

**QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR Tuesday 8/27/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD**

Greeting:

What a week if you lived in Florida? One word can sum up a lot of it – “Fay.” Hurricane Fay, Tropical Storm Fay, etc. Fay just would not go away. It rained and it rained endlessly. I began to look out the door for Noah to come sailing by in the ark. For most of us Fay created discomfort and inconvenience. For a few it created tragedy. For those who were tragically affected by Fay’s rain and wind our hearts go out to you and our prayers are with you. For most of us we just had to live with the inconveniences that it brought. I sat here at the church for the two full days Fay blew by. For those of you who do not know, our present church building is less than a mile from the ocean “as the crow flies.” As a result it got a little stormy. We had to get sand bags and put them in front of the doors. We bought them and put ourselves out ourselves (*Just a note of humor for those locals who have been reading the paper*). We tried to make our doors and windows more water proof. For the most part we were successful. We did get some water between the doors and under the doors so that our main lobby flooded and we got water about 5 yards into our worship center. In one of our class rooms we got a good deal of water. On our children’s building we lost our main sign and a storm drain. Again these were just minor inconveniences that caused us to have to do a little extra work. For the majority of us the biggest hassle was that we were without electricity. Some of our people at the church work for the electric company. They have been a little busy as of late. Even days after all the wind and rain passed by they are still working feverishly to restore power. Did you know how important electricity is? I mean, I for one am very grate to ole Ben Franklin for his little kite trick that helped us discover electricity. Do you realize what you can not do without electricity? You can not use those daily necessities we have come to rely on. My battery on my computer can only last so long with out drinking in some electrical juice. Refrigerators, stoves, and the list goes on... are no good with out electricity. Here was a major lose – no lights. You can not see a thing. In the secular work I live in, we help people with what is called disaster recovery plans and business continuity plans. I discovered that we have none of either at the church. Our business continuity plan consisted of one flash light that had a dead battery. It is dark in a hallway with out lights. You can not see where to go and what to do. I found myself stumbling along in the darkness simply trying to find my way from one point to another. To put it simply I was pretty lost and ineffective without lights. Perhaps that is what the Psalmist was trying to say in Psalm 119 when he wrote verse 105.

Scripture for today:

Psalm 119: 105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. 106 I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. 107 I have suffered much; preserve my life, O LORD, according to your word. 108 Accept, O LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws. 109 Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law. 110 The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts. 111 Your statutes are my

heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. 112 My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.”

Life Application:

If you can not have electric lights then at least a flashlight, a lantern or even a match helps. The Psalmist made a confession. He needed a light to show me the way to go. I need guidance just as he did. This really is a dark world we live in. Without clear direction we are lost and ineffective. Every day people get opinions and advice. There are people who make a fortune at giving advice. There are advice columns, self help books television shows, etc.. Dr. Phil has become a household name in America. Not all of these people are bad. Many times they have very helpful information to give. The problem is so often these advice experts change as quickly as the direction of one of those tropical storms. One year a certain action is in vogue and then the next year it is out. Spank your kids, don't spank your kids. Handle the babies as soon as they are born. Don't get germs on those new born babies. It is ok to do this. It is ok to do that. The truth of the matter is that if you are using some advice columnist or self help book to get direction from, by the time you buy it and read it, there is a possibility it is out of date. Oh, and before you think about relying solely on your friend and family's advice - think carefully. So often our advice to others is affected by our own experiences and prejudices. We need a place to turn to find direction. The Psalmist said he had found that in Scripture. He said, "***Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.***" This is so true. Every need we have can be addressed in Scripture. Don't get me wrong. The Bible does not tell you whether to wear blue or brown today. In many cases the Bible does address specific issues and does say directly that certain behavior or actions are right and some are wrong. In this cases we need to listen! However, the Bible is not a rule book. It is a book, however, that gives you guiding principles that you can build your life on. The core values that determine the direction of your life can be found in this great book. Those core values and principles can become a beacon or a lighthouse to guide you through the storms of life. The more you know Scripture the better off you are. I am not talking about magic formulas. I am talking about the fact that the more you expose yourself to the light of God's word, the more wisdom and understanding you will have about life. The Bible is God's instruction book for your life. It is useless unless it is read and known.

Spiritual exercise:

How do you go about making decisions? Do you take the time to read and study and to pray over decisions you have to make? When it comes to career moves, financial decisions, family issues, relationships do you just go on emotions, a feeling, popular opinions or do you seek out direction from the scriptures? Do you have a commitment to "***follow your (his) righteous laws?***" Can you really say, "***My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end?***" A key is to take the time when you hear a message, or read a principle from Scripture and ask yourself how does this apply to me? What do I need to do? What do I need to change? In effect we need to keep the lights on so we can make our way.

Thought for the day.

Keep the light on so you can see the way.