

# *Walking Together in the Word*

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for January 2024

The purpose of the Chapel Devotion Project is to encourage individuals and families to make prayer and devotional time in God's Word a regular part of their daily lives. We believe many good things will come from your intentional study and reflection of God's Word:

- Your relationship with God and with others will grow and be strengthened.
- Study of the Scripture and hymns for the upcoming weekend will enhance your worship.
- You will come to the Lord daily in prayer, bringing your praise, thanks, and requests to Him.

## *How to Use These Devotions*

Each week contains five pages of devotional material. How you choose to use the material is up to you. You could study one reading or one page a day. You might read several portions every other day. You may use the short order of worship provided below. Use the material in the way that best fits you and your family.

### **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
All: Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

### **DEVOTION and REFLECTION**

### **PRAYERS and THE LORD'S PRAYER**

#### **LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.  
Amen.

or

#### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Leader: The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless us  
and keep us.  
All: Amen.

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Devotions and supporting material written by Pastor Ted Laesch and Mary Laesch.



# Walking Together in the Word

January 1–January 6, 2024

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, January 7.*

## Baptism of Our Lord

### The Gospel: Mark 1:4–11

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

### Devotion on the Gospel

Jesus' baptism is not at all like baptisms that we are used to. Usually for us, the family gathers around the font—godparents, parents, and other family members standing by. Afterwards there are pictures and handshakes and a family gathering at a baptismal dinner.

It wasn't like that at all for Jesus. But there is one way that His baptism is very similar to the ones we're used to. There was great, joyful delight. As He was coming out of the water, the heavens tear open and the Holy Spirit descends on Him like a dove. And then the voice of God is heard: "You are my Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."

It's God's salvation story continuing to unfold. And God proclaims the story so clearly: Jesus is the Son of God! Jesus is Lord. He's your Lord. He's your Savior. He was born and He lived and He suffered and He died and He rose—for you. He's marked you as His own at your Baptism. He's said, "You are a child of God now. You are My child now. And I love you."

And no matter where we go, He goes with us.

And no matter what we go through, He stands beside us.

And no matter what we have done, He forgives us.

And no matter how great or how many our sins, He still says: I love you. You are mine. Your sins are covered.

Jesus is the Son of God. And through Baptism, you are His child—forgiven, loved, and precious—a great, joyful delight to Him.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Jesus had no sin. He did not need to repent as others who had received John's baptism. But he was baptized as the substitute for sinful humanity and this baptism served as His inauguration into ministry. How did God the Father place His "stamp of approval" on Jesus and His work? (see Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1)*

*How was Jesus empowered for His ministry? Look at Mark 1:12-13. What was Jesus' first battle on behalf of humanity?*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Although everything else has a beginning, God has always been. Read Psalm 90:2 and reflect on the fact that our God is holy, infinite, and eternal. What difference does that make for us?*

*God's first creative word called forth light in the midst of darkness. Throughout the Bible, light is symbolic of life and blessing. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Read 2 Corinthians 4:6. What is the role of the light of God in the re-creating work of the Holy Spirit in sin-darkened hearts?*

*Paul answers his own question from verse 1 regarding going on sinning so that grace might increase. His answer (in effect): "God forbid!" What is the basis for his response (see vv. 3-4)?*

*Write down what St. Paul says happens to the Christian because of his or her Baptism. As you look at that list, praise God from who all blessings flow!*

*Verse to Remember:  
Romans 6:11*

## The Old Testament Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

# *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*

## The Epistle: Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus

## The Psalm: Psalm 29

- Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is powerful;  
the voice of the Lord is majestic.
- 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;  
the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,  
Sirion like a young wild ox.
- 7 The voice of the Lord strikes  
with flashes of lightning.
- 8 The voice of the Lord shakes the desert;  
the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
- 9 The voice of the Lord twists the oaks  
and strips the forests bare.  
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
- 10 The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
the Lord is enthroned as King forever.
- 11 The Lord gives strength to his people;  
the Lord blesses his people with peace.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*David, the psalmist, refers to "the voice of the Lord" seven times in this Psalm, emphasizing the strength and authority of God. What other times do you hear the powerful voice of God at work? (see the Old Testament and Gospel readings as two examples)*

*It is evident in this psalm that the Word of God always comes with great power. What great power is shown by God's Word in the lives of His children? (see Romans 1:16-17)*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*Pray stanza three of  
this hymn together as  
a family, or  
individually, as we  
seek to live out our  
baptismal faith and  
calling.*

The Hymn: The Only Son from Heaven

LSB 402

The only Son from heaven,  
Foretold by ancient seers,  
By God the Father given,  
In human form appears.  
No sphere His light confining,  
No star so brightly shining  
As He, our Morning Star.

O time of God appointed,  
O bright and holy morn!  
He comes, the king anointed,  
The Christ, the virgin-born,  
Grim death to vanquish for us,  
To open heav'n before us  
And bring us life again.

O Lord, our hearts awaken  
To know and love You more,  
In faith to stand unshaken,  
In spirit to adore,  
That we, through this world moving,  
Each glimpse of heaven proving,  
May reap its fullness there.

O Father, here before You  
With God the Holy Ghost  
And Jesus, we adore You,  
O pride of angel host:  
Before You mortals lowly  
Cry, "Holy, holy, holy,  
O blessèd Trinity!"

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*No star  
so  
brightly  
shining  
As He,  
our  
Morning  
Star.*

# Faith + Life Connections

Do you remember your Baptism? Ask your parents to tell you about that special day. Jesus was baptized too, but not because He was sinful. Jesus took on our sins in His baptism. When you were baptized, God washed away your sins. Your Baptism connects you with Jesus!

*Mark 1:4-11*

Everything has a beginning—races, games, years, people! But not God. God always has been, and always will be. Jesus said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Rev. 22:13). God *created* all things, including you! Praise our eternal, life-giving, creator God!

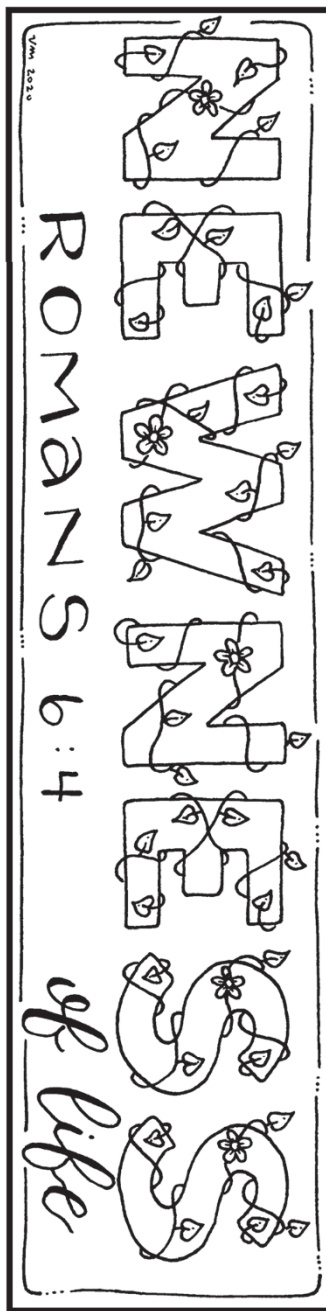
*Genesis 1:1-5*

Jesus died on the cross for our sins. But He didn't stay dead—He rose and He is alive forevermore! Because Jesus lives, we know that we will also live forever with Him!

*Romans 6:1-11*

**Memorize:**

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus  
*Romans 6:11*



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**Devote Yourself to Prayer** *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.





# Walking Together in the Word

January 8–January 13, 2024

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, January 14.*

## Epiphany 2

### The Gospel: John 1:43–51

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

46 “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

48 “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

49 Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

50 Jesus said, “You believe[a] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” 51 He then added, “Very truly I tell you,[b] you[c] will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’[d] the Son of Man.”

### Devotion on the Gospel

The invitation is delightfully simple. It’s just three words: “Come and see.” An invitation from friend to friend, from one heart to another: Come and see. It’s what happens when someone meets the Lord and is excited about the Lord and can’t help but to tell someone else about the Lord.

It’s what happened with Philip and Nathanael. Philip meets Jesus and the next thing we know, he is running after Nathanael telling him the good news. Philip met the Lord and was excited about the Lord and couldn’t help but to tell Nathanael about the Lord. And as the story unfolds, we see a doubter turn into a believer. Faith bursts into the heart of a man. All because of the Holy Spirit working through a simple little phrase: Come and see.

What an invitation! Come and see. It’s an invitation that hasn’t stopped. In fact, it is an invitation that is extended to you and to me. Come and see. Come and see the Christ! Come and see the glory of God, the healing of the sick, the grace given to sinners—to you and me. Come and see—and follow, just like Philip. Just like Nathanael.

What a wonderfully simple invitation. Come and see. An invitation from God’s heart to ours. Come and see the Christ—in Word and in water and in wine and bread. Come and see the Christ at work in your life, sharing miracles of grace, of love, of forgiveness. Come and see—and by the power of the Holy Spirit, follow. And maybe you will go to your friend, your neighbor, your family member or love done and you will say: I have met the Christ! He is the Savior of the world. Come and see!

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*What do you think it means to witness for Jesus?*

*How do our ideas of witnessing compare with what Philip did? Is there anything we can learn from him?*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*When Eli realized it was God who was calling Samuel, Eli taught Samuel how to respond to God's call. What can we learn from Eli's teaching?*

*Verse 7 says that Samuel "did not yet know the Lord." And yet, God calls and commissions Samuel to be His spokesman. What does that mean for us as we consider how God calls you and me into His service?*

## The Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. 6 Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

8 A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

*if I take the  
wings of the  
morning...*

YOU ARE  
THERE!

PSALM 139:9



## The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

12 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

*Do you not know that your bodies  
are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is  
in you, whom you have received  
from God?*

## The Psalm: Psalm 139:1-10

You have searched me, Lord,  
and you know me.  
2 You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
3 You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.  
4 Before a word is on my tongue  
you, Lord, know it completely.  
5 You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.  
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.  
7 Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
10 even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Some in the church at Corinth believed that "everything is permissible" in Christian freedom. They were influenced by the prevailing attitude in their culture that said: "If it feels good, do it." How does Paul answer this sinful and damaging approach to life? How does God regard our bodies? How ought we to regard them then?*

*Verse to Remember:  
1 Corinthians 6:19*

*The psalmist is amazed by the fact that God knows so much about him. What items of knowledge does he list?*

*The psalmist makes it clear, not only does God know everything about him, there's no escaping or hiding from God either. How can this truth cause fear and distress? Or peace and comfort?*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*Read through this hymn and write down what Scripture says is involved in the call to follow Jesus. What is the result of a life following the Savior?*

The Hymn: "Come, Follow Me," the Savior Spake *LSB* 688

"Come, follow Me," the Savior spake,  
"All in My way abiding;  
Deny yourselves, the world forsake,  
Obey My call and guiding.  
O bear the cross, whate'er betide,  
Take My example for your guide.

"I am the light, I light the way,  
A godly life displaying;  
I bid you walk as in the day;  
I keep your feet from straying.  
I am the way, and well I show  
How you must sojourn here below.

"My heart abounds in lowliness,  
My soul with love is glowing;  
And gracious words My lips express,  
With meekness overflowing.  
My heart, My mind, My strength, My all,  
To God I yield, on Him I call.

"I teach you how to shun and flee  
What harms your soul's salvation,  
Your heart from ev'ry guile to free,  
From sin and its temptation.  
I am the refuge of the soul  
And lead you to your heav'nly goal."

Then let us follow Christ, our Lord,  
And take the cross appointed  
And, firmly clinging to His Word,  
In suff'ring be undaunted.  
For those who bear the battle's strain  
The crown of heav'nly life obtain.

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# Faith + Life Connections

“Come quick! Look!” Have you said this when you found something interesting or exciting? When you discover a cool-looking insect, or find something everyone’s been looking for, you call others to come and see! That’s what Philip did when he found Jesus. He called his friend to “Come and see.” How can you tell someone to “Come and see” Jesus this week?

*John 1:43-51*

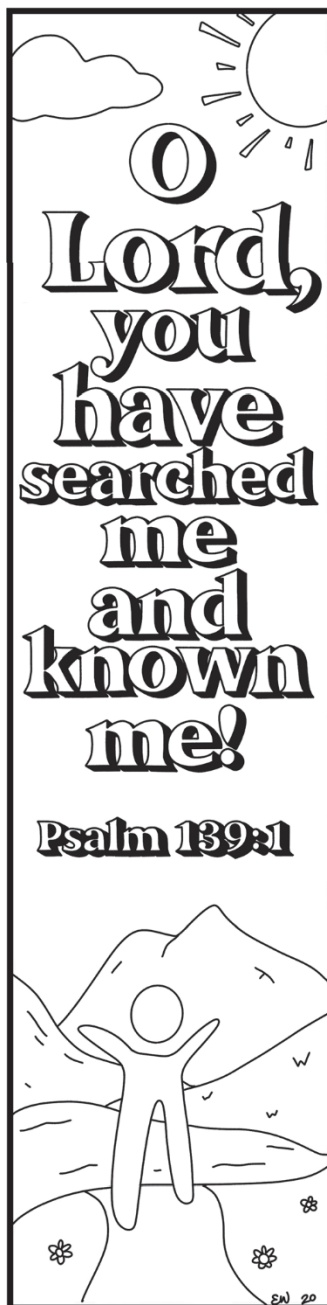
Samuel heard God speaking to Him. What would you do if you heard God speaking to you? Guess what? He does! God speaks to us in His Word, when we read it and hear it read to us. We talk with God in prayer. How awesome that our God communicates with us! *1 Samuel 3:1-10*

Who knows everything about you, even more than your parents or you, yourself? God does! He knows you and loves you, no matter what!

*Psalm 139:1-10*

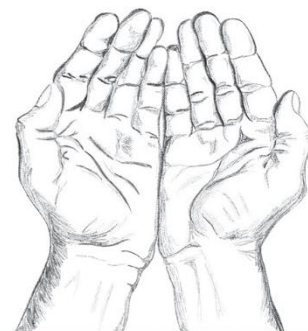
**Memorize:**

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? *1 Corinthians 6:19*



O Lord,

and your  
right hand  
shall hold me.  
amen



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**Devote Yourself to Prayer** *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.



# Walking Together in the Word

January 15–January 20, 2024

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, January 21.*

## Epiphany 3

### The Gospel: Mark 1:14–20

14After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

16Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 17And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

18And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

### Devotion on the Gospel

Do you remember how you came to know Jesus? I’ll bet somebody told you about Him. Maybe it was your mom or your dad when you were just a child. Maybe it was a friend. Maybe there was more than one person. But somehow, someone told you about the Lord, just as I am doing now, and through that good word, God brought you to faith.

John the Baptist was one of the first to tell others about Jesus. Then, after John was arrested, Jesus Himself took up the task. He came preaching, the Bible says, “The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Some who heard that good news were the disciples. Not only did they hear the good news, they were called by Jesus to go and tell that good news to others. And it doesn’t stop with those twelve disciples! All who believe in Jesus and follow Him are called to tell the good news too—to be, as Jesus called it, “fishers of men.”

Through the words of His people, Jesus is revealed. It happens through Your words and mine. Through our words, God comes to people and brings them to faith. All we do is tell the good news. God does everything else.

And that Word that we share is powerful, because it’s God’s Word, and it’s His story, and it’s His power that works in it. And it does work. It works mightily—giving faith, opening heaven, blessing with eternal life.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*What does it mean that Jesus chose and called ordinary, uneducated men to be His disciples and apostles?*

*How did the response of Peter, Andrew, James, and John show that Jesus should take precedence over everything else?*



## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Ninevah was the capital city of the Assyrians, one of the Israelites' most feared enemies. The Assyrians were known to be ruthless and brutal and violent, even abusing God's chosen people. What does the Lord's desire to forgive them say about His love and grace?*

*How could one man's preaching have such an impact on such a powerful, pagan people?*

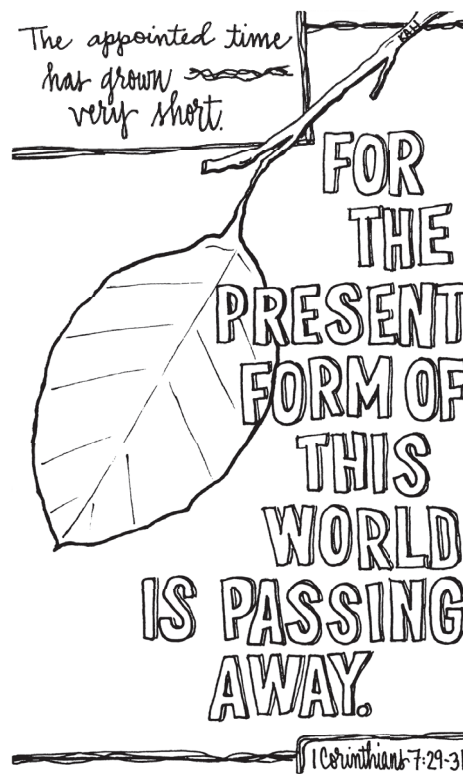
*So very often we are distracted by the things of this world - so distracted that we take our mind off of Jesus and we lose our eternal perspective. How do Paul's words encourage us to live in the truth that "the time is short?"*

*What is Paul's purpose in this passage in his exhortation and encouragement of the Corinthian church? (see verse 35)*

## The Old Testament Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

1Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." 3So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. 4Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" 5And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. . . .

10When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.



## The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

29This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, 30and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, 31and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.



## The Psalm: Psalm 62

1For God alone my soul waits in silence:  
from him comes my salvation.

2He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress;  
I shall not be greatly shaken.

3How long will all of you attack a man  
to batter him,  
like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

4They only plan to thrust him down from his high position.  
They take pleasure in falsehood.

They bless with their mouths,  
but inwardly they curse.

5For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,  
for my hope is from him.

6He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress;  
I shall not be shaken.

7On God rests my salvation and my glory;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

8Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us.

9Those of low estate are but a breath;  
those of high estate are a delusion;  
in the balances they go up;  
they are together lighter than a breath.

10Put no trust in extortion;  
set no vain hopes on robbery;  
if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

11Once God has spoken;  
twice have I heard this:

that power belongs to God,

12and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.

For you will render to a man  
according to his work.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Verse to Remember:*  
Psalm 62:1

*In what ways does  
David in this psalm  
express his trust in  
the Lord?*

*Reread the last two  
verses of the psalm.  
What are the reasons  
that David gives for  
his abiding trust in  
the Lord?*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*What a wonderful prayer this hymn is for those who are lost or those who have gone astray from Christ and His Word. Using the stanzas of this hymn, take time each day this week to pray for the lost and the wayward.*

The Hymn: O Christ, Our True and Only Light *LSB 839*

O Christ, our true and only light,  
Enlighten those who sit in night;  
Let those afar now hear Your voice  
And in Your fold with us rejoice.

Fill with the radiance of Your grace  
The souls now lost in error's maze;  
Enlighten those whose inmost minds  
Some dark delusion haunts and blinds.

O gently call those gone astray  
That they may find the saving way!  
Let ev'ry conscience sore oppressed  
In You find peace and heav'nly rest.

Shine on the darkened and the cold;  
Recall the wand'ers to Your fold.  
Unite all those who walk apart;  
Confirm the weak and doubting heart,

That they with us may evermore  
Such grace with wond'ring thanks adore  
And endless praise to You be giv'n  
By all Your Church in earth and heav'n.

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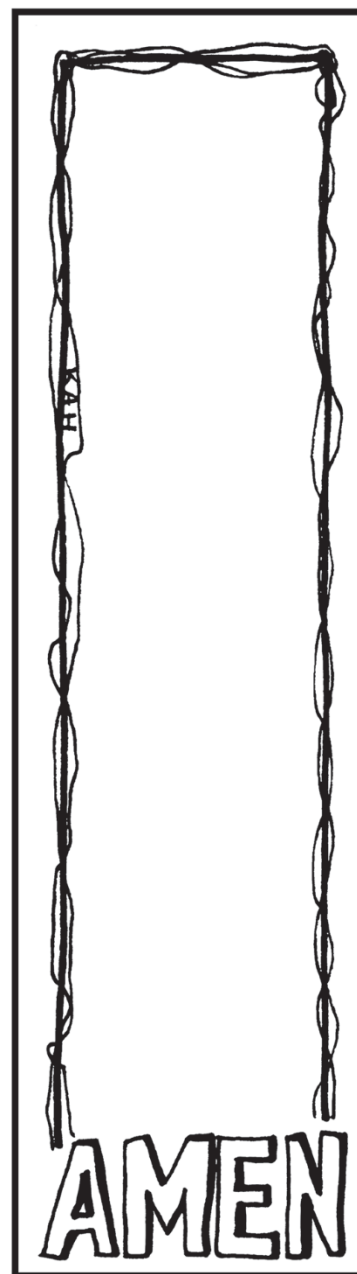
# Faith + Life Connections

How do you catch a fish? Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John knew. They threw nets into the sea and brought fish into their boats. Jesus came and said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." How did they become fishers of men? They shared God's Word with people and the Spirit brought people to faith. You can be a fisher of men too! Talk about how God helps you share His Word and His love. *Mark 1:14-20*

The people of Ninevah were evil and scary. No wonder Jonah didn't want to preach to them! But God loves and wants all to be saved, even those we think are beyond saving. How can you show God's love to someone who is mean to you? Ask God to help you. *Jonah 3:1-5, 10*

When everyone seems against us, we have someone who is for us. God is with you, no matter what. Call to Him. He loves you and He will help you. *Psalms 62*

**Memorize:**  
For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. *Psalm 62:1*



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**Devote Yourselves to Prayer** *Colossians 4:2*  
Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.



# Walking Together in the Word

January 22–January 27, 2024

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, January 28.*

## Epiphany 4

### The Gospel: Mark 1:21–28

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

### Devotion on the Gospel

Who is the authority in your life? Who is the person or what is the thing that makes you do what you do, say what you say, think what you think?

I know that there can be a lot of different answers to that question. Authority can come in many different shapes, sizes, and forms. It can be a pleasure, a perpetual sin, a pride. It can be a sport, wealth, or even a political party. It can be any number of things that hold sway over our lives and hearts and minds. Who is the authority in your life?

Over 2000 years ago, Jesus came, preaching the good news—speaking and teaching with authority! Jesus has authority—authority over demons (as we see in this text), authority over sickness, authority over nature, authority over even death itself! Jesus is the very Son of God. Jesus has authority!

And when Jesus rules our hearts, when Jesus is the authority above anything and everything else for us, then he changes our lives and He changes our future. Our lives are lived in faith for Him. And our eternal future is secure with Him.

Jesus is our Savior from sin. He is our Lord who has given His life for our life. He is the One who guides us do what we do, say what we say, think what we think. Jesus is the authority! Jesus is the authority in our lives.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Rabbis in Jesus' day taught by quoting the opinions of other rabbis. How does Jesus show His authority as the Son of God?*

*What was the reaction of the people to Jesus? How do demons respond to Jesus?*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*“The Prophet” was one of the designations used to refer to the Promised One, Jesus. He would speak God’s own Word and speak in God’s own name. What do these two characteristics reveal about the authority of this Prophet and His Word?*

*What message was the Prophet to bring to God’s people?*

*Read Romans 14:21 and 1 Corinthians 8:13, noting what St. Paul says he is willing to give up. What would you be willing to give up to avoid hurting a weak brother or sister’s conscience?*

*What are the responsibilities of the stronger Christian in regard to weaker Christians in light of these verses from 1 Corinthians 8?*

## The Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15–20

15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. 16 For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.”

17 The Lord said to me: “What they say is good. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. 19 I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. 20 But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.”

## The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:1–13

Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. 2 Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. 3 But whoever loves God is known by God.

4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

7 But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8 But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? 11 So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12 When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

## The Psalm: Psalm 111

Praise the Lord.

- I will extol the Lord with all my heart  
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.
- 2 Great are the works of the Lord;  
they are pondered by all who delight in them.
- 3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds,  
and his righteousness endures forever.
- 4 He has caused his wonders to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and compassionate.
- 5 He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.
- 6 He has shown his people the power of his works,  
giving them the lands of other nations.
- 7 The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy.
- 8 They are established for ever and ever,  
enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.
- 9 He provided redemption for his people;  
he ordained his covenant forever—  
holy and awesome is his name.
- 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.  
To him belongs eternal praise.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning  
of wisdom;  
all who follow his precepts have  
good understanding.*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Psalm 111 and 112 are “twins” psalms, probably written by the same author and meant to be read together. Read both psalms and note common themes and thoughts.*

*The “fear” that the psalmist speaks of in verse 10 is a loving reverence and awe of God. Why is this verse a theme you see several other times in the Bible? (see Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7, 9:10)*

*Verse to Remember:  
Psalm 111:10*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*As you read or sing  
this hymn, how is the  
authority and divinity  
of Jesus expressed?*

The Hymn: Son of God, Eternal Savior

LSB 842

Son of God, eternal Savior,  
Source of life and truth and grace,  
Word made flesh, whose birth among us  
Hallows all our human race,  
You our Head, who, throned in glory,  
For Your own will ever plead:  
Fill us with Your love and pity,  
Heal our wrongs, and help our need.

As You, Lord, have lived for others,  
So may we for others live.  
Freely have Your gifts been granted;  
Freely may Your servants give.  
Yours the gold and Yours the silver,  
Yours the wealth of land and sea;  
We but stewards of Your bounty  
Held in solemn trust will be.

Come, O Christ, and reign among us,  
King of love and Prince of Peace;  
Hush the storm of strife and passion,  
Bid its cruel discords cease.  
By Your patient years of toiling,  
By Your silent hours of pain,  
Quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,  
Stem our selfish greed of gain.

Son of God, eternal Savior,  
Source of life and truth and grace,  
Word made flesh, whose birth among us  
Hallows all our human race:  
By Your praying, by Your willing  
That Your people should be one,  
Grant, O grant our hope's fruition:  
Here on earth Your will be done.

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Faith + Life Connections

*Walking Together in the Word, January 22-January 27, 2024*



Who tells you what to do?  
Parents, other adults . . . these people are authorities in your life. They help you do what is right. But sometimes we listen to people that tell us wrong things to do. How do we know who to follow? Jesus is the best authority. He always leads us to think and say and do things that are good and right. Where can you go to find out what Jesus says?

*Mark 1:21-28*

God told Moses that He would send a Prophet who would speak God's own Word and speak in God's name. That Prophet was Jesus! We still listen to Him today, through the Bible, God's Word. Why should we listen to the words of Jesus?

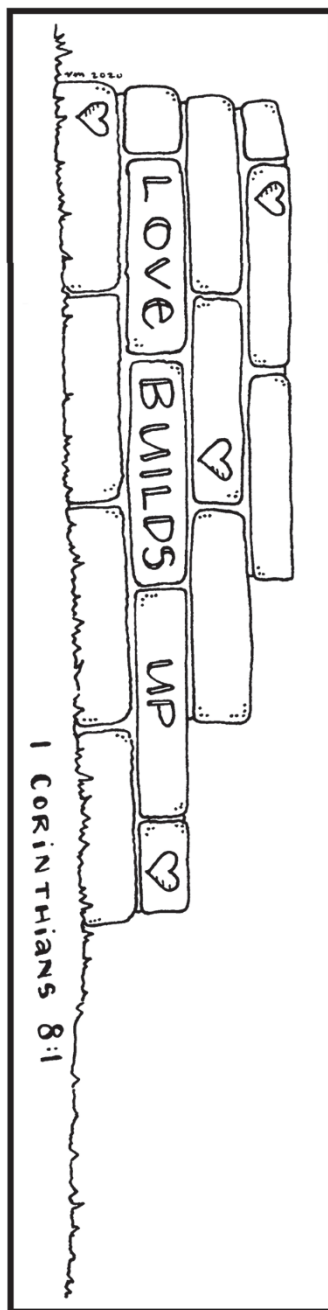
*Deuteronomy 18:15-20*

It's tempting to be a "know-it-all," especially if you do know a lot! But God tells us it's more important to love others. How will you show love to others this week?

*Psalms 111*

Memorize:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. Psalm 111:10



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