

"Of all my inventions," Thomas Edison reminisced some years before his death on Oct. 18, 1931, "the incandescent light was the most difficult."

One October evening, many years ago, the 32 year old inventor sat in his laboratory, weary from 13 months of repeated failure to find a filament that would stand the stress of electrical current. The scientific press, at first politely skeptical, was now openly derisive. Discouraged backers were refusing to put up further funds.

Idly, Edison picked up a bit of lampblack mixed with tar, rolled it into a thread -- "Thread," he mused, "...thread... thread... thread... carbonized cotton thread!" He had tried every known metal. Now he'd run to the vegetable kingdom.

It required 5 hours to carbonize a length of thread in a muffle furnace. The first one broke before it could be removed from the mold; likewise a second and third. An entire spool of thread was consumed; then a second spool. Finally a perfect filament emerged, only to be broken in an effort to insert it into the vacuum tube. Another was destroyed when a jeweler's screwdriver fell against it. Finally, after two days and two nights the filament was successfully inserted. The bulb was exhausted of air and sealed, the current turned on. "The sight we had so long desired to see met our eyes."

And then Edison, after working continuously for 48 hours sat for an additional 45 hours, until the light blinked out. He gazed intently at the world's first incandescent electric lamp.

Look at what Edison gave the world. Look at what Jesus gave the world. What can we as God's children here at Sunnyside give the world?

(adapted from Don Cain)