



PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

December 18, 2016

God's Word Works

by Frank Himmel

Speaking to a group of money-loving Pharisees, Jesus once told the story of two acquaintances who died (Luke 16:19-33). One of the men in the account was a rich man, the other was a beggar named Lazarus. Day after day, the rich man ignored Lazarus's obvious need.

When Lazarus died, angels carried him to Abraham's bosom where he was comforted. When the rich man died, he was tormented in Hades.

The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to comfort him. The answer was no. The rich man then made a followup request: "Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house – for I have five brothers – lest they also come to this place of torment."

"But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'

"But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'

"But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead'" (vv. 27-31).

There is a hint of complaint in the rich man's second request and the ensuing conversation, as though he was not adequately warned of his impending doom. His implication is that if God governed differently, more might be saved. Something more dramatic, more attention-getting, more convincing than the Scriptures was needed.

Interestingly, not too long after the Lord related this account, Jesus raised a man from the dead – a man named Lazarus! Did it have the effect the rich man anticipated? Hardly! Read John 11:47-53 and 12:9-11. When the report of Lazarus's resurrection reached the ears of the Jewish leaders, they convened a council and determined to kill both Jesus and Lazarus!

The gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21). Carnal inducements do not assist it. Neither do slick-talking preachers; they are more hindrance than help (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Miracles are not necessary, either.

Honest, humble, truth-seeking souls are moved by the gospel when they hear it. Let's make sure they do. ■



David's Bedtime Prayer

by Frank Himmel

Godly parents teach their children to pray at bedtime, beginning from the time toddlers are old enough to speak. We can develop no better habit than daily prayer. Psalm 141 is David's evening prayer. Let's listen in.

- *"Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips"* (v. 3). Is there anything we need to pray more often or more fervently? Remember James's assessment: "No one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison" (James 2:8). O Lord, guard me from saying too much; guard me from speaking ignorantly; guard me from speaking angrily; guard me from speaking dishonestly; and guard me from constant grumbling and criticism.



- *"Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice the deeds of wickedness with men of iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies"* (v. 4). The place to stop evil conduct is in the heart, before it spreads to the tongue, hands, feet, etc. (Matthew 15:18-19). We have so many less problems when our hearts stay focused on good!

Two dangers constantly lurk; David was keenly aware of both. One is association with "men of iniquity," those whose hearts are not focused on good. To the extent you can choose your company, choose well.

"Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33). The other danger is what David calls admiration of iniquitous men's delicacies. That might refer to their sins themselves, the enjoyable aspects of their wrongdoing. Or, it may refer to sinners' apparent "success," despite (or even because of) wicked living. The Bible frequently warns us against being envious of sinners (Proverbs 23:17; 24:19-20).

- *"Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; it is oil upon my head; let me not refuse it..."* (v. 5). This prayer is threefold. First, let there be a friend who will reprove me when I need it. Some are too afraid or too timid to speak. Let there be a Nathan when I need him. Second, let him offer that rebuke as kindly as possible. At best, it will be hard to take. Third, let me be receptive to it. Let me be humble enough, honest enough, and courageous enough to admit my mistakes and make needed corrections.

- *"Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, and from the snares of those who do iniquity"* (v. 9). David frequently faced enemies trying to entrap him. Behind them all was the great adversary, the devil, who "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Like David, we need to pray that we will not be enticed by his bait or deceived by his camouflage. That requires us to be on the alert and to be aware of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Who among us does not need to include these sentiments in our prayers? ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Mark Clifton	Chris Brooks	Josh Baucom
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Gary Hagler	John Baucom
OPENING PRAYER	Mark Clifton	Chris Brooks	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	Jason Chandler	Jason Chandler	
CUP	Adam Gibson	Adam Gibson	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Rawland Daniel		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Greg Winget
CLOSING PRAYER	Don Rapp	J B Williams	David Gray