

LIGHT FROM THE WORD

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inside

Light from God's Word

Daily Devotionals

Daily Bible Readings

Meet the Writers

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Light from God's Word

The Bible does not mention the second coming of Christ to entertain us, but to edify us. Furthermore, the Bible doesn't tell us when Jesus will come again, but it does tell us how to live in light of his promised return.

The second coming inspires hope. Despite the trials and persecution that buffeted the Thessalonians, they persevered in faith, hope, and love, knowing that at Jesus' return the believing dead would be resurrected, living believers would be caught up together, and all reunited with Jesus.

The second coming inspires holy living. As the apostle Paul explained to the Thessalonians, it is not God's will for anyone to waste time while anticipating Christ's return. Instead, it is God's will that every believer leads a sanctified life.

The second coming inspires urgency. We cannot predict how much time remains until Jesus returns. Now is the day of opportunity. We need to redeem the time and urge the lost to be reconciled to God. Like the Thessalonian believers who were young in the faith, yet zealously spreading the good news, we should be inspired to rescue the perishing.

As we study Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, may we, too, spread the good news near and far. The Lord said he is coming soon, and his reward is with him (Rev. 22:12).

Sincerely,

Wesleyan Publishing House Editorial Staff

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a difference in your life?**

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*Then I called on the name of the LORD:
"LORD, save me!" (Ps. 116:4)*

It was an Easter Sunday when three men boarded a boat for what was intended to be a short trip between two small Pacific islands. Six days later, a family member reported to the Coast Guard that the three men had not returned. Immediately a search that would cover nearly 78,000 nautical miles was initiated. At first, the search yielded little results. Hope was thin until a pilot spotted signs of life in the form of branches that formed the word "HELP."

In today's Scripture reading, there is another word that is also a cry for help, spelled S-A-V-E. To gain a better understanding of what the psalmist was describing, we only need to look to the apostle Peter. Like the psalmist, and not unlike the three men stranded on Easter Sunday, Peter was caught in a desperate situation after he courageously responded to Jesus' invitation to step out of the boat and join him on the water. As Peter began to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Without hesitation Jesus reached down and pulled Peter to safety (Matt. 14:30–31).

Sometimes life strands us on an island, sometimes it tosses us in the waves, and sometimes we may feel that the "cords of death" entangle us (Ps. 116:3). Whenever we find ourselves in desperate situations, let "Lord, save me!" be the prayer of our hearts.

—T. J. Albertson

Psalm 116:1–9

**RECOUNT A TIME WHEN THINGS SEEMED DESPERATE
AND GOD DELIVERED YOU.**

*We remember . . . your work produced by faith,
your labor prompted by love, and your endurance
inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 1:3)*

In 1914, famed Irish explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton set out on a trans-Antarctic expedition, but disaster struck when his ship became trapped and eventually crushed by ice. Stranded with twenty-seven men, Shackleton led them through freezing temperatures and storms, drifting on various ice floes for months. In a daring open-boat journey, he and five other crewmen crossed over 800 miles of treacherous seas to seek rescue. Shackleton and his small crew of men eventually landed on the uninhabited side of South Georgia, an island far off the coast of Argentina. He then walked over thirty-two miles of mountainous terrain to the fishing village of Stromness to find help to rescue his stranded crew. Against overwhelming odds, all twenty-seven members of his crew survived. Shackleton's leadership and care for his men turned a failed expedition into one of history's most remarkable tales of survival, demonstrating that hope and resolve can triumph over despair. He lived up to the name of his ship: *Endurance*.

In one of Paul's first letters, we meet a small church that has faced hardship and persecution from its inception. Yet this small, persecuted church remained faithful, loving, and hopeful. While Paul only spent a relatively short amount of time with them during his first visit, he continually remembered and praised them as a model for churches throughout the Roman Empire. The church in Thessalonica models persistent faith, passionate love, and enduring hope for us today.

—Mark Moore

1 Thessalonians 1:1–3

ENDURE TODAY'S HARDSHIPS WITH FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

*Our gospel came to you not simply with words
but also with power, with the Holy Spirit
and deep conviction. (1 Thess. 1:5)*

P*ax Romana*, the peace of Rome, was proclaimed throughout the land. This gospel offered peace and prosperity for everyone in the empire. Trade and commerce flourished under this peace. Extensive road systems were built under this peace, ensuring safer travel and economic growth. But Roman peace came only from Roman power. Rome maintained this peace through violence, war, and oppression, which was hardly good news for those in the empire outside of Rome proper.

The gospel of Christ also offered peace for everyone who heard it. This gospel also came with power, but here we see a surprising difference. The peace of Christ, *Pax Christi*, did not use power to oppress and enslave people; rather, it offered true freedom.

The power of the gospel of Jesus Christ drove the apostle Paul to share this gospel with everyone across the Roman Empire. He had experienced *Pax Christi* firsthand. He experienced true liberation and salvation and dedicated his life to proclaiming this good news. The church in Thessalonica rejoiced at this good news and was filled with the Holy Spirit. Though they experienced persecution and suffering because of the gospel, they remained faithful just as Paul did.

The good news of Jesus Christ comes to us today with that same life-giving power. May we truly find it good news and be filled with the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit.

—Mark Moore

1 Thessalonians 1:4–5

PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF THE PEACE OF JESUS CHRIST!

You welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. 1:6)

Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for twenty-seven years for his resistance to South Africa's apartheid government. Held in harsh conditions on Robben Island and other prisons, he endured hard physical labor and isolation, but never gave up his vision for a just and unified South Africa. Through his letters from prison and emphasis on peace, he became a symbol of resistance and reconciliation. Upon his release in 1990, he chose forgiveness over revenge, working to dismantle apartheid through peace and dialogue. In 1994, he became South Africa's first Black president. Mandela's endurance and graciousness, forged through severe suffering, offered his country and the world a profound example of joyful perseverance.

The church in Thessalonica also served as an example for joyful perseverance in the face of severe suffering. Welcoming the gospel was not easy for the church. Unlike other churches in southern Greece, such as Corinth, the Thessalonian church endured harsh persecution from their community. Still, they remained joyful. Paul helps us understand the source of their joy. Their joy was not a result of their circumstances but in spite of them.

God does not promise that we will never experience suffering after receiving the gospel. In spite of our circumstances, he offers joy through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

—Mark Moore

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

EMBRACE THE SPIRIT'S GIFT OF JOY NO MATTER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. (1 Thess. 1:8)

As a child, my family owned a small cabin on a lake in northern Indiana. We spent most weekends fishing and swimming. A Quaker camp owned most of the land on our side of the lake. In the middle of the campground sat a large bell that the camp would use to notify the campers when it was mealtime. Every day at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the bell could be heard ringing across the lake. Even though it was not meant for us, the bell often reminded my brother and me to go to the cabin to get something to eat before heading back out on the lake.

In his opening letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul provides us with an intriguing metaphor. He compares the church to a bell ringing out the message of Christ. The more they endured, the louder their faith rang out the message of Jesus throughout Greece and eventually everywhere else. Paul continually praised the church in Thessalonica because their simple, yet persistent faith was known beyond their city.

Imagine your life as a bell. What message is ringing for everyone to hear? Paul's prayer is that your life will ring out the message of the good news of Jesus. Through your faithfulness and love, the message of Christ will ring through your family, friends, city, and world.

—Mark Moore

1 Thessalonians 1:8–9

LET THE MESSAGE OF JESUS CHRIST RING OUT FROM YOU.

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. (1 Thess. 1:9–10)

During World War II, the Italian town of Assisi became a haven for hundreds of Jews escaping persecution and certain death. Courageous priests like Giuseppe Nicolini, along with the townspeople, hid them in convents and monasteries. Forged documents were printed in secret. Escape routes were whispered in alleyways. Every knock on the door could have been the Gestapo. Families had to stay silent for months, and children were coached never to cry aloud. Mass was celebrated in underground rooms. Time was measured by meals discreetly delivered and coded signals. They waited not just for liberation, but for survival, living moment to moment in hope. When the Allies arrived and the Nazis fled, those saved emerged weeping with gratitude. Their long, fearful wait in the shadows had ended in salvation, thanks to those who risked everything to shelter them.

Paul praised the church in Thessalonica for turning from idols to serve the true God and for waiting for the return of Christ, the living God. The Thessalonians had found their true salvation, but they had to wait patiently while enduring suffering and persecution. It would have been easy for them to give up and return to their former idols, but they remained faithful. Waiting can be heavy with fear and uncertainty, but we are called, just as the church in Thessalonica, to wait on Christ with faith and hope.

—Mark Moore

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10

WAIT FAITHFULLY IN HOPE, EVEN WHEN FEAR SURROUNDS YOU.

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. (1 Thess. 1:2)

In the early twentieth century, leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, still had no effective treatment. Alice Ball, an African American chemist and the first woman and first Black professor at the University of Hawaii, revolutionized treatment with her groundbreaking "Ball Method." By modifying chaulmoogra oil into an injectable and absorbable form, Ball's work offered the first effective treatment for leprosy and was used globally for decades. Tragically, Ball died at just twenty-four years of age, and her contributions to science were not recognized until years later. Her legacy, though once obscured, continues to impact global medicine and serves as a testament to her brilliance and resilience. Her hard work and dedication helped bring dignity and healing to thousands once shunned by society.

The church in Thessalonica was not a powerful group of influencers and leaders in Greek society. They would have been relatively unknown to the community at large, yet Paul notes that their enduring faith in the midst of persecution served as a model for the church spread throughout the empire. Paul praised them for their humble obedience and often encouraged and challenged other churches with their story. The church in Thessalonica encourages us to live out our faith with joy and perseverance—even when we think no one notices. Our simple lives of faith will impact more people than we can ever imagine.

—Mark Moore

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

LIVE FAITHFULLY AND SERVE HUMBLY, EVEN WHEN NOT RECOGNIZED.

*What shall I return to the LORD
for all his goodness to me? (Ps. 116:12)*

The chorus of a popular worship song, by Brandon Lake, proclaims, "So I throw up my hands and praise you again and again, 'cause all that I have is a hallelujah, hallelujah. And I know it's not much but I've nothing else fit for a King, except for a heart singing hallelujah, hallelujah." For me, the line, "I know it's not much," has always stood out. Singing praise to God, even offering our lives to him, may not feel like much in light of the grandeur of God, but they are immense offerings because they are everything we have to give. God has no need for expensive gifts or luxury items more appropriate for a king. God has everything he needs. A heart singing hallelujah is the perfect gift.

The psalmist asks an important question in verse 12: "What shall I return to the LORD for all of his goodness to me?" Nothing he could offer could match what God had already given him. So what does the psalmist do? He worships. He lifts up the cup of salvation as a testimony to the goodness and protection he has received from God. As a further act of worship, he offers his life in service to the God who has given much. He doesn't have anything else to offer except his praise and his life, which, as it turns out, is everything.

—Mark Moore

Psalm 116:12-19

OFFER YOUR HALLELUJAH AND YOUR LIFE TO GOD.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

By reading for fifteen minutes each day, you can read every chapter of the Bible in one year. Begin anytime!

march

1. Luke 8–9
2. Luke 10–11
3. Luke 12–13
4. Luke 14–16
5. Luke 17–18
6. Luke 19–20
7. Luke 21–22
8. Luke 23–24
9. Numbers 1–2
10. Numbers 3–4
11. Numbers 5–6
12. Numbers 7–8
13. Numbers 9–11
14. Numbers 12–14
15. Numbers 15–17
16. Numbers 18–20
17. Numbers 21–23
18. Numbers 24–26
19. Numbers 27–30
20. Numbers 31–33
21. Numbers 34–36
22. John 1–3
23. John 4–5
24. John 6–7
25. John 8–9
26. John 10–11
27. John 12–13
28. John 14–17
29. John 18–19
30. John 20–21
31. Deuteronomy 1–2

april

1. Deuteronomy 3–4
2. Deuteronomy 5–7
3. Deuteronomy 8–11
4. Deuteronomy 12–15
5. Deuteronomy 16–19
6. Deuteronomy 20–23
7. Deuteronomy 24–27
8. Deuteronomy 28–29
9. Deuteronomy 30–31
10. Deuteronomy 32–34
11. Acts 1–3
12. Acts 4–6
13. Acts 7–8
14. Acts 9–10
15. Acts 11–13
16. Acts 14–16
17. Acts 17–19
18. Acts 20–22
19. Acts 23–25
20. Acts 26–28
21. Joshua 1–4
22. Joshua 5–7
23. Joshua 8–10
24. Joshua 11–14
25. Joshua 15–18
26. Joshua 19–21
27. Joshua 22–24
28. Romans 1–3
29. Romans 4–7
30. Romans 8–10

may

1. Romans 11–13
2. Romans 14–16
3. Judges 1–3
4. Judges 4–5
5. Judges 6–8
6. Judges 9–11
7. Judges 12–15
8. Judges 16–18
9. Judges 19–21
10. Ruth 1–4
11. 1 Corinthians 1–4
12. 1 Corinthians 5–9
13. 1 Corinthians 10–13
14. 1 Corinthians 14–16
15. 1 Samuel 1–3
16. 1 Samuel 4–7
17. 1 Samuel 8–10
18. 1 Samuel 11–13
19. 1 Samuel 14–15
20. 1 Samuel 16–17
21. 1 Samuel 18–20
22. 1 Samuel 21–24
23. 1 Samuel 25–27
24. 1 Samuel 28–31
25. 2 Corinthians 1–4
26. 2 Corinthians 5–8
27. 2 Corinthians 9–13
28. 2 Samuel 1–3
29. 2 Samuel 4–7
30. 2 Samuel 8–11
31. 2 Samuel 12–13



T. J. Albertson has been pastoring for twenty-one years, the last nineteen in interchurch service. He loves teaching the whole Bible and its relevance to life.



Marcy Burke enjoys living in Alabama, being a retired pastor's wife, former missionary, and worship leader. She enjoys playing the piano and taking long walks with her husband, Larry.



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