



Words of Blessing

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High School Weekly Words Advent Week 1: December 3, 2006

Living the Word

Matthew 4: 18-22 As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers who were fishermen, Simon (called Peter) and his brother Andrew, catching fish in the lake with a net. Jesus said to them, “Come with me, and I will teach you to catch men.” At once they left their nets and went with him. He went on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat with their father Zebedee, getting their nets ready. Jesus called them, and at once they left the boat and their father, and went with him.

God’s Call

I have called you by name! Listen and look. I will show you how and where your call will unfold in a greater way. You will hear my voice, and I will tell you the next step in your call. You are ready. Have confidence in your gift and in my word. People will hear me speak through you, and they will see and feel my love through what you say, offer, and do in my name. You will hear my voice by listening. Peter heard his call to go out. He may have struggled at times to “get it right,” but I never gave up on him. I will never give up on you either. I will strengthen you, guide you, hold you by the hand, point the way, and keep saying the same things. I will encourage and love you through the times when you struggle or lose confidence.

Think and pray about your calling and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that you have received. Think and pray about what I am asking you to do so you can use your gifts to bring my love, words, and reality to the world. You are called and you will be empowered. You are chosen and set apart for a call that is uniquely your own because your gifts are special. How and where your gifts are needed will not be like anyone else. I call you to something that nobody else can do, and I will empower you through the Holy Spirit. I, myself, will point the way and walk at your side.

Sometimes you hear my voice through others. Listen to the words of an angel, the invitation to serve, and the needs around you. You will have many opportunities, and sometimes it is hard to hear the call. So you need to set a pattern, a way to hear your call and how to do it. Take time for prayer and reflection. Listen with attention. Listen to the words of encouragement and support from others. Keep my love and that call on you heart. Sometimes the call and work are there and blessed, but maybe you have to make a change or offer a simple sacrifice, like more time. Change is important in the call, because it is in your changing that I shape you to live out the call. Your call is meant to be a ministry of the church. The ministry of the church is healing, and so what you do in my name with your gifts will always bring healing through my love, words, and reality. Your call will also always be about evangelism and prayer, because that is how you plant seeds of love and bring people to me. My child, you may never see the results of your

words or kindness but you will have planted seeds, and like eggs, you will change lives in my name.

Your call may be a great mission, or your call may be to be a powerful leader or even a saint. I have a specific plan and calling for you! You may doubt that you are called to be a preacher or healer because those calls are “too big,” but the church will only survive, much less grow, with people who give themselves to prayer, to the call to teach children and teens, or to the call to hug and welcome new people with invitations and a cup of coffee. It does not matter if you are called to something that seems important. All works and calls are important. Whether you are a computer expert, homemaker, or a priest, and whether you are young or old, you are important and you have a specific call. Through the Holy Spirit, I call, commission, and empower you to do your call.

I want you to share my words with a needy people. Proclaim my love, words, and reality. Share the good news. Be eager to witness and tell your story, the story of someone you know, and my story. Give me all of your heart, and I will lead and empower you to hear and do my call. Listen to my voice. Have an open heart and through the words of the Holy Spirit you will hear your call. The Holy Spirit will teach you and shape you. My love, words, and reality will fill you so that you will see why and how you have been called in your own unique way to bring new life to others.

Eggs: My resurrection is celebrated in many ways. It is represented by the symbol of eggs. During the past year I have shared words about eggs. You have heard and, I hope, have shared about how eggs are used, decorated, and celebrated. Eggs represent new life, my new life for you. New life was offered to others that first Easter day, and it is offered to you today at this time of Advent when you think of my being born. In a few weeks it will be Epiphany, and you will learn more about eggs at that time. Eggs represent transformation. The hen hatches the egg and a new time is born. I told my disciples about this transformation and they took these words out, just as you can. I want people to know that my life, death, and resurrection can bring them new life so that they can go out and answer their call to be all they can be for the world. I have called you.

Important: I ask you and want you to read these words many times in the month ahead, but especially this week. I ask you to share these words with others. If you have a group, share the words with them, but also share with other groups and individuals or get a new group together, especially for those who are not sharing with others right now. Go to church each week and offer to share the words with others. Everyone needs to share the weekly words with as many others as they can during all of the weeks of Advent through Epiphany. You should not be reading and working with these words alone. My love, words, and reality are meant to be shared with others. Do your part. Make the time; you have it and can do it. This is a gift to you, and it is very important. My words in the weeks to come will shape the year ahead for you. They are a very special gift to you.

Words for the week: Call and mission

Prayer question: Do you know what your call is? Are you willing to step out in a bigger way to do it? Pray each day for the faith to ask what your call is and how you are to follow it. Listen.

Action for the week: Take quiet prayer time to think about what you would like your call and mission to be. Listen and see if you can hear my words about your call and mission. What do you

think I would ask you to do in using your gifts? Write your answers in a journal you will keep and read daily during the next month or so. Keep the journal handy for daily reflections.

Witness my love and reality: What new “thing” would you like to have happen in your spiritual life at this time? What about a new or greater call for the church or for the youth in your church, school, or community? What is the mission of eggs? Share your thoughts this week with others in your youth group, church, school, or town or with your friends.

Daily prayer for Advent: Lord, I know you have a call for me to do in your name. Just like eggs, each call will be different and will be used in a different way. I am ready to go out, Lord. Make the path and way forward clear. I am ready. Thank you for giving me companions for the work and the path.

The following words are for you. You will know which ones speak to you and answer your questions or prayers. These personal words are guidance for you in your journey today.

- An angel will speak to you this week, so be on the lookout. Grace will offer you words of praise and support, like “Great job!” You have been working pretty hard, and yet there is still more you want to do. Grace will give you the assurance you need, just like the farmer who pats the hen on the head when she has hatched a wonderful bunch of baby chicks. I love it!
- I have called you to work with people in a church, to build it up and open the doors wide so others, especially those your age, can know my love, words, and reality. Your welcoming smile is what is needed. Introduce people to your friends, other people, and even some special adults and share part of your story with them. Your gifts of love, joy, and friendship always make others feel comfortable. You don’t need a nametag, just a picture of an Easter egg on you. Yes, it will make for a funny and eye-catching welcome and witness. I love it! You, too?
- I ask you to help in a ministry in a church that will bless others, feed people, and make my love and words real. You have all the needed gifts and talents. The need is there. In trying to get this going, you will need two people to help you out. Guess who? They are both good eggs!
- You have not had an easy time lately. You have been busy and stressed, and you have been trying to juggle projects, decisions, time, school, and invitations. Begin each day with prayer and quiet. Organize yourself and your day the night before. Plan your day so you are doing what is important to do first. Make time, like hens do, to sit on some “eggs.” Pray about what you are waiting for. Believe in miracles.
- School is really busy right now, with homework, tests, papers, and all. It can get overwhelming at times, so I ask you to start your day with a little prayer of thanksgiving for your life. Then set out to smile with joy to the first three people you meet in school. You have blessed their lives. Let the joy of that knowledge remain with you and keep you smiling, calm, and joyful. I love you!
- Did you see me the other day? I was standing nearby, and you were tired and stressed out. I smiled at you and wanted to tell you that it will all be okay. Trust in me and know that this time of year is not about shopping and busyness but about the Christ child who was born to give his life and love for you. It is about finding peace in your life and offering it to others each day.
- I am calling you, right now, this very moment, to tell two others what you are going to do in answer to my call for you to reach out to other young people in your life, church, school, family, and job. You could offer to be a friend, support, encourager, or listener. Well, what will you do?
- This can be a stressful time in life with school, activities, homework, tests, deadlines, and decisions. I have a gift for you. It is called peace and joy. I am going to offer it to you, so watch for me. You will see me in school. I will be wearing a shirt that will grab your attention. I will be smiling at you. And know that I also have a red and green egg in my pocket.
- School is a place where you begin to figure out who you are, who you want to be, and what you

might like to do one day. You have the gift of helping. You really do. I ask you to consider ways that you can use this gift for a career in the future. I have a list of five people you helped this month.

- You have the gift of being a loyal friend, so you have been blessed with some special friends in your life. Keep making time to be thoughtful and caring. Reach out and make that call or send that email. Ask friends to go to a movie or spend time with you. You will be blessed.

- Celebrate life. Be thankful for all those in your life. Give thanks for the gifts of the Holy Spirit that have been given to you to use in the world to share my love, words, and reality. You are an inspiration to others because your love is so unfailingly generous and your humble heart seeks no praise or attention. Nobody seems to notice the smallest.

- When life seems to be too busy or difficult, slow down. You have the gift of wisdom and need to draw on it to be able to see how and where to best use your time and gifts. I see how much you have to do. An egg is not laid and hatched in one day. It takes a while. Slow down.

- You will be invited to do something that will use your many gifts and talents. Look for it. You have to be available and sincerely interested for this to happen. You have the gifts of creativity, teaching, giving, so how do you combine them? You will see.

- I ask you to be more involved in the lives of others in your school and church. Use your gift of encouragement and know that people's lives will be truly changed and touched by this gift. Some people you know well are struggling. Your smile, prayers, and words will help more than you can know. I bless you for all you do in my name.

- I see all the good things you do, those acts of kindness show to others. They bring you closer to me and to what your call is right now. My love is reflected in your helping the friend who is struggling. My reality is shown in how you share my words and talk about your faith. My words are shared in your comfort and support to those who need to know I am real. Bless you.

- There is work for you to do in many areas and places in your life. How do you discern what is best to do and when and how to do it? Well, you pray, put your trust in me, and listen. You have been hearing a call to step out and use your many gifts, especially your gifts of listening and faith, to help others. I have put you in a place that offers a new beginning. Be joyful with pink eggs and share them.

- You are a joy in the lives of many people. Your kindness and thoughtfulness have blessed others in ways you are not aware of because you never seek attention. Know that this week you touched one person, one very special person, who needed to know he or she mattered.

- Step out! Move out of what you think is safe and secure and take my hand. You are ready to find and use your unique gifts in the world today. Be creative and bold. Don't hold back. Don't be cautious and uncertain. Let the Holy Spirit fill you with faith, confidence, and passion.

- It is near the end of the year, and you may be wondering what you did in my name to make the world a better place. My dear child, you are unique because you do not seek to be blessed or given things. Instead, you seek to give so others are blessed and so that they know my reality and love. I have a very special blessing for you humble spirit. It will come in a box on the 25th.

- Eggs mean so many things in the world. One of the things they represent is new life. Some eggs get colored and some remain plain. If you were an egg people would see you as light green, peaceful and growing, caring and kind. I bless you for the way you live your life—light green, sharing, and loving so many people in my name.

- I know you have some questions on your heart. What do you do? What decision do you make? How can you be sure it is right? My child, trust that I will be here for you whatever and whenever you decide. I love you and want you to be happy and peace-filled about the direction you are going to take. Be prayerful, listen, believe in me, read my words, talk to a spiritual friend, and then trust in me.

- I call you to be a listener, to really hear people share their hopes, problems, and questions. You can do it in school, in a church, in your home, in a coffee shop, in a park—well, anywhere. You have all that is needed to meet this call: You love me, you care about others, you are faith-filled, and you pray. That is all they need right now. You are a very good egg as a friend.

- Did you see me the other day? I was at your school. You were in a big hurry and almost dropped some books. I saw you take the time to smile at others, and your smile touched many. You bless many people with your smile. Thank you. Bless you! I smiled back at you and blessed you.

- It is time to use your gifts in more ways. You have the gift of being a good and loyal friend. Wow, so many people need that. How about making some extra time for a friend who is struggling with some decisions right now? Listen to your friend, befriend him or her, and help your friend as I would. I am counting on you to use your gifts. You can even offer them an egg.

- I give you a blessing today. It is the opportunity to help your family right now. How? Well, how about writing a note to each one this week to thank each one for how much they help you and inspire you in your life. Write down one special gift you see in each person and say how that gift has helped you be a better friend and a better Christian.

- You are a born leader. You inspire others to listen and follow. So get some weekly word-sharing groups going where you are, and start them in other places where the need is clear. You can do this with family, school friends, church friends, or friends outside church. Well, you can do the words anywhere!

Read and pray my words to you

Please note that the Bible verses are drawn from the Good News Translation (or Today's English version), so references to a particular stopping place may not match your translation exactly.

Isaiah 2:1-3

1 Samuel 3:6-10 and 19

Proverbs 2:9-10; 3:5-6

Deuteronomy 2:7

Numbers 11:23-25

Joshua 1:4-7

Psalms 16:8-11

Psalms 119:105-106, 135

Psalms 91:11-12

Psalms 33:20-22

Psalms 143:1 and 10

Matthew 16:24-25

John 10:14-16

Mark 2:13-14, 17

Luke 5:1-4, 9-11

Acts 13:1-3

Matthew 19:13-15

John 1:43-45

Matthew 21:21-22

Luke 6:12-16 and 19

Acts 9:10-12, 15-16

1 Corinthians 1:6-9

1 Thessalonians 2:12-13

Romans 1:5-7

1 Peter 1:1-5

1 John 3:22-24

1 Corinthians 3:5-6, 22-23

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