



Ancient Clay Lamp

True story. In 1939 or 1940, a great uncle of mine was part of an archaeological 'dig' somewhere in the Holy Land and uncovered a clay lamp. I inherited the lamp from my father. Inside is a yellowed piece of paper which reads, "Lamp-oil. Ancient - est. 2500 BC. Found within the project near Tel-Aviv, 1939-40."

It's a small lamp, bird-shaped, 3" tail to beak, made of clay. I suppose removing the lamp from the Holy Land project was some kind of violation. But the act of holding a 4500 year old hand-made lamp carries with it a reverent sense of history, and the fact that it was made by someone during the time of Moses! Well, wow! If you would like to see it, just ask me.

On occasion when I read the words of Psalm 119:105 I do think about this "little lamp of mine." This is one of the most helpful passages in the Bible, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

In Bible times, there were no flashlights, of course. The traveler carried a small oil lamp, like this one, whose flax wick gave only a tiny light but enough to see by. Not enough light to see what lay far down the path, but enough to take the next step, without stumbling or falling.

Do we feel that way? At the start of this brand-new day, does the Word become our light, our compass? A light for your path into this new day? Did you wake up this morning feeling excited what the day may bring? Or, was there a dull sense of dread about what the day may hold, again?

We may recite "This is the day the Lord has made and I will rejoice," but do you rejoice in your heart? The dawning of each new day is a gift from the Lord, it's not something that we should take for granted. But...

Our pace of life has slowed, we should find Him anywhere, everywhere, in the smallest things and the largest elements of this day. James tells us to “Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds.” Joy? Can you find YOUR joy in The Word?

In the writing project that I have nearly completed there’s a scene in an old, deserted chapel in the middle of nowhere. My heroine stands at the pulpit:

“On the pulpit was her Bible, the one she received on confirmation. She lifted it, then set it down on edge and let it fall open. Her eye rested on a passage from Jeremiah, and she read it aloud: ‘For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

This is the start of a pivotal scene in the story, but it does suggest something about our relationship to the Word. I have never been one to memorize scripture. I have a friend who seems to know the Bible inside and out, and I marvel at how a car salesman can have such an intimate knowledge of God’s word. There have been times when his gift has been intimidating to me. Give him a theme, and he can probably find the right passage.

That’s not something that I can do. Oh, I have my favorite passages, and one or two I could recite, but not like my friend. How about you? Could you, like my heroine, let your Bible fall open and find meaning in a randomly selected passage? Question: Who randomly selected the passage? Your eyes? Or, perhaps, His?

So, it is morning and you have this bit of dread about the day before you, how do you deal with that? Meditation readings help. Prayer helps. Sometimes music can help. This morning, because of that passage, in my mind I can hear Amy Grant singing that beautiful blessed, and very singable song, no, not “This Little Light of Mine,” but this:

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

When I feel afraid, and think I’ve lost my way.
Still, you’re there right beside me.
Nothing will I fear as long as you are near;
Please be near me to the end.

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This essay was the Meditation in Stan Escott's [Watchword](#) for April 30, 2020. These regular words of encouragement, reflection, scripture and devotional prayer, born from the Covid-induced isolation of a small Bible study group, are now available online. To explore Watchwords or sign up for the mailings, visit bosworth30.com/watchwords/.