

## Power Outages

Thunderstorms and other events occasionally knock out electrical power. It's inconvenient, but seldom life-threatening. Going without electricity for a time reminds me of how spoiled I am and how dependent I have become on modern conveniences.

I don't get much work done when the electricity is out! I marvel at people of bygone eras who read the Bible by sunlight in the day and lamp light at night. Preachers wrote sermons, articles, and books by hand long before typewriters were invented, much less word processors. People did research by long, laborious hours of reading books, not by Google searches and internet sites.

As handy as electricity is, there is an infinitely more important power source that can never be knocked out: the Lord Himself! He demonstrated His limitless power by the creation of heaven and earth, and *"nothing is too hard for You"* (Jeremiah 32:17). But power in the material realm doesn't comprise the whole of God's power. The gospel of Christ *"is the power of God unto salvation"* (Romans 1:16). The world may scoff and reject the gospel, but *"to us who are being saved it is the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:18). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead give us hope that we, too will be resurrected (1 Corinthians 6:14); and that power works for our benefit as we strive to serve Him faithfully and grow spiritually (Ephesians 1:19-20).

People got along for millennia without electricity. but attempting to live without God has never ended well. His power created and sustains us. Let us honor Him!

## What is our Blind Spot?

**"Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me'" (Mark 10:21).**

The rich young ruler asked Jesus what he needed to do to go to heaven. Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The young man claimed he had done that. Then Jesus told him, *"One thing you lack."* Jesus saw something missing in his life that could keep him out of heaven.

Before we look at the answer Jesus gives, let's explore this a bit for ourselves. Have you ever wondered what Jesus would tell you? One thing you lack! I do, daily. I may be comfortable and feel confident in the love of God and not sense a lack of anything. It might shock us if we were honest with ourselves.

Jesus knew the man's heart – ours too! He was rich, and confident with no "bad" sins on his record. But he was not using his wealth to glorify God. He had a blind spot.

Blind spots are places inside your car that prevent a clear view outside. Mirrors don't help either. We can't see the possible danger coming. What is our blind spot?

Jesus told him to sell everything and give to the poor. Drastic action. Why? Because that's what it would take. But He also added, *"Come, follow me."*

Mark prefaces this with, "And Jesus looked at him and loved him." When Jesus asks us to do something, it's not because He wants to rain on our parade. He loves us and wants us to be where He is.

This young man walked away sorrowfully dejected. Sadly, he didn't see the sorrow in Jesus' eyes. His love was rejected.

So, the question we must ask ourselves is this, *"What do I lack?"* What would the answer from Jesus be?

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)

## TRUE TREASURE

**"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21 ESV).**

Once when I was teaching a junior high class, an argument raged among the students about designer clothes and which brands were the best. In the heat of the discussion, a student turned to me and said, "Mr. Westmoreland, you always dress nicely. Where do you purchase your clothes?" The discussion ended when they learned the clothes I was wearing that day came from K-Mart.

Even as I look back on that event with a smile, I realize that much of what we see in today's world is no laughing matter. Far too many thrive on the accumulation of "stuff." Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, teaches that our earthly journey consists of more than food, drink, clothing, and the acquisition of goods. Instead, believers must *"desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness..."* (Matthew 6:33 CEB).

When we depart from this life, worldly goods will be left behind - this much is certain. Our "stuff" will become the property of others. In a way, what we have is on loan, for we have only temporary ownership. As we consider these things, let us place less emphasis on the temporary and more on that which Jesus offers – the true riches.

Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

**If you cannot understand why someone is grieving for so long, consider yourself fortunate that you do not understand.**