



Light

“Symbols, Metaphors, and Similes”

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4

As a child I sang a little song called “This Little Light of Mine.” At the time, it was just a little song that we memorized in Sunday School and sang. It was nothing more; but the teacher emphasized that we were the light. At that time, you hear things, and they stay in your mind, but you don’t really comprehend them. It is like memorizing. We can memorize

lists, but they don’t have any significance until we can put them to some use, or see their relevance to something else.

There are many things that we associate with other things giving them their true meaning. Jesus taught in parables. He used metaphors and similes. They brought the information down to our level so we could associate it with our lives and the things of this earth. The parables are described as stories with a moral. Metaphors and similes guide us to associate an idea or object with a truth. The truth in this is the light of God. What is the light of God? Men have been studying it for years.

As a child, I sang many verses to this song. It continued “Hide it under a bushel? No!” - “Won't let Satan blow it out” - “Shine all over the whole wide world” and “Let it shine til Jesus comes. I'm gonna let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.”

Now, as an adult I see several layers of meaning in this little song. I tried to research to see who originally wrote it, but no one person is given the credit. It is just a little song for children. As a child I sang it, and remembered it, but without real meaning. As a youth, I helped other smaller children learn it and sing it. As an older person, I helped children in Sunday School learn it and sing it. Then as a mature adult, I began to think about the words and their meaning. I realized that I was given a very strong lesson in theology as a child and I didn’t recognize it as a negative preaching to me. The person who taught it to me as a child was the Sunday School teacher and my mother. They explained that I was the light. I was a light in the world. As a light I needed to tell others about Jesus and not hide from that light.

Now, I know that the light was with me as I was growing up. Regardless of where I was or what I was doing, the light of God, the love of God, was always with me. Satan couldn’t blow it out, and I remember the Sunday School teacher putting a shade on a lamp and showing us how the light still shined through. There was nothing that could be put on it that could completely hide it unless we turned the light off.

I know that we cannot turn off the light of God, His love. We cannot stop his grace. It is impossible. With a simple metaphor, John tells us about the light of the world that is coming. In John 1:7-9 we read “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He (John) was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

We are to carry that light with us today. We can’t hide it under a bushel. It is impossible for us now to try to turn out that Light. As Christ was born into this world, He became the physical Light to all of us who believe on Him. John had an awesome privilege to first tell about that Light of God.

His Light will never be dimmed. God sent His Son to be the Light to us. It guides us yes, but it is always there. What more can we ask? A fairly new song, in an album from DC Talk called “In the Light” puts the prayer for our becoming a light in these words. The first chorus says “I keep trying to find a life on my own. Apart from you I am the king of excuses. I’ve got one for every selfish thing I do.” The chorus continues:

I wanna be in the Light
As You are in the Light
I wanna shine like the stars in the heavens
Oh, Lord be my Light and be my salvation
'Cause all I want is to be in the Light
All I want is to be in the Light.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to always follow the Light you have given to us. Sometimes we seem to be in the dark when we try to do things on our own. Help us to feel the assurance that you are there with us and guide us that we may walk in that Light. Amen

1. What other metaphors and similes do you know?
2. Can they guide us through rough times?
3. Can we see God through these simple truths that we learned as a child?
4. Next time you are outside, do you see God in nature, in leaves, snow, wind, calm oceans?
5. Can other actions or objects become a way for you to never forget the greatness of God and His love?

©Gail Kennedy Keffer