

My friend and I climbed into the mountainside, where the Teacher often went to pray, so that we could meditate as often He did in communion with His Father. Twilight descended and we continued to share our thoughts with each other. As we looked out over the valley from our elevated vantage point, the storyteller began to tell a story.

An old man was rocking on his porch at night, looking out into the darkness. He lived high up in what he considered his own special mountain. His little grandson crept into his lap and asked for a story. The old man said, "Tonight I would rather tell you about what I see out there in the valley. I have sort of special powers, you know."

The little boy couldn't understand. He said, "I can't see anything out there."

"Don't you see the light out there? To me it represents the good that people do."

"I see nothing."

"Are you really sure?"

"Sure! Except there are some tiny flashes from time to time."

"Yes! That is exactly what I am talking about!"

"That's just fireflies, I guess."

"No, it is much more than that. Notice that the light is multi-colored and not just green."

"Yeah, I guess." The little boy was trying to understand, but was wondering if his grandfather was doing all right. "But it is still so very dark."

"People indeed are not very good. But within each is a great capability for good. And sometimes there is a spark of goodness that is emitted from them. Just there, look! That was a widow cooking dinner for a sick neighbor. And that flash over there was a man who has just decided that he would actually keep his promise to treat people better. Off to the left there was the glint from a younger man, a little older than you, who has just committed himself to the Lord."

"I remember that during the war the "night" it was the blackest that I had ever seen. There the flashes of good were even more thrilling, as countless men and women refused to let the unspeakable evil overwhelm them. They saved so many at the risk of their lives and souls."

The little boy, hearing a strange sound to his grandfather's voice, looked up to him and saw that there was a tear in his eye. "Papa, are you feeling bad?"

"No, on the contrary, I am so happy."

"But why are you crying?"

"It is because I love goodness so much. It is true that there is so much blackness; but it only makes the contrast greater when you see the light. I love to see people struggling to do what's right. When you come to love goodness like I do, then you will understand."

I took a while to absorb the impact of this story. I was greatly moved by it, and it led me to think of the true light that now shines in the world through Jesus Christ¹. And we are to be the carrier of that light². And we know that Christ looks down and appreciates even the small acts of goodness that we perform³.

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Luke 21:1-4

1. John 1:1-5, 9; John 8:12, John 9:4-5.
2. Matthew 5:14-16.
3. Matthew 10:42.