

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

January 27, 2008

[] = Instructions for worship planners and worship leaders: delete from the worship folder
() = Information for the congregation: include in the worship folder and/or PowerPoint.

[Note: **Worship Alive Plus!** is designed to be useable/adaptable in planning contemporary, blended and “fresh traditional” worship.]

[Lutheran Lectionary © 2008 Fellowship Ministries,
by Kelly Ferrari, Julie Koenemann, Rev. M.R. Ignotus and Rev. J. Paul Davidson]

WORSHIP THEME: “Change of Address: A Prophecy Fulfilled”

After John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. This simple change of address fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy recorded in Isaiah 9:1-4. It was a strategic move for the Kingdom because Jesus moved to the “Galilee of the Gentiles,” indicating the universal significance for His ministry. Besides fulfilling prophecy and confirming that Jesus truly is the Messiah, this news is hope for us today as a people also “living in darkness” under the very “shadow of death” – our desperate moral and spiritual condition here in America. God says the darkness will be dispelled with the dawn of a great light, which will shine upon us through the life and ministry of Jesus, continuing among us today through His Holy Spirit.

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

[Worship Planners: A Worship CD and/or the praise team can play in the background 10-15 minutes before the service. Then the first congregational song can begin at the scheduled service time.]

WELCOME AND FELLOWSHIP¹

OPENING SONGS²

[choose 2 or 3 of the songs listed below or from elsewhere in this service]

Come, Now is the Time to Worship

[ATBS 1:117; HMS 18:1426; MSPW2:56; SD 10:6; SD 17:12]

[Text note: You might consider replacing the text “gladly choose” with “gladly love” for local use]

(adapt text to “Gladly Serve You Now”)

Brian Doerksen

Come now is the time to worship
Come now is the time to give your heart
Come just as you are to worship
Come just as you are before your God...Come

One day every tongue Will confess You are God
One day every knee will bow

¹ Welcome everyone; briefly announce the theme of the service and offer an opening prayer on that theme; have them rise and greet one another. A Praise Team member can *lightly* play harmonies in the background, building gradually into the first song.

² For Traditional or Blended Music suggestions, see the options which come after the contemporary songs.

Still the greatest treasure remains
For those who gladly choose You now
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Days of Elijah

[HMS 14:1128; SSA; also iWorship Songbook 1:181]

Robin Mark

These are the days of Elijah Declaring the Word of the Lord
And these are the days Of Your servant Moses Righteousness being restored
And though these are days Of great trials Of famine and darkness and sword
Still we are the voice In the desert crying Prepare ye the way of the Lord

Chorus

**Behold He comes Riding on the clouds
Shining like the sun At the trumpet call
So lift your voice It's the year of Jubilee
And out of Zion's hill Salvation comes**

And these are the days of Ezekiel The dry bones becoming as flesh
And these are the days Of Your servant David Rebuilding the temple of praise
And these are the days of the harvest The fields are white in the world
And we are Your laborers In Your vineyard Declaring the Word of the Lord

Ending

There is no god like Jehovah There is no god like Jehovah
There is no god like Jehovah There is no god like Jehovah
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I Am Free

[HMS 20:1590; SSA]

[www.songselect.com; www.iwillworship.com; www.pwarchive.com;
www.praisecharts.com]

Jon Egan

Chorus 1

**I am free to run I am free to run
I am free to dance I am free to dance
I am free to live for You I am free to live for You
I am free I am free**

Through You the blind will see Through You the mute will sing
Through You the dead will rise Through You all hearts will praise
Through You the darkness flees Through You my heart screams I am free

Chorus 2

**I am free to run I am free to run
I am free to dance I am free to dance
I am free to live for You I am free to live for You
I am free I am free**

Yeah I am free I am free

Chorus 3

I am free to run I am free to run
I am free to dance I am free to dance
I am free to live for You I am free to live for You
O I am free I am free
I am free I am free

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[Traditional Options]:

Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light [CH 264; LSB 839; LW 314; LBW 380; PH 26; UMH 223; WC 158]

Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness [H82 339; LSB 636; LW 239; LBW 224; NCH 334; PH 506; UMH 612]

The People That In Darkness Sat [LSB 412; LW 77]

TIME OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS³

Pastor: Jesus did indeed change His physical address in the midst of His ministry. Did He move into your neighborhood? Did He take up residence in your very heart? Or, is He someone you've heard about, but have not met? Let us confess to Him the gap there has been between hearing about Him, and knowing Him, and then ask Him to move in.

(A time of personal reflection and confession)

People: O gracious God, we have been a people who walked in darkness. Even though we have confessed Your name with our mouths and sung Your praises, we may not know You as You desire us to know You. Draw us close to You, Lord. Bring us into that place of intimacy that You long to share with us. Lord Jesus, when You were crucified, the veil of the temple was torn in two. That veil represented the place that separated You from your children. You tore it apart, God, so that we would no longer be separated from You. By the blood of Your Son, You gave us grace to enter into Your presence. Yet we dare not enter until we have fallen to our knees in repentance. Purify our hearts, Lord. Make us so hungry for You that we die to ourselves and allow You take up residence in our hearts and reign there. Amen.

Pastor: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world--the strength we need to overcome in the world and the salvation of the world. Through His death on the cross all your sins are forgiven you. Go in peace to love and serve Him. Amen.

[Optional: Children's Message and/or Dismissal to Children's Church]

³ Alternative to group recitation and placement: Don't print or project these words. Have the leader make use of some of the thoughts above, loosely and freely paraphrased on behalf of the whole congregation. **It is also effective to weave confession and absolution between a couple songs of the opening set.**

+ WE HEAR GOD'S WORD +

[It is suggested that the introductions be read out loud as well as the Scripture itself]

FIRST READING Isaiah 9:1-4 (NIV)

When Jesus began His public ministry in Galilee (a territory formerly belonging to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali), He fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy in this lesson. Now even the Gentiles, who were walking in darkness, would have their eyes opened to the great Light of salvation in Christ.

¹Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan- ²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. ³You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. ⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

SECOND LESSON 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 (NIV)

In these passages Paul makes clear to the Corinthians that they are not to create divisions among themselves because they follow different teachers or pastors. Christianity is torn asunder by this problem in today's world. Some run after the most popular pastor, or the latest teaching, and look for a church that satisfies all our wants, as if it were about us! Paul reminds us that it's really all about Jesus, and any words that are not God's Words empty the Cross of its power.

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. ¹¹My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹²What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." ¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? ¹⁴I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

GOSPEL Matthew 4:12-25 (NIV)

Today's Gospel mentions many regions of the Middle East that are right now at the top of the news headlines. These passages recount Jesus' travels through such places as Syria, Jerusalem, Judea and Jordan. There exists much spiritual darkness in these regions. Yet, this Gospel tells us that the Messiah, the Anointed One of Israel, once walked through these territories "preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." Oh, that these regions and all those who walk in darkness might once again see the great Light!

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵"Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the

Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—¹⁶the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." ¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." ¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him. ²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. ²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

MESSAGE "Change of Address: A Prophecy Fulfilled"

[See "Sermon Starters & Seasonings" provided at the end of this service]

+ WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD +

[Optional location for Confession/Absolution, using materials found earlier in this service]

SONG OF RESPONSE (choose one)

Touching Heaven Changing Earth

[\[www.musicnotes.com\]](http://www.musicnotes.com)

Reuben Morgan

Chorus

**Lifting up the name of the Lord In power and in unity
We will see the nations turn Touching heaven changing earth
Touching heaven changing earth**

We will seek Your face Almighty God Turn and pray
For You to heal our land Father let revival start in us
Then every heart will know Your kingdom come

Never looking back We'll run the race
Giving You our lives We'll gain the prize
We will take the harvest Given us
Though we sow in tears We'll reap in joy

Ending

Send revival (send revival) Send revival (send revival)

Send revival to us

Send revival (send revival) Send revival (send revival)

Send revival to us

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Hear Our Praises

[SD 13:2; SD 20:2; HMS 14:1141; MSPW 2:64]

Reuben Morgan

Chorus

**From the mountain to the valley Hear our praises rise to You
From the heavens to the nations Hear our singing fill the air**

May our homes be filled with dancing May our streets be filled with joy
May injustice bow to Jesus As the people turn and pray

May a light shine in the darkness As we walk before the cross
May Your glory fill the whole earth As the water over the seas

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[Traditional Options]:

O Christ Our True and Only Light [LSB 839; LW 314; LBW 380]

Thy Strong Word [CW 280; ELW 511; H82 381; LSB 578; LW 328; LBW 233]

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – Apostles' Creed

[NOTE: The following are contemporary song options for speaking the Apostle's Creed: *Because We Believe* ATBS 119; SPW 6; INTEGRITY 12 **OR** *This Is What I Believe* GB 249 **OR** The Apostles Creed Integrity 8]

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

[OR]...

The people walking in darkness have seen a great Light!
The Lord God is the Light of the world.
I believe that He was in the beginning, creating the universe,
Flinging the stars into space and placing the planets in their orbit.
I believe that He created all life, and that He is sovereign over all creation.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great Light!
Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.
Co-Creator with the Father, He came in human form to die on the cross,
that all who believe in Him might not perish, but live forever.
I believe that He is coming again as King, to establish His throne on earth,
and reign forever and ever.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great Light!
The Holy Spirit is the Light of the world.
He is the fire that consumes, chastens, exhorts, edifies and comforts me.
He is the light of God, and the mind of Christ.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great Light!
I believe that God's redemptive plan of salvation is even now being fulfilled through the One God:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

OFFERINGS

[Congregational Song Option at the Offering: Select one of the suggestions from elsewhere in the service that is yet unused]

PRAYERS⁴

[Prayer Topic Starters]

- Thanks for:
 - Your heart for all people, Father, opening up Your gospel to every tribe and tongue on earth.
 - Shining Your light into this dark world, and giving us Your Spirit so that we can be a light to others.
- Please give us:
 - A desire to have a real relationship with You--not just a religious belief.
 - A spirit of unity in this body, without divisions over our opinions.
 - An increase of joy as we see You removing the burdens and yokes from our shoulders and our lives.
- Cause us by Your Holy Spirit and Your Word to:
 - Spread the Light of Your Gospel from our schools and neighborhoods to the ends of the earth, in whatever ways You call us.
 - Stop chasing after the latest evangelists and teachers, and just remain in the Word of God, as unified believers in Christ.
 - Break down denominational walls and learn to love one another.
 - Stop thinking church is about *us* – instead of You, Lord Jesus!
- Local congregational and individual concerns

The Lord's Prayer

⁴ Formal language and "perfectly read" prayers are not recommended for contemporary worship. People appreciate the touching sincerity of informal prayer. "Heartfelt" prayer also teaches/models simple prayer language that anyone can use at home, in the car, the office, etc. These "**Prayer Topics Starters**" are offered to help facilitate spontaneity.

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.

[A communion option to insert for churches celebrating the Lord's Supper on this day]

+ The Lord's Supper +

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

WE PREPARE

Pastor: Lord Jesus, You are the Light of our lives. You simply call us to follow You. Give us grace to see Your light, Lord, to understand the power of Your salvation, and give us courage to follow where You lead. Lord, we thank You for the Cross, and we come to dine with You in celebration of our new life! For on the night...[Words of Institution]

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: **And also with you.**

(Worshippers turn to one another and share the peace which comes from the Lord with words such as, "God's peace to you.")

DISTRIBUTION SONGS – [choose as many you need]

At The Cross

[SSA; [Praise Charts.com](https://www.praisecharts.com); [MusicNotes.com](https://www.musicnotes.com); [IwillWorship.com](https://www.willworship.com) (chord chart only)]

Darlene Zschech | Reuben Morgan

Chorus

**At the cross I bow my knee Where Your blood was shed for me
There's no greater love than this You have overcome the grave
Your glory fills the highest place What can separate me now**

Oh Lord You've searched me You know my way
Even when I fail You I know You love me

Your holy presence Surrounding me
In every season I know You love me I know You love me

You go before me You shield my way
Your hand upholds me I know You love me

Ending

You tore the veil You made a way
When You said that It is done
You tore the veil You made a way
When You said that It is done

And when the earth fades Falls from my eyes
And You stand before me I know You love me I know You love me
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We Fall Down

[ATBS 1:6; MSPW 2:66; SD 9:21; SD 12:10; WT 1:72; WT 2:65; WT 3:64]

Chris Tomlin

We fall down, We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus,
The greatness of Mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus.

And we cry holy, holy, holy,
And we cry holy, holy, holy,
And we cry holy, holy, holy is the Lamb.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lamb.

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[Traditional Options]:

O God of Light [ELW 507; LSB 836; LBW 237]

Come Unto Me Ye Weary [LSB 684; LW 345]

COMMON DISMISSAL

FINAL COMMISSIONING

Pastor: Lord Jesus, You are the strength of our lives and our salvation! You are the Light of the world. Shine in the hearts of those gathered here today, Lord, that they might be light to the people who walk in darkness. Pour out upon them the blessing of Your Holy Spirit, in the power of the Cross. Amen.

People: Change your address today, Jesus, and come live in *me!* Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Blessed Be Your Name

[ATBS 2:1; HMS 20:1572-1574; MSPW 3:163; WT 5:6]

Beth Redman / Matt Redman

Blessed be Your name In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness Blessed be Your name

Chorus:
Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord Still I will say:
"Blessed be the name of the Lord Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord Blessed be Your glorious name."

Blessed be Your name When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be' Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering Blessed be Your name

Chorus:
You give and take away You give and take away
My heart will surely say Lord blessed be Your name (repeat)

Chorus: (2X)
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Or

Lord Reign In Me
[ATBS 2:41; MSPW2 96]

Brenton Brown

Chorus
Lord reign in me reign in Your pow'r
Over all my dreams in my darkest hour
You are the Lord of all I am
So won't You reign in me again

Over all the earth You reign on high
Every mountain stream every sunset sky
But my one request Lord my only aim
Is that You'd reign in me again

Over every thought over every word
May my life reflect the beauty of my Lord
'Cause You mean more to me
Than any earthly thing
So won't You reign in me again

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[Traditional Option]:

Blest Be the Tie That Binds [(Dennis) CH 426; (Boylston) CW 494; ELW 656; HFG 560; LW 295; LSB 649/975; LBW 370; NCH 393; PH 438; UMH 557; WC 708]

Musical Notes

Music charts downloadable through:

www.Praisecharts.com

www.Worshipleaderassistant.com

www.musicnotes.com

www.songselect.com

www.Wordmusicnow.com

www.worshiptogether.com

www.musicnotes.com

Chord charts free downloads available at:

www.Iwillworship.com

www.pwarchive.com

Mp3 downloads available through:

www.Songtouch.com

www.Walmart.com

www.Worshiptogether.com

www.Itunes.com

New Songs to consider:

Emmanuel (Recorded on *iworship Christmas*)

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Lead lines on www.songselect.com; church charts on www.Iwillworship.com

Giving it Away (Recorded on Michael Gungor Band's *All I Need is Here*)

Lisa Gungor, Michael Gungor © 2007 worshiptogether.com songs (Adm. By EMI Christian Music Pub.)

Lead lines on www.worshiptogether.com, www.songselect.com

SSS – SERMON STARTERS & SEASONINGS

The following ideas are merely intended to help get your own creative juices flowing and prepare your heart for God's Spirit to inspire and speak through you.

“Change of Address: A Prophecy Fulfilled”

Text: Matthew 4:12-23 and Isaiah 9:1-4

After John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. This simple change of address fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy recorded in Isaiah 9:1-4. It was a strategic move for the Kingdom because Jesus moved to the “Galilee of the Gentiles,” indicating the universal significance of His ministry. Besides fulfilling prophecy and confirming that Jesus truly is the Messiah this news is hope for us today as a people also “living in darkness,” under the very “shadow of death” – our desperate moral and spiritual condition living in America. God says the darkness will be dispelled with the “dawn” of a great light which will shine upon us through the life and ministry of Jesus which continues among us today through His Holy Spirit.

Sermon Outline:

Central Thought: Jesus is the Light that dispels our Darkness

- I. Sitting in darkness
- II. A Great Light
- III. Reflect the Light

Theological Reflections and Practical Applications

Matthew 4:15

Galilee of the Gentiles - Or “of the nations,” so called, because it was inhabited by Egyptians, Arabians, and Phoenicians. The Hebrew גוֹיִם *goyim*, and the Greek *εθνων*, signify nations. And, in the Old and New Testaments, mean those people who were not descendants of any of the twelve tribes. The word *Gentiles*, from *gens*, a nation, signifies the same. It is worthy of remark, that it was a regular tradition among the ancient Jews, that the Messiah should begin His ministry in Galilee.

Matthew 4:16

The people who sat in darkness - This is quoted from [Isaiah 9:2](#), where, instead of *sitting*, the prophet used the word *walked*. The evangelist may have intentionally changed the term, to point out the increased misery of the state of these persons. *Sitting in darkness* expresses a greater degree of *spiritual* blindness, than walking in darkness does. In the time of Christ's appearing, the people were in a much worse state than in the time of the prophet 700 years before. During this period, they were growing more ignorant and sinful.

The region and shadow of death - These words are amazingly descriptive. A region of death - **Death's Country**, where, in a peculiar manner, death lived, reigned, and triumphed, subjecting all the people to his sway.

Shadow of death - Σκία θανάτου, used only here and in [Luke 1:79](#), but often in the Old Covenant, where the Hebrew is צל תוֹם *tsal maveth*, It is not easy to enter fully into the ideal meaning of this term. As in the former clause, death is personified here. A shadow is that darkness cast upon a place by a body raised between it and the light or sun. Death is here represented as standing between the land already mentioned, and the Light of Life, or Sun of Righteousness. In consequence of which, all the inhabitants were, involved in a continual cloud of spiritual darkness, misery, and sin. The heavenly sun was continually eclipsed to them, until this glorious time, when Jesus Christ, the true Light, shone forth in the beauty of holiness and truth. Christ began His ministry in Galilee, and frequented this uncultivated place more than He did Jerusalem and other parts of Judea. Here His preaching was peculiarly needful, and by this was the prophecy fulfilled.

Matthew 4:18

Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother - Why did not Jesus Christ call some of the eminent Scribes or Pharisees to share His Gospel, and not poor unlearned fishermen, without credit or authority? Because it was the kingdom of heaven they were to preach, and their teaching must come from above. Besides, the conversion of sinners, though it be affected instrumentally by the preaching of the Gospel, yet the grand agent in it is the Spirit of God. As the instruments were comparatively common, and, the work which was accomplished by them was grand and glorious, the excellence of the power at once appeared to be of God, and not of man. And thus the glory, due alone to His name, was secured, and the great Operator of all good had the deserved praise.

Matthew 4:19

Follow me - *Come after me*, δευτε οπισω μου. Receive My teaching, imitate Me in My conduct - in every respect be My disciples. We may observe that most of the calls of God to man are expressed in a few solemn words, which awake the conscience, and deeply impress the heart.

Matthew 4:23

Teaching in their synagogues - synagogue, συναγωγη, from συν, together, and αγω, a public assembly of persons, or the place where such persons publicly assembled. Synagogues, among the Jews, were not probably older than the return from the Babylonian captivity. They were built not only in cities and towns, but in the country, and especially by rivers, that they might have water for the convenience of their frequent washings.

Not less than ten persons of respectability composed a synagogue--as the rabbis believed that this number of persons, of independent property, and well skilled in the law, were necessary to conduct the affairs of the place, and keep up the Divine worship. Therefore, where this number could not be found, no synagogue was built, but there might be many synagogues in one city or town, provided it were populous. Jerusalem is said to have contained 480. This need not be wondered at when it is considered that every Jew was obliged to worship God in public, either in a synagogue or in the temple.

The chief things belonging to a synagogue were:

1. The ark or chest, modeled after the ark of the covenant, containing the Pentateuch.
2. The pulpit and desk, in the middle of the synagogue, at which he stood who read or expounded the law.
3. The seats or pews for the men below, and the galleries for the women above.
4. The lamps to give light in the evening service, and at the feast of the dedication.
5. Closets for the utensils and alms-chests.

The synagogue was governed by a council or assembly, over whom was a president, called in the Gospels *the ruler of the synagogue*. They are sometimes called *chiefs of the Jews, the rulers, the priests or elders, the governors, the overseers, the fathers of the synagogue*. Service was performed by them three times a day - morning, afternoon, and night.⁵

Illustrations:

“The People who Sat in Darkness...”

"[In December 1952] a toxic mix of dense fog and sooty black coal smoke killed thousands of Londoners in four days. It remains the deadliest environmental episode in recorded history." Here is what happened. As the smoke coming out of London's chimneys mixed with natural fog, the air turned colder. Londoners heaped more coal on their fires, making more smoke. Soon it was so dark some said they couldn't see their feet. By Sunday, December 7, visibility fell to one foot. Roads were littered with abandoned cars. Midday concerts were cancelled due to total darkness. Archivists at the British Museum found smog lurking in the book stacks. Cattle in the city's Smithfield market were killed and thrown away before they could be slaughtered and sold—their lungs were black. Funeral director Stan Cribb of T. Cribb and Sons has led thousands of funeral trains through the smoggy streets of London. But he says the 1952 event dwarfs all others he has seen. He remembers the moment he saw the first gray wisps: "You had this swirling, like somebody had set a load of car tires on fire."

London's killer fog is a metaphor of the spiritual world into which Jesus came--a malevolent, sinister, deadly darkness covered the world when the Word "made his dwelling among us." Scholar D. A. Carson writes: "The 'world' in John is a symbol for all that is in rebellion against God, all

⁵ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament

that is loveless and disobedient, all that is selfish and sinful. When we read, therefore, in John 3:16 that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son," we are not to think that God's love is being praised by reference to the world's bigness, but by reference to its badness. This ugly, sinful, rebellious world, this sewer of infidelity, this glut of endless selfishness, this habitation of cruelty, this lover of violence, this promoter of greed, this maker of idols—this world God loved, and loved so much that he sent his Son."

National Public Radio - "All Things Considered," (12-10-02)

Why We Seek the Lost:

On July 4, 1854, Charlie Peace, a well-known criminal in London, was hung. The Anglican Church, which had a ceremony for everything, even had a ceremony for hanging people. So when Charlie Peace was marched to the gallows, a priest read these words from the Prayer Book: "Those who die without Christ experience hell, which is the pain of forever dying without the release which death itself can bring." When these chilling words were read, Charlie Peace stopped in his tracks, turned to the priest, and shouted in his face, "Do you believe that? Do you believe that?" The priest, taken aback by this verbal assault, stammered for a moment then said, "Well...I...suppose I do." "Well, I don't," said Charlie. "But if I did, I'd get down on my hands and knees and crawl all over Great Britain, even if it were paved with pieces of broken glass, if I could rescue one person from what you just told me."

Tony Campolo, Let Me Tell You a Story

Fisher of Men:

Jens Oveson was fishing for salmon in central Norway's Gaula River when he was swept away by a strong current. Kjell Wilhelmsen, 55, spotted the man's struggle. Wilhelmsen had fished the river for 25 years and knew where the current would carry Ovesen. Wilhelmsen ran across a bridge, waiting for Ovesen as the current carried him downriver.

Wilhelmsen later told a newspaper, "He seemed paralyzed. Only his face and the tips of his boots were above water. I decided to start casting." His homemade lure hooked Ovesen's rubber waders on the first cast of about ten yards. But Ovesen weighed nearly 250 pounds. Wilhelmsen used every trick he knew to reel in the big man without breaking his light line. He landed the half-conscious Dane and hauled him onto the shore. Oveson survived the ordeal.

"Fisherman Hooks Drowning Dane to Save His Life," The Wenatchee World

Inspired by His Presence:

President Theodore Roosevelt, a charismatic figure who made quite an impression on people. One journalist, William Allen White, wrote of his first meeting with Roosevelt in 1897:

"He sounded in my heart the first trumpet call of the new time that was to be.... I had never known such a man as he, and never shall again. He overcame me. And in the hour or two we spent that day at lunch, he poured into my heart such vision, such ideals, such hopes, such a new attitude toward life and patriotism and the meaning of things, as I had never dreamed men had.... After that, I was his man."

If a mere mortal can have such an affect on another, how much more our Lord? If we will spend time with him in prayer and in Scripture, we too will find our hearts filled with vision, with hope, with a new attitude toward life and the meaning of things, and afterwards we too will say with thankfulness, "I am His."

Mark Galli

Willing Means Able:

Ira D. Sankey was helping with his father's business and working as a local revenue collector, married and with one child, when Moody's path crossed his. Moody heard him sing at the YMCA convention and in his characteristic straightforward way informed Sankey that he would have to quit his job. "I have been looking for you for the past eight years," said the evangelist. But Sankey hesitated to give up the security of a well-paying government job.

So the next day, according to one writer, "Moody ... asked to meet him on a certain street corner. When Sankey arrived, he found Moody setting up a barrel on the sidewalk. Moody called to Sankey to climb up and start singing. Startled, Sankey hardly remembered how, but he found himself on the barrel singing 'Am I a Soldier of the Cross?' The crowd of factory workers heading home stopped and stayed for Moody's sermon. One example was worth a thousand arguments to Sankey. He knew he must return home and seriously consider joining Moody in Chicago."

He did, and their names became inseparably linked. Although Sankey was not college-educated, and his voice was untrained, the enrapturing quality of his sound and his sensitivity to the use of music in

spiritual capacities became his trademarks. It was said of him: "Mr. Sankey sings with the conviction that souls are receiving Jesus between one note and the next."

Dwight Moody

Death by Gaming:

Is it possible to play yourself to death? Officials at a Chinese Internet cafe think so ever since a 30-year-old man died after playing a game online for three days. The man collapsed, and paramedics failed to revive him on the scene. About 100 other people using the cafe for Internet purposes left in fear.

China is second only to the U.S. in number of Internet users and is home to millions of online gamers who play for hours in public Internet cafes. Internet addiction has spawned a counseling industry to treat people who cannot stop playing online games or surfing the web for days at a time.

Aldous Huxley's book *Brave New World* was written in 1932, but Huxley correctly forecast some of the issues of the 21st century. Huxley's premise was that people would come to love the things that enslaved them, and that they would worship the technology that would undo their capacities to think. He believed that by inflicting pleasure upon people, they could be controlled, and ultimately ruined, by the trivia they pursued.

Hugh Poland

God on Trial:

It is not uncommon for people to shake their fists at God in the midst of tragedy and suffering. The Bible includes the stories of righteous men who questioned God for what they considered poor management of creation.

But Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers has taken his complaints to court. In October 2007, Sen. Chambers sued God for "causing untold death and horror" in the form of "fearsome floods...horrendous hurricanes, [and] terrifying tornadoes." Furthermore, says the senator, God has wrought "widespread death [and] destruction" and terrorized "millions upon millions of the Earth's inhabitants."

Chambers filed the suit to make a statement about the American court system. Outraged by a recent lawsuit he considered frivolous, the senator intends to demonstrate that "anybody can file a lawsuit against anybody." His motion against God, then, is tongue in cheek. Chambers, who has a history of antagonism against Christians, has no vested interest in his suit against the Almighty.

Nevertheless, the case raises important questions about God's activity in this broken world. Is God to blame for poverty, warfare, and natural disaster? Chambers seems to think so. To him the facts are clear--there is suffering everywhere, and God is everywhere. Therefore, God must cause suffering. But God's not the only being who is everywhere. So are sinful human beings.

Brandon O'Brien

The Light Gives Meaning:

Charles Colson and several other Christian leaders once met with President Borja of Ecuador to discuss Prison Fellowship International's ministry in Ecuadorian penitentiaries. They had no sooner been seated in luxurious leather chairs when the President interrupted the conversation with the story of his own imprisonment years before being elected to the presidency.

He had been involved in the struggle for democracy in Ecuador. The military cracked down, and he was arrested. Without trial, they threw him into a cold dungeon with no light and no window. For three days he endured the solitary fear and darkness that can drive a person mad.

Just when the situation seemed unbearable, the huge steel door opened, and someone crept into the darkness. Borja heard the person working on something in the opposite corner. Then the figure crept out, closed the door, and disappeared.

Minutes later the room suddenly blazed with light. Someone, perhaps taking his life into his hands, had connected electricity to the broken light fixture. "From that moment," explained President Borja, "my imprisonment had meaning because at least I could see."

Even more important than the light we see with our eyes is the light that Christ brings to our hearts, giving our lives the understanding and meaning only He can give.

Ronald W. Nikkel

Christians Too Busy for God:

In data collected from over 20,000 Christians in 139 countries (though mostly in America) and between the ages of 15 and 88, The Obstacles to Growth Survey found that, on average, more than 4 in 10 Christians around the world say they "often" or "always" rush from task to task. About 6 in 10 Christians say that it's "often" or "always" true that "the busyness of life gets in the way of developing my

relationship with God." Christians most likely to agree were from North America, Africa, and Europe.

While busyness afflicts both men and women, the distraction from God was more likely to affect men than women in every surveyed continent except North America, where 62 percent of women and 61 percent of men reported busyness as interfering with their relationship with God.

By profession, pastors were most likely to say they rush from task to task (54 percent), which adversely affects their relationship with God (65 percent).

"It's tragic and ironic--the very people who could best help us escape the bondage of busyness are themselves in chains," said Dr. Michael Zigarelli, who conducted the study at the Charleston Southern University School of Business.

Van Morris

Dying Woman Clings to High Priest:

Author William Willimon tells of an encounter he once had with a dying woman.

She was in the last stages of lung cancer, gasping day after day for breath. It was obvious she was in great pain and exhausted from fighting. She clutched a crucifix daily, given to her by her grandmother when she was a girl, carved by a monk in Europe. It was a symbol of all that her Catholic faith meant to her. When I entered the room that afternoon, I could see she was very near the end. "Would you like me to pray for you?" I asked. "Would you like me to summon a priest?" With her last ounce of energy, she held out the crucifix toward me, which depicted the body of Christ nailed to the cross. She said, "Thank you—but I have a Priest."

William Willimon

Doomsday Clock Moves Ahead:

Since its birth in 1947, the world's eyes have been on the famous Doomsday Clock. This symbolic timepiece measures how close the world is to "midnight"—that is, a nuclear or environmental apocalypse. It is officially set by the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* magazine, a resource dedicated to educating the world about global security.

The magazine made news in 2007 when physicists collectively decided to set the clock ahead two minutes to 11:55 pm. The jump forward was in response to the continued dangers of ongoing wars, the worldwide increase in nuclear weapons, and the ever-growing threat of climate change. The closest the Doomsday Clock has ever been to midnight was two minutes, when the U.S. successfully tested a hydrogen bomb in 1953. The furthest it has been from midnight was 17 minutes, after the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union.

Bill Ray

Sitting with God on the Bathroom Floor:

In his book *The Pressure's Off*, psychologist Larry Crabb uses a story from his childhood to illustrate our need to delight in God through adversity:

"One Saturday afternoon, I decided I was a big boy and could use the bathroom without anyone's help. So I climbed the stairs, closed and locked the door behind me, and for the next few minutes felt very self-sufficient. Then it was time to leave. I couldn't unlock the door. I tried with every ounce of my three-year-old strength, but I couldn't do it. I panicked. I felt again like a very little boy as the thought went through my head, "I might spend the rest of my life in this bathroom."

My parents—and likely the neighbors—heard my desperate scream. "Are you okay?" Mother shouted through the door she couldn't open from the outside. "Did you fall? Have you hit your head?" "I can't unlock the door!" I yelled. "Get me out of here!" I wasn't aware of it right then, but Dad raced down the stairs, ran to the garage to find the ladder, hauled it off the hooks, and leaned it against the side of the house just beneath the bedroom window. With adult strength, he pried it open, then climbed into my prison, walked past me, and with that same strength, turned the lock and opened the door. "Thanks, Dad," I said—and ran out to play. That's how I thought the Christian life was supposed to work. When I get stuck in a tight place, I should do all I can to free myself. When I can't, I should pray. Then God shows up. He hears my cry—"Get me out of here! I want to play!"—and unlocks the door to the blessings I desire.

Sometimes He does. But now, no longer three years old and approaching sixty, I'm realizing the Christian life doesn't work that way. And I wonder, are any of us content with God? Do we even like Him when He doesn't open the door we most want opened—when a marriage doesn't heal, when rebellious kids still rebel, when friends betray, when financial reverses threaten our comfortable way of life, when the prospect of terrorism looms, when health worsens despite much prayer, when loneliness intensifies and depression deepens, when ministries die?

God has climbed through the small window into my dark room. But he doesn't walk by me to turn the lock that I couldn't budge. Instead, He sits down on the bathroom floor and says, "Come sit with Me!" He seems to think that climbing into the room to be with me matters more than letting me out to play.

I don't always see it that way. "Get me out of here!" I scream. "If you love me, *unlock the door!*"

Dear friend, the choice is ours. Either we can keep asking Him to give us what we think will make us happy—to escape our dark room and run to the playground of blessings—or we can accept His invitation to sit with Him, for now, perhaps, in darkness, and to seize the opportunity to know Him better and represent Him well in this difficult world.

Larry Crabb

My DeathSpace.com:

With some 30 million people now involved world-wide [in online, virtual reality video games], there is mounting concern that some are squandering—even damaging—their real lives by obsessing over their "second" ones. That's always been a concern with videogames, but a field of study suggests that the boundary between virtual worlds and reality may be more porous than experts previously imagined.

Nearly 40 percent of men and 53 percent of women who play online games said their virtual friends were equal to or better than their real-life friends, according to a survey of 30,000 gamers conducted by Nick Yee, a recent PhD graduate from Stanford University. More than a quarter of gamers said the emotional highlight of the past week occurred in a computer world...

Edward Castronova, associate professor in the Department of Telecommunications at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, says, "There's a fuzziness that's emerging between the virtual world and the real world."

Alexander Alter

Made to Be Used:

We have a sterling silver tea set at home that a family member gave us as a reminder of her love for us. It's quite old and beautifully made, and it sits on a stand in our dining room. There's only one problem—we can't use it. Before she gave it to us, she had it chemically coated so that it wouldn't tarnish. Hot water will ruin the finish.

God's not looking for sterling silver tea sets. He's looking for rough-and-tumble clay pots—the kind that can be used everyday. He's looking for the kind of pots that don't need to be tucked away in a china closet, but can be sent out into a crash-bang world, carrying within them the life of Christ. The church was never meant to be a china cabinet, where precious pieces could be safely stowed out of harm's way. The church was meant to be a working kitchen, where well-worn pots are filled again and again to dispense their life-giving contents to a thirsty world.

Bryan Wilkerson

Quotations:

I saw a sign on a strip of highway once that I would like to have copied on my gravestone. It said, "End of construction. Thank you for your patience."

Ruth Bell Graham

If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next ... Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in'. Aim at earth, and you will get neither.

C. S. Lewis

Surely there can be no deeper joy than that of saving souls.

Lottie Moon

I believe in Christianity as I believe the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else.

C.S. Lewis

The gospel is too readily heard and taken for granted, as though it contained no unsettling news and no unwelcome threat. ... It is a truth that has been flattened, trivialized, and rendered inane.

Walter Brueggemann

Jesus' resurrection makes it impossible for man's story to end in chaos—it has to move inexorably towards light, towards life, towards love.

Carlo Carretto

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you want them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

Thomas à Kempis

Music:

“For the Sake of the Call”

Nobody stood and applauded them
So they knew from the start
This road would not lead to fame
All they really knew for sure was Jesus had called to them
He said "Come follow Me" and they came
With reckless abandon they came

Empty nets lying there at the waters edge
Told a story that few could believe and none could explain
How some crazy fishermen agreed to go where Jesus lead
With no thought for what they would gain
For Jesus had called them by name and they answered

CHORUS

We will abandon it all for the sake of the call
No other reason at all but the sake of the call
Wholly devoted to live and to die
For the sake of the call

Drawn like the rivers are drawn to the sea
No turning back for the water cannot help but flow
Once we hear the Savior's call we'll follow wherever He leads
Because of the love He has shown
And because He has called us to go we will answer

We will abandon it all for the sake of the call
No other reason at all but the sake of the call
Wholly devoted to live and to die

BRIDGE

Not for the sake of a creed or a cause
Not for a dream or a promise
Simply because it is Jesus who calls
And if we believe we'll obey

CHORUS

Steven Curtis Chapman

Video Clips:

Our Need for a Healer – Star Trek V

The movie *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* begins with this mysterious scene. A human-looking alien named J'onn is toiling beneath a blazing sun. Ragged and malnourished, he drills in vain for water. There are hundreds of holes in the earth around him. Suddenly, he hears the heavy pounding of hoofs. A caped rider on horseback thunders ominously toward him. J'onn releases his drilling device, hurries toward his rifle, and raises his gun toward the fast approaching rider. The rider pulls up short and after a few moments of silence says, "I thought weapons were forbidden on this planet." Powerfully built, the rider swings down from the saddle. He continues, "Besides, I can't believe you'd kill me for a field of empty holes." Pathetically, J'onn replies, "It's all I have." He seems to sag under the exhausting weight of his burdens. "Your pain runs deep," the rider says. Sobbing, J'onn says, "What do you know of my pain?" "Let us explore it together," the rider says. J'onn begins to tremble, and tears flood down his dirty cheeks. The rider continues, "Each man hides a secret pain. It must be exposed and reckoned with. It

must be dragged from darkness and forced into the light. Share your pain. Share your pain with me, and gain strength from the sharing." J'onn cries out in anguish, and finally rests his head on the rider's chest. A calmness comes over J'onn, who is baffled but gratefully transformed by the stranger's compassion. Elapsed time: This scene begins immediately following the opening credit and lasts approximately three minutes. Content: *Star Trek V* is rated PG for mild profanity and violence.

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier (Paramount, 1989)

Dead Man Walking:

Dead Man Walking is based on a true story about Sister Helen Prejean (played by Susan Sarandon), a nun who agrees to offer spiritual counsel to Matthew Poncelet, a man on death row. This angers Mr. and Mrs. Percy, the parents of the teenage girl Poncelet murdered, as they can't understand how she could sympathize with someone who committed such a savage act.

In one scene, Sister Helen is sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Percy (played by R. Lee Ermey and Celia Weston) in their home. Mrs. Percy asks her why she had come over to "our side." Sister Helen, with a concerned look on her face, carefully answers, "I wanted to come and see if I could help you all and pray with you, but he asked me to be his spiritual advisor, to be with him when he dies." Mrs. Percy asks her what she had decided. Sister Helen answers, "That I would." Mr. Percy has a surprised look on his face. "We thought that you changed your mind. We thought that's why you were here." Sister Helen shakes her head reluctantly. Mrs. Percy, indignant, says, "How can you come here?" Mr. Percy says, "How can you sit with that scum?" Sister Helen, somewhat anxious and groping for words, answers, "Mr. Percy, I've never done this before. I'm just trying to follow the example of Jesus, who said that every person is worth more than their worst act." Mr. Percy responds in a raised, passionate tone, "This is not a person. This is an animal. No, I take that back. Animals don't rape and murder their own kind. Matthew Poncelet is God's mistake. And you want to hold the poor murderer's hand. You want to be there to comfort him when he dies. There wasn't anybody in the woods that night to comfort Hope when those two animals pushed her face down into the wet grass!" Sister Helen, in a flustered voice, says, "I just want to help him to take responsibility for what he did." The parents respond with further indignation. Then Mr. Percy says in a firm and serious tone, "Sister, I think you need to leave this house right now." Sister Helen, now confused and flustered, stands up and heads toward the front door. Mr. Percy stands up and tells her angrily, "Wait a minute. If you really are sorry, and you really do care about this family, you want to see justice done for our murdered child. Now, you can't have it both ways. You can't befriend that murderer and expect to be our friend too!"

Elapsed time: This scene begins at 00:51:15 and ends at 00:53:45.

Rated R for depiction of rape and murder as well as language

Dead Man Walking

The Ultimate Gift:

The Ultimate Gift is about an arrogant, spoiled young man named Jason Stevens (played by Drew Fuller). Jason expects a huge inheritance when he hears that his grandfather has died. What he gets instead is a crash course in life. Jason is required to do twelve tasks—what his grandfather calls "gifts"—designed to challenge him in improbable ways. Among Jason's tasks is the challenge to make one true friend within a month. He soon befriends Emily (Abigail Breslin), a little girl battling leukemia. In this scene, Jason finds Emily sitting alone in the hospital chapel. She is staring at a statue of Jesus with his arms outstretched. "I wonder if he takes advance orders," she says. "For what?" Jason asks. "For my place. You know—up there," Emily answers as she points upward. "What do you think it's going to be like?" Jason asks. "Butterflies—lots of butterflies. Do you know God paints every color on a butterfly with His finger?" asks Emily. "I didn't know you thought about stuff like that," Jason replies. "I think about dying," Emily says, as she begins to cry. "There's something basically unfair about a person dying. I even hate the idea." "You know," Jason says softly, "I don't know much about God or Jesus, but I can promise you that those arms are meant for you." Soon after Emily's death, Jason eventually inherits \$100 million from his grandfather. He invests every dime of it to build Emily's Home, a facility for families whose children are facing extraordinary health challenges.

Rated PG for some violence and language.

Elapsed Time: DVD, Chapter 14; 00:46:56–00:47:59

The Ultimate Gift (Life Media, 2006)

Images for your PowerPoint slideshow:



"The question is, how do we win the world to Christ . . .
with a minimum of fuss and bother?"