

## Oil for Your Lamp

‘The entire University of Michigan football team checked into their hotel rooms the night before the big game with Ohio State University. The Michigan coach had given clear instructions that his players were to get a good night’s sleep. They were not to leave their rooms. One rebellious lineman, however, wanted to get out and see the city of Columbus by night. The lineman deceptively put a floor lamp on the bed and put covers around it so it looked like he was already asleep in bed. Then he left his room to go out on the town. Late that night the coach went around to all his players’ rooms and did a bed check. He opened each door and hit the light switch. Arriving at the lineman’s room, he turned on the light. The covers were still covering the floor lamp, but the player had not unplugged the lamp. So when the coach hit the switch, the lamp shed light on the lineman’s deception. Light does that. Light reveals darkness.’

You know what? There’s a whole lot of darkness around us, in our country. And The Light is revealing it. These last few years, I’ve come to realize that I’ve been living in a fantasy. The country I thought I was born in and was living in has turned out to be something else entirely. A rude awakening, but I’ve come to understand that the good, Christian America that I thought I lived

in had been infected with an insidious, corrupting cancer purposefully administered to us in subtle, surreptitious doses over many decades. So subtle that most of us never noticed what was happening. And now, we see that nearly the entire country has been taken over, overwhelmed by anti-Christ evil.

It's analogous in an indirect way to the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids our Lord told. All ten were told to wait for the arrival of the bridegroom, but his ETA was uncertain. Knowing this, five of them brought extra oil for their lamps in case he was delayed. The other five were not so prepared. Indeed, he was delayed. But after midnight, he suddenly appeared, and the bridesmaids set about relighting their lamps which had gone out over the many hours of waiting. The five with the extra oil replenished their lamps and were ready to go when the door opened. The other five found themselves with lamps but no flames, no fire, because they had no oil. No amount of pleading and cajoling netted them any additional oil from the others. Being told to go out to buy more, they hurried out into the night, when no stores were still open. Theirs was truly a fool's errand! They probably had to wait until early morning when a few early-opening shops commenced business for the day. When these five returned, well, of course, the doors to the wedding feast had long since been closed. They were too late. And now, no amount of pleading and cajoling could gain them admittance. Indeed, the bridegroom himself told them that he had no idea who they were. They were out of luck. And in

the meaning of the parable, they had missed their opportunity for eternal life in Heaven with the Lord. Though they had been given invitations, they didn't take them seriously enough to actually prepare themselves to go with the Lord.

Our Lord is the Light of the World. He is light itself. In His presence is light itself. The origin of all light. In whatever form light eventually takes, it all originates from God Himself. God has spread light all round His creation. Because of His light, the creation itself can be comprehended. Without God's light, it wouldn't matter what He created or didn't create, no one would be able to know if anything was here or not. For all would be dark. Nothing could be perceived. But with God's light, absolutely everything can eventually be seen and understood. He has put His light in the stars, in the sun and moon, in lightning bolts, electricity, bioluminescent glows, and even the bonds which bind atoms together and direct the movements and states of quarks and quantum particles. In some ways, God is, in a sense, gravity itself, for in Him we live and move and have our being. We exist, everything exists because He is. Without Him, nothing exists.

On earth, our most primordial form of light when it's dark is fire. Flame. And so the lamp was invented. We pour in oil, insert a wick, and light it. And voila!, we have light. In a power outage, even if no flashlights work, why, we still have some kerosene lamps in storage. And they'll still work when nothing else will.

In the Book of Revelation, our Lord Jesus appears to the

Apostle John surrounded by some lamps. They were on stands, and were burning. Some brighter than others. He told John that these lamps were churches. Which means that each church, each body of believers, is a lamp. It provides light that illuminates the darkness around it. With this light, people can see what is what, and can make informed decisions about how to live. But not just churches. Each person, each believer, is also a lamp. Our Lord said exactly this when He told us in Matthew 5 that we, each of us as individuals, and collectively, are the light of the world. If He is the origin of all light, then whatever light we each have is from Him. If our individual lamps are dim, then we obviously need to draw closer to Him, the Source of All Light and Life.

When the five bridesmaids whose lamps had run out of oil had to go to the shops to buy more oil, they were necessarily distancing themselves from the Lord, the source of Light and oil, in a futile and vain attempt to get more oil from the world's, mankind's counterfeit, substitute oil. The other five just used their extra oil and they were all good to go. And they went. Right into the very presence of their Savior and Lord and Bridegroom. Right into His very arms of love and life and light.

For, we know from the Scriptures, God's Word written, that oil is a symbol and physical sign and expression of Holy Spirit. The kings of old were anointed with oil. Oil was poured on their heads to signify that God the Holy Spirit was upon them, to be with them, guide them, and to exercise God's authority through

them. And even before the kings, so were the priests of God anointed. When Christ Jesus came, He was anointed. Several times. Each was divinely significant and absolutely pregnant with cosmic meaning. And after He parted space and time and came into this earth, dividing history itself into Before Christ, and after In the Year of our Lord, anointing is now open to each and every believer, both directly by God Himself as He sends His Holy Spirit on each of us, and in physical signs as in the anointing oil used when we pray for the sick, and ordain believers into special offices in the Church. Though we use special anointing oils, made using variations on the Old Testament formulations of the ancient anointing oils, the exact identification of some ingredients now lost to time, what is truly important, the genuine essence of anointing, is the special presence and power of Holy Spirit that we invoke, and Who comes upon a person, a family, a group, a church.

For there is no “magic” in the oil itself. And while we each are lamps, we do not physically light ourselves on fire. It is the illuminating presence of Holy Spirit that makes us lamps, lights of the world, little Christs, little anointed ones. For Christ Jesus, is The Anointed One. He is the first, the original, the ultimate Anointed One. For He is God Himself. He is God in the flesh, that is, our physical fleshly bodies. His very title, “Christ”, is the Greek word meaning Anointed One. That Greek word, “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word, “Messiah”, which means, you guessed it, Anointed One. Just for clarification’s

sake, “Christ” is not Lord Jesus’ last name. Lord Jesus doesn’t have a last name. His only earthly name is “Jesus”, “Yeshua”. “Jesus” is the English mispronunciation of the Greek transliteration, “Iesous” of His Hebrew name, “Yeshua”. All of those names mean the same thing—Savior. Or more fully, “God saves”.

And as He gave Himself on the Cross for us, He willingly shed His blood for us and the creation. The life of the living being is in the blood. So Lord Jesus gave His life to the world. And when we accept Him as our Lord, we take upon ourselves His shed blood. Therefore, His very life we take upon ourselves, and into ourselves, as we *celebrate* the most holy sacrament of Holy Communion. Though it still looks, smells and tastes like grape wine or juice, it is the physical fruit of this earth, which has been created by His hand, and then given special life, His life, within itself, and so, as we ingest it, we partake again and again of Christ Jesus’ very life essence. And with it, everything that He was and is and forever will be. That is how we become, through His process of sanctification, embodiments of righteousness, holiness, truth, life and light. Like Him. That is what it means to become His children! The five wise bridesmaids in our Lord’s teaching parable knew to keep stocked up on oil—the oil of Holy Spirit. And thus, so must we. Seek Him. Pray to Holy Spirit in the privacy of your own hearts and minds every day for His presence to come upon you. And live like you’re God’s children. Not ornery holy terrors, but obedient and oily, holy lights of the world!

