

THE LIVING WORD OF EPIPHANY

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

February 5 - February 11

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

As we near the end of the season of Epiphany, a season of increasing light and revelation, this week's readings draw us into the spotlight by clarifying our call as God's people. We discover that ***those of us privileged to perceive God's light and receive God's light are also called to share God's light with the world.***

In Sunday's Gospel reading from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares, "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14). He then unpacks those terms by describing how salt and light are perfected in service to others. Salt that fails to enhance or preserve food is useless. Light that fails to enlighten a house is useless. Salt and light do not find perfection in isolation. Their power is made perfect in service.

Isaiah and Paul affirm and strengthen our call to be salt and light. In Isaiah, the prophet chastises those who have lost their saltiness (Is 58:1-12). They may have an appearance of righteousness, but their pride, quarreling, and hostility reveal they have lost the flavor of justice, generosity, and service. Their so-called righteousness fails to enhance or sustain the lives of others. If only they could recapture true righteousness (i.e., saltiness), their light would "break forth like the dawn" (Is 58:8).

In 1 Corinthians chapter 2, Paul invites us to be enlightened with the powerful wisdom of the cross (vv. 1-16). The cosmopolitan and status-seeking Corinthians may have an appearance of worldly wisdom, but their prideful bickering and social divisions reveal their immaturity in "spiritual things" (v. 13). Slick rhetoric and indulgent lifestyles not only fail to enlighten but actually hide the light of Christ under a bucket. Paul's shocking message is that every gift and strength is meant to be used, spent, shared, and funneled into the shape of a cross. The cross of Christ is not only a once-for-all accomplishment on our behalf, it also reveals an enduring pattern—the mind of Christ—that allows God's light to fill the world.

Wisdom and righteousness (i.e., salt and light) appear as recurring themes throughout the week.

Thursday through Saturday:

- Psalm 112 celebrates the Fear of the Lord as a source of lasting righteousness and wisdom.
- Deuteronomy praises God's Law as a fount of wisdom allowing God's people to shine his light to all nations.
- Isaiah foretells the tragic end of all who build lives on surface piety while keeping their hearts far from God (quoted by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark!).
- James the brother of Jesus implores us to reveal the wisdom of the cross through lives of humility, purity, and peace.

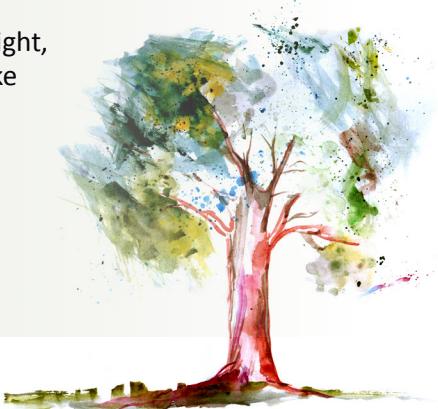
Monday through Wednesday:

- Psalm 119 treasures God's Word as a lamp for our feet and a light on our path.
- King Josiah recommits his kingdom to their identity as God's salt and light when the Book of the Law is (re)discovered in the temple.
- Paul affirms "the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).
- Proverbs contrasts the folly of worldly wisdom with the light of life-giving commandments.
- Jesus assures us that we will never walk in darkness as long as we follow him.

FOR reflection

As people called to be salt and light,
do our works inspire and provoke
others to glorify God (Mt 5:16)?

Where are we at risk of
substituting surface piety for
genuine justice, generosity, and
service in the world?





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday

Psalm 112:1-9; Deuteronomy 4:1-14; 1 John 5:1-5

Friday

Psalm 112:1-9; Isaiah 29:1-12; James 3:13-18

Saturday

Psalm 112:1-9; Isaiah 29:13-16; Mark 7:1-8

Sunday

Psalm 112:1-10; Isaiah 58:1-12; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Matthew 5:13-20

Monday

Psalm 119:105-112; 2 Kings 22:3-20; Romans 11:2-10

Tuesday

Psalm 119:105-112; 2 Kings 23:1-8, 21-25; 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Wednesday

Psalm 119:105-112; Proverbs 6:6-23; John 8:12-30

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

“And now,” God says, this God who took me in hand from the moment of birth to be his servant, to bring Jacob back home to him, to set a reunion for Israel—What an honor for me in God’s eyes! That God should be my strength! He says, “But that’s not a big enough job for my servant—just to recover the tribes of Jacob, merely to round up the strays of Israel. I’m setting you up as a light for the nations so that my salvation becomes global!”

Isaiah 49:5-6 MSG

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 (Fifth Sunday after Epiphany)

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your 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.**



