

Sermon followed by Service

January 15, 2023 - God-Lived Life - 1

1 Peter 2:2-3

What is the God-lived life? The God-lived life is a life of being a disciple, a life that wants to learn more about God, that wants to grow closer to God. The God-lived life is a life that loves to listen to God, that loves God's Word. Today, Peter uses a stronger word. The God-lived life is a life that craves God's Word.

Oh, that word "craves" is a powerful word, isn't it? And it shames me. I'll tell you what I crave - spaghetti and, this past week, Christmas chocolate. I'll tell you what I crave - put my phone in front of me and I just have to know: "What happened? Who said what? What do the internet gods think I want to know; I need to know!" But God's Word? If the preacher's long or boring, la dee da dee da. If I've heard it before, if the Memory Treasure takes work, if I'm too tired, if I'm too needing to get to my work, my thing Oh, I might admire how other people crave, but they must have more time, less to do. I might think - after I get the rest of my life in order, but first "my stuff." I might want to start; I might even start, but God always lets something get in the way. So, "crave the pure milk of the word?" That word "crave" is a powerful word, and it shames me.

So let's just leave it behind. Oh, that sounds like a good idea, doesn't it? Do we get to do that? If God says something we don't like, do we get to just leave it behind and go on our way? We aren't here to go on our way, are we? We're here to leave behind our way and to be on Jesus' way. Like the tax collector in Jesus' parable, we're here broken and contrite before God - "God, have mercy on me a sinner." Like that tax collector, we're here for God's mercy, God's

blessing. We're here for God's new start, God's new day. We're here to live the God-lived life, right?

What does the God-lived life look like? The God-lived life looks like Jesus. The God-lived life looks like Jesus when he's twelve years old. Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. As they're heading back home, Jesus stays back in Jerusalem. He's not out and about exploring big-city Jerusalem; he's at the temple. He's not just checking out the massive Temple complex that Herod built; Jesus is talking with the Bible teachers, asking his questions, digging into God's Word. For hours and days, he's digging into God's Word, asking his questions, connecting the dots, seeing his place in God's Word.

Then we see Jesus, 30 year's old, just after he's baptized. What did we say last week? - he's supercharged by the Spirit of God who then leads Jesus out into the wilderness for this purpose - to do battle with Satan. And what do we hear? Satan tempting, twisting God's Word, offering to satisfy Jesus' human hunger for food, offering to satisfy our human craving for glory and the good life, to make life easy for Jesus. And what does Jesus do? He takes the Word he's been digging into; he wields the Word as a weapon against Satan; Jesus cuts through Satan's lies, and puts Satan in his place, with the Word of God.

Then we see Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount expounding, explaining God's Law. He knows how people - can I say "we"? Jesus knows how we like to find loopholes around God's Law, shortcuts through God's Law, holes that empty God's Law. He knows how people like to re-write God's Word, God's Way, to fit their own word and way. And what does Jesus do? Jesus doubles down. Jesus doesn't make the Law easier; he shows the Law to be

tougher, stricter, more demanding, and more condemning; he shows God's Word to be just what we need.

And then we hear Jesus with his Bible in his heart, and this time he points to the cross. **“Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him.’”** And what did Jesus do? He didn't do “the loophole, shortcut, leave God's Word behind to do my own thing” thing. No, Jesus set his life on doing what God's Word gave him to do; he set his life on sacrifice and went to the cross.

Why? To cover over our shortcuts and loopholes, to cover over our twisting and turning of what God says, to cover over our la dee da dee da. To pay the price for the times we try to shut God up and cut God off. You know how angry you get when people tell you to shut up, when people intentionally cut you off mid-sentence? Can you imagine how righteously upset God could be with us? But Jesus took our place and took what we would have coming from an angry and condemning God. Now, you get to hear God's favorite Words: “Come to me. Relax. I've got this; I've got you. I've got your past forgiven; I've got you forgiven. I have a place for you in my heart; I have a place for you in my heaven.” Those favorite words of God - they sound so good, don't they?

They sound so good that when Peter says: “Crave” them, we don't see that as some imposition - God imposing on us - do we? And when God invites us in to hear his secrets, the secrets of his love, the secrets of heaven, we don't think that some hardship, do we? And when God doesn't just text us “Ivya,” but gives us a whole Bible to speak to us, comfort us, guide us, inspire us, power us ... that's why

Peter says: **“Like new-born babies, crave the pure milk of the word, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”**

We’ve tasted that the Lord is good. You’ve tasted that the Lord is good, haven’t you? That’s why we’re doing something special. We’re taking a break from what we’ve been doing. We’re starting a new day, a new start with our Bibles. We’re taking a break from all the other stuff going on in our lives. We’re starting a new day, a new start listening and learning what God wants to say to me, to you. We’re taking a break from all the other stuff we think we need to be doing, to let God do, to let God do what he sees we need in us.

That’s why we’re asking you to start new with us on Sunday mornings - a new start with the basics of what we teach and why we teach what we teach. Then during the week, a new start together, a new start with your Bible or a devotion, or a new start praying. Maybe you’ve heard that before. Here’s something you maybe haven’t heard - tell us what you’re doing, what you’re reading, what you’re learning, what you’re praying. And ask us, encourage us, yes, even challenge us - to do what? To be like those sheep - listening to the Shepherd, following the Shepherd, living the God-lived life of a Disciple listening to the Word of Jesus. Amen.

January 14 & 15, 2023

SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we follow our sports teams, our political heroes, our social media (small screen) and big screen stars. People invest untold hours a week (a day) to learn all they can about their teams, heroes, stars. How much of what we “learn” is actually true? How many of us wouldn’t be embarrassed to know how much time we spend following people we can’t stand?

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we consider what it means to follow - to be a disciple of - the One who gave his life for us so we can have the Life of heaven.

OPENING HYMN

“Speak, O Lord”

Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow’r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we’ll stand on your promises,
and by faith we’ll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,
and the earth is filled with your glory.

I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!
Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

1 Peter 1:22–2:3

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For,

“All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE OF THE DAY

Proverbs 1:7

Alleluia. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 18:9–17

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Cling Tightly to the Word of God”

Hymn 707

Cling tightly to the Word of God and Christ’s disciple be,
for then, beloved, you will know the truth that sets you free,
the truth that sets you free.

Recall in faith the precious gift of your baptismal day,
when you were joined to Jesus’ death that washed your sins away,
that washed your sins away.

For just as God raised up his Son from death by his great might,
so too, in Christ, we now may live as children of the light,
as children of the light.

Be strong! Stand firm! Come, walk the path that saints before you trod,
with ready feet to bring good news of Christ, the peace of God,
of Christ, the peace of God.

Know that his body and his blood will feed your hungry soul
like manna in life's wilderness, until you reach your goal,
until you reach your goal.

Now fix your eyes on Jesus Christ; "Come, follow me," says he.
"Deny yourself, take up your cross; come, lose your life for me,
come, lose your life for me."

SERMON

VIDEO

BIBLE STUDY

2 Chronicles 34:1-2, 14-21, 29-33

¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. ² He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

¹⁴ While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the temple of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that had been given through Moses. ¹⁵ Hilkiyah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD." He gave it to Shaphan.

¹⁶ Then Shaphan took the book to the king and reported to him: "Your officials are doing everything that has been committed to them.

¹⁷ They have paid out the money that was in the temple of the LORD and have entrusted it to the supervisors and workers.” ¹⁸ Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

¹⁹ When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. ²⁰ He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king’s attendant: ²¹ “Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD’s anger that is poured out on us because those who have gone before us have not kept the word of the LORD; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book.”

²⁹ Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰ He went up to the temple of the LORD with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the LORD. ³¹ The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.

³² Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

³³ Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

INTRODUCTION

How quickly the Word was lost in Judah! It had only been two generations since good king Hezekiah reigned! What can you think of that was valued in the past and no longer has the same value today? Why is that the case?

INTO THE TEXT

1. In verse 19, we see the law cut King Josiah to the heart when he tore his robes. However, fear of the law is not what motivated a change in behavior. We see that motivation in verse 32. Describe it.
2. What were the effects of the Word of God on the people?

APPLYING IT

1. Often in our everyday lives, we see the law motivate behavior but not change hearts. Give examples.
2. In what ways can people see that the gospel has impacted your life?
3. What can we do to ensure the Word is treasured for generations to come?
4. Look at your challenge card. How do each of those suggested commitments work toward this goal?

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy;
in your faithfulness and righteousness, come to my relief.

Spare us, Lord, from the lies of the devil and the attacks of our conscience.
Comfort and save us in your patient compassion.
Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Guide us, Lord, to the wisdom of your Word and the power of your promises. Take away our confusion and doubt.
Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Hear us, Lord, when we come to you in prayer. Make us confident to take you at your word and to follow you in faith.
Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Empower us, Lord, to walk in your ways and live in your truth. Fill us with your love, that we may love you and one another.

Have mercy on us, Jesus.

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

CHOIR SONG

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face"

Hymn 660

Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
here would I touch and handle things unseen,
here grasp with firmer hand eternal grace,
and all my weariness upon you lean.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
this is the heav'nly table spread anew.
Here let me feast and, feasting, still prolong
the brief bright hour of fellowship with you.

I have no help but yours nor do I need
another arm but yours to lean upon.
It is enough, O Lord, enough indeed;
my strength is in your might, your might alone.

Mine is the sin but yours the righteousness;
mine is the guilt but yours the cleansing blood.
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace:
your blood, your righteousness, O Lord, my God.

Too soon we rise; the vessels disappear;
the feast, though not the love, is past and gone.
The bread and wine remove, but you are here,
nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
the Lamb's great marriage feast of bliss and love.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

The almighty and merciful Lord—the Father, the Υ Son, and the Holy Spirit—bless us and keep us.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"God's Word Is Our Great Heritage"

Hymn 640

God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever;
to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure
throughout all generations.

OFFERING

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Challenged to Live the God-Lived Life ... of a Disciple

- **Join us for Family Bible Hour** - "4 Key Concepts" (starting 1/29)

Time for a faith-foundation check?

Looking for answers to your questions?

Want to help others with their questions?

Our Bible Information Class offers all that and more! We start with "4 Key Concepts," move on to "Faith Builders" and, then as growing disciples, we dig deeper into what God says to us in the Bible.

Sundays at 10:30. (If Sundays don't work, let's find a time that does!)

- **Read your Bible daily** (at least 5 days a week) - Bible Reading Plans
 - *Christian Worship*, p 248ff - This Daily Lectionary (list of readings) leads the reader through most of the New Testament and about 1/3 of the Old Testament in a year. If you're reluctant to start because you'll miss some days, mark what you do read without worrying about the days.
 - *Forward in Christ* - Same readings (as above) listed for the month
 - *Forward in Christ* (ForwardInChrist.net) - new series reads through the Psalms (with commentary) over 6 months
 - *Through My Bible in 3 Years* (read or listen) - WELS.net
The Peoples Bible series in our library is an excellent resource.
- **Read (listen or watch) together a family devotion (3x per week)**
 - Meditations StJohnsLib.com
 - TimeofGrace.org WhataboutJesus.com
 - WELS.net subscriptions has a rich list of options, including ...
 - Marriage Moments at <https://welscongregationalservices.net/ministry-resources/wels-marriages/marriagemoments/>
 - The Peoples Bible series in our library is an excellent resource.
 - Check out our church library for other options.
- **Set aside time to Pray Each Day** (alone and together)