

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
EPIPHANY

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

January 22 - January 28



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

In our modern context, if there were men with responsibilities who chose to drop everything, leave their jobs, perhaps leave their families, and go follow some guy around, we would likely think them impulsive (at best). But our Gospel text this week shows Peter, James, and John doing exactly that. However, Jesus was a rabbi, and these three men were being given an opportunity to study under a rabbi. When they drop everything to follow Jesus, they are seizing on an incredible opportunity that would have been considered a high honor in their context.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18 also deals with followers. The Corinthians were divided because some of the members of the church community were claiming to follow particular apostles or leaders. This passage reminds us that we all follow Christ and there should be no disunity in the body. What a powerful reminder to those of us who live in a time where the Church is once again fracturing along political lines, petty theological squabbles, and minor disagreements. Once again, we need to heed the call to recenter on Christ and be united.

Psalm 27 is another reminder to put Christ at the center, especially when we are fearful. There is so much that causes me fear. Just a few moments scrolling headlines, reading some dire predictions of the future, or thinking about the rapid rise of scary technologies, and I am bogged down in fear. Perhaps you feel the same way. Maybe you are facing an unknown future, trouble in relationships, unnerving happenings in the world, or a health diagnosis that has caused fear to grip you. Continue to seek Jesus, to center him in your life, and to remind yourself of his promises.

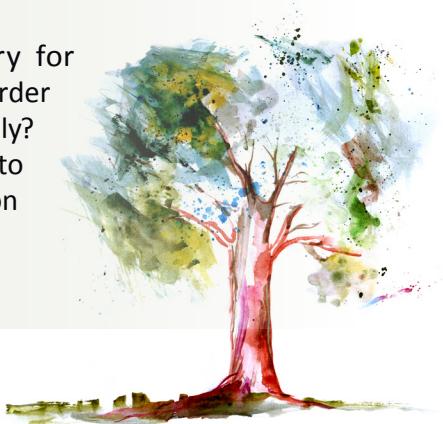


Speaking of promises, this week we also read Isaiah 9:1-4, which is the same passage quoted and in our Gospel text. This prophecy, written hundreds of years before Jesus, was fulfilled by him. Like those who heard this prophecy, we are people walking in darkness who have seen a great light. We are in the season of Epiphany, where God revealed, and is continuing to reveal, himself.

Jesus issued an invitation to the three men in our story to move from the crowd to being disciples, to being followers, to being apprentices of him and his way. He issues the same challenge to us today. Jesus is calling you to move from the crowd into apprenticeship by modeling your whole life to become more like him, to surrender the fears that keep you trapped, and to move to dependency on him.

FOR reflection

What changes are necessary for you to make in your life in order to follow Jesus wholeheartedly? Where might he be asking you to change? Ask God for direction on how to best follow him.





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday

Psalm 27:1-6; 1 Samuel 1:1-20; Galatians 1:11-24

Friday

Psalm 27:1-6; 1 Samuel 9:27-10:8; Galatians 2:1-10

Saturday

Psalm 27:1-6; 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Luke 5:27-32

Sunday

Psalm 27:1, 4-9; Isaiah 9:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

Monday

Psalm 27:7-14; Judges 6:11-24; Ephesians 5:6-14

Tuesday

Psalm 27:7-14; Judges 7:12-22; Philippians 2:12-18

Wednesday

Psalm 27:7-14; Genesis 49:1-2, 8-13, 21-26; Luke 1:67-79

Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering: for my Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 1:11

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51)

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

Scripture Reading (read Psalm and Gospel text here)

Period of Silence

Confessing Our Faith (Apostles' Creed)

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect (Third Sunday after Epiphany: The Baptism of our Lord)

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the good news of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

A Midday Prayer

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms. Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. *Amen.*

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name.

Amen.

*Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all
snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell
with us to preserve us in peace; and
let your blessing be upon us always;
through Jesus Christ
our Lord.
*Amen.**



