



# NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

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

Volume 355 • December 2022

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Joy to the World 1-2

My Beautiful Mess 3

Closing Thoughts 4

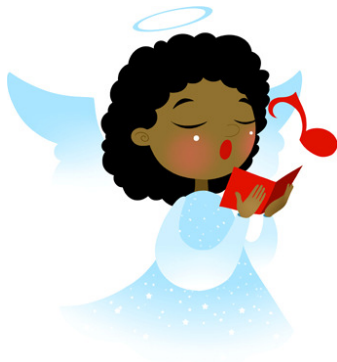
## Dear Friends,



If I had only one message for us in this hour in which every aspect of human relationship seems to be unusually stressed - some to the breaking point - it would be these audio teachings on joy (part of your November, December, and January *Nightlights*).

***Joy to the World***, which we sing at this season, was not written as a Christmas carol. It was actually referring to the second coming of Christ. If you read or quote the lyrics of each stanza, you will see that though it certainly applies to either advent, it was meant to be a celebration of the joy that will **liberate creation from its bondage to decay and bring it into the glorious freedom of the children of God.**

**(Romans 8:21)** Just as that joy will reach its peaks at His return, *it is our inheritance now*. It is best to speak not of joy or love as two separate forces, for even though they are obviously separate concepts (thus separate words) they work as one. Writers on this subject sometimes then refer to joylove. Jesus makes this plain in **John 15:9-12: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.** I spend about three hours unpacking what joylove is and how it works in us in these three teachings, so I will not repeat that here. But in this season of focusing on the Incarnation, though we are people of that reality every moment of every day, let us especially find time to get quiet before the Lord. We should deeply contemplate what these words of Jesus are saying to us: ***I love you as the Father loves me.*** Don't gloss over that, which so often deprives us of the nourishment He means us to get from His words to us. Soak in it.



Don't look for feelings of love or for feelings of joy. Feelings may come or go. It is the actual presence - His Presence - His love - that will produce the force of that joy. It will happen first in us, and then - whether we feel it or not - that force of joylove will flow through us into whatever circumstance we encounter, no matter how joyless or loveless it may seem. This is how His kingdom comes, little by little, bit by bit. Our very presence, when filled with His very Presence, brings His kingdom of heaven into earth. And in ways we may not ever see, we are overthrowing darkness. We are overcoming loveless joyless evil by just being who we are. And all this takes place whether we feel it or not!

One last word. I am like you whenever I hear some preacher tell me, "It doesn't matter whether you feel it or not." I don't like hearing it either. I want to feel it. I need to feel it. And a part of me wants to lash out (in times of great difficulty especially) and yell, "What good is it, if I can't feel it?!" But I have learned the answer over and over, and am still learning. *Embracing His promise of joylove when there is no emotional evidence of its presence in me changes me.* And my lack of feelings to buoy me up in times of stress actually in some way I do not fully understand, strengthens me. In some mysterious way, that joylove flowing through me empowers me to stand and trust Him. In fact, I am strengthened to live from my true self in the face of negative forces. Feelings of love and joy, good and welcome as they are, may pull me off course and shut down my spiritual guard. Rather, I choose to trust His words to me, with, or most often without, the accompanying feelings. I know that He is always with me and in me. I know that His power of joylove flows to and through me in any given situation. I know that He will open my eyes and sharpen my discernment. I know that He will deepen my capacity for the flow of joylove to and through me.

We don't know how the finale of this present age will come. But think of this. It may come as so many prophecy teachers claim. But it may also come bit by bit, as we embrace our call to be salt and light in the midst of rot and darkness. **You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. (2 Peter 3:11,12)**

So as you sing *Joy to the World* this season, think of both of its applications: the first advent, and the second coming. Because of the first, we can hasten the second. **No more let sin and sorrow grow, or thorns infest the ground. He comes to make His blessing known far as the curse is found!** And He does that, through us!



# MY BEAUTIFUL MESS

Red, purple and black, yellow, blue and green  
Tangled colors, their picture unseen

Deepest sorrow and joy, laughter and pain  
Woven as one, their purpose not plain

Wisdom the needle, each stitch His concern  
His ways for me to cherish and learn

Heavy or light, how am I to know  
The thread most needed for me to grow

Underneath the grandest design  
My will and desire I must resign

To see His glory from above  
The pattern created by His love

Each prick shall bring life and healing  
and grace for pain at times so reeling

My life a tapestry, the work of His hand  
To finish the faith He first began

So I will rejoice, be glad and profess  
Thank you God for my beautiful mess!

by Lane Ferguson



# Closing Thoughts...



The long slow unfolding of history, whether the big picture or our personal one, leaves a lot of room for either impatient frustration or growth in wisdom and holy awe. In the early Jesus Movement of the 1970's, many were sure Jesus would be back by 1980 at the latest. Then we moved it to 1988, then 1989, depending on what books we were reading. I am growing old waiting. And I can tell you, though I am looking and longing for His appearing, I am not impatient with this long process. *Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. (2 Peter 3:15)* And salvation is far more than hitting heaven and missing hell. The huge wide wonderful meaning of that word SALVATION, which religion has sadly shrunk down to a win or lose proposition, is far greater than we ever dreamed. *Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)*

*Merry Christmas! Clay & Mary*



## **McLean Ministries**

P.O. Box 2088 • Hickory, North Carolina 28603 • 828.322.5402  
Visit our website: [www.mcleanministries.org](http://www.mcleanministries.org)  
or email us at [claymcleanministries@pobox.com](mailto:claymcleanministries@pobox.com)

