11-14).**

When we stumble, we do not lay there and think, “Oh well. This is just typical of the real me.” No! That is **not** the real you! The real you is your highest self, not your lowest. The real you is created in Christ for the manifestation of goodness in the earth. So get up! And reject condemnation! Go forward becoming more and more like Jesus as you go. For **the lovers of God walk on the highway of light, and their way shines brighter and brighter until they bring forth the perfect day. (Proverbs 4:18)** *The Passion*





I STILL BELIEVE

By Russ Taff
Video Testimony (2018)

This video testimony about Russ Taff is a great illustration of real grace. Many fans will remember the sound of Russ Taff's voice, first with the *Imperials*, and then as a solo career that spans the decades of the 80's and 90's, and then in recent years with the *Gaither Vocal Band*. Russ and wife Tori have filmed a sometimes gut-wrenchingly honest, but ultimately encouraging testimony of the behind the scenes heartbreak of his addiction. They clearly portray how that adult addiction was rooted in the hidden suffering of a boy struggling to survive the mixture of harsh legalism, mental illness, and the confusion of broken love in an unhealed Pentecostal preacher's family. Without bitterness, but with great honesty, Russ and Tori explain how a high profile Christian musician who truly believed his message and lived it out for the most part, was in reality hiding his pain and very deeply wounded. The story is about the grace that first captured him as a boy as the same grace that pursues and eventually heals the man. This film is definitely helpful to any who are struggling with any ongoing issues that need to be cut at the roots. It is also a great tribute to the journey of healing that can be long and fraught with setbacks, not only for the wounded one, but also for those who love him. It is available on Utube and other online outlets. It would be great viewing for a home group setting that could lead to healing discussions and prayer.



Closing Thoughts...



Russ Taff and I are exactly the same age and grew up in very similar Bible Belt cultures. Our addictions were different, but our root wounds were much alike. As has rightly been said before, we cannot heal what we cannot feel. And often the power of a story, *especially* a heart-felt true one played out before us, helps us get to the depths of our own buried pain. Don't hide from the grace that is pursuing you. For it is His grace reaching in to heal and set free every aspect of who you really are. Be tenacious when there seems to be no passion or hopeful feelings. It is Jesus-centered Cross-exalting tenacity that is the heart expression of love that breaks the yoke.



In His Presence, Clay & Mary

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