



Words of Blessing

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High School/College Weekly Words Epiphany Week 5: February 3, 2008

Living the Word

Mark 1:14-20 After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. “The right time has come,” he said, “and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!” As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, catching fish 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 a little farther on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat getting their nets ready. As soon as Jesus saw them, he called them; they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went with Jesus.

The Journey: Make the Journey Personal

The apostles were my friends and companions, and each one was special. They were also friends who supported one another. They were not just a group of followers; I knew and loved each one like a brother. You are special to me, as they were. Your gifts, talents, decisions, joys, and struggles are important to me. I want to be your companion on the journey that is just ahead.

Today, just like my disciples and followers, you have the opportunity to hear and see people who offer the Christian message of my words made real and personal through their own example. They share about their life with me. They talk about me. Some quote the Bible. Others tell of seeing me on a road. But what “invites” people to follow me and believe is the way they tell about their own faith story and offer examples from their own life. They share their journey with me in a personal way so it becomes real to others. Their faith and courage stand out, and you can see it because they are ordinary people like you. Today, you can make your journey real and your goals as a Christian attainable.

Believe that what I call you to do with your gifts will be unique and special. When you let go and put it all in my hands, when you put your sandals on and take my hand, you will see the path and work I need you to do. It is important and special. If you wonder what to do with your life—whether you are graduating from junior high, high school, or college or whether you are looking at your career or gifts, I will point the way and help you. You can do something that only you can do in this world. Believe that.

Nobody is like you. Set out each day to find ways to share my love, words, and reality. Use your gifts, help others, and build up my people and church in your own personal ways. Your hands are needed. Tell your story and how you walk with me. If you have ever heard a sermon or talk at a Christian workshop, you know that what usually inspires is that person’s sharing of his or her

own story and how he or she overcame challenges and persisted in following me.

My child, I am here. I am real. I have blessed you and filled you with the power of the Holy Spirit. Now go out and live it. Use your gifts and witness in any way the Holy Spirit leads you. Maybe you will tell a friend, or even a stranger, that I am real to you. Maybe you will tell people our story and how you came to do what you are doing in my name. I will keep pursuing you. My love will surround you. I will empower you to bless others and fill you with joy.

Word for the week: Witness

Prayer question: What can you do to make your relationships and friendships more personal? How can you make your spiritual life deeper? Are you ready to share who you are, what your journey is and who I am in your life? Be ready to just be yourself.

Action for the week: Share your responses to the prayer question with a group and/or write it down in a journal to keep and read. Plan what to tell people about who you are; your faith journey; how real I am to you; what you believe; and about my love, words, and reality. Share this with two people this week. As with you did last week, be purposeful in planning to do this, and record what you plan to do (and what happened). For example: I will (insert action, such as “pray for”) (a name) who needs (insert the need, such as healing).

Direction: Picture yourself going into a coffee shop. You get something to drink and look for a place to sit down. You see someone you know sitting alone and ask if you can join him or her. You begin talking about friends in common and the weather. This person looks kind of down, and you begin to share your story and faith with simple words. After an hour you realize that you both know each other better because you shared from the heart. Your companion is smiling now, and you leave realizing that you gave a witness—and it was not hard. You were being yourself. This week plan to go to places where you will see people you know. Be ready to share your faith.

Learn: You are just as special as everyone else. Your story and gifts can be used each day to help others. You realize it is not hard. It is just putting your faith in action to witness.

Witness my love and reality: Look for opportunities this week to begin witnessing your story in a new way. Make your story and life real to people. Be yourself. Let go and watch for miracles.

Daily prayer for this week: Lord, when I read the Bible and stories about you, the disciples, and your followers, it does not seem possible that I could ever go out and share in the same way. But I realize today that I am just myself and my story, simple or complex, can be the way to help someone and to share your love, words, and reality. Help me to keep going out to share our story.

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.

- You will see me this week in a special way. I want you to know me as real in your daily life. You are seeking to grow in your faith and in using your gifts in more ways. You will see me in a simple way that will be so real that it will become a part of your witness all through your life. I will be real, but you will have to be open to how and where to see me. Remember, I want our relationship to be personal. This experience will be an important step in your journey.

- My child, you have a great story to tell. You do! What you believe, how you live out your journey, and how you use your gifts are unique. I love you because you are special and yet simple in your faith. Your life and what you tell others this week, will bring a powerful blessing and new hope to someone else. So many people around you want to believe. Make me very real today.

-It takes courage to be a faithful Christian today. There is still persecution in the world and a divided church. People go their own way and are too busy to pray or support my church and its people. The simple faith of my disciples is hard to maintain today. Instead, the message is to do what you want and it's okay to be too busy for church each week. Don't let those messages drown out the simple faithful voices of the saints who died for their faith or the people who keep praying and building up the church. My child, be strong. Read my words. Meet with me each day so I can be real to you. The test of the church today is about your relationship with me and my people.

- I love angels. They are each unique and special. Some walk slowly looking for ways to help people who are in a hurry. Others are always ready to just "appear" and surprise someone with a miracle. Each angel is different. That is true with you and with others in your life. You are unique and the way you use your gifts and help others is special. I love the way you reach out to be a good friend and listener, patiently reassuring others when they struggle. You are a Christian of great faith and courage, but you don't brag about it. Instead, you show it in all you do and say. You are the kind of witness who makes me real and blesses people. Your angel was there this week. Did you notice?

- The path is there for you to be my hands in the world and to share your story and witness of faith. Your life has had joys, struggles, miracles, silly fun, angels, prayer, and blessings. You have blessed many people with your friendship. You listen to people. You hear them. You welcome them into your life, church, and story. Have greater confidence that you are on the right path.

- Georgia, Buddy, and Pockets are wonderful angels. They see themselves as ordinary and love to help people out all over the country. They like to sit in restaurants, coffee shops, and other places where people of all ages stop in for a rest, some quiet, and a bite to eat. They lead simple angel lives but have blessed and helped many. One of them helped you this past year. Do you remember the event? I want you to know that, like these angels, your life and ordinary kindness bless people every day and far out into the world. Bless you for helping someone this week.

- The path is there for you to be my hands and witness in the world. You will heal people, share your story, and bring people to me. Together we can bless many. This year begin to share your story and what you believe with more people. They need and want to hear from you. Let's start now.

- You have the gifts of healing and faith. It is important to have both of these gifts in offering healing as a ministry, gift, or call. You will hear about or meet more and more people who need healing in many ways. Do not be afraid to step out. Keep focused on me and simply let me work through you. Let the Holy Spirit empower you. This gift will grow in many ways this year, and you will discover that it is a call that needs a simple life, grounded in prayer, and a faith-filled community and church. The next time someone seeks healing through you, watch for me.

- Prayer is part of the Christian journey, and it is our time to be together. You can pray in church, school, coffee shops, street corners, and grocery stores. You can pray alone, with a friend, or with a group. Make prayer real and so much a part of your life that people will see and hear your prayers happening. They will see your humility, kindness, compassion, and faith in action. My child, wherever you go each day, pray. Watch miracles happen and people healed and blessed.

- Road trip! I love them! Within the next three months, go out somewhere. Look for angels, miracles, and me. Some miracles I will plan, and others will be planned by an angel named George and his helpers Jeremiah, Tea, Stephanie, Helen, Daisy, and Alice. George loves being an angel because there are so many people who need blessings and need their faith to be unshakable! George and his friends are convinced that seeing angels will do it. I think so, too! They will be looking for some smiling and caring people to bless with miracles. Look for them.

They leave a trail.

- You have the gifts of prayer, humility, and love. Yes, they go together very well. I want you to begin to use your gift of prayer all the time. Practice it, and watch what happens. Pray for someone in a busy store, a classroom, on the street, driving a car, or in a church. This week select one person to pray for each day. It would be good to choose someone you see outside your home, but you can use someone at home if need be. How should you pray? Focus on the person and what you think is his or her greatest need at that time. Make your prayers personal. I will be listening and watching.

- I see the struggle of many people, people of all ages, and I know you do, too. Many struggle with their faith or with making time to go to church and support it in all ways. They don't see the needs of the clergy, church leaders, and teachers and how little it takes to help and affirm them. There is a path for you this year that will show you where there are needs and how you can help meet them. No, they will not be strangers but the people and needs around you. Share your gifts, time, and love. Use your gifts of teaching, joy, helping, and faith. Build up my church. You can do this. You can.

- You have the gift of evangelism. I love evangelists! Some people love being an evangelist. They go out with passion and joy to tell everyone about me. They make my life and miracles interesting and personal. They make the life of a Christian today seem exciting. No, not easy but surely filled with joy and love. Go out every day this week and make our journey visible.

- I ask you to make the next few months a time to deepen your relationship with me even more. Each day spend more time with me in prayer and listening. Your life and journey in the next two years will be amazing. There are unique things that only you can do for me and the people I put in your life. Your gifts, especially your gifts of faith, love, and prayer, will change lives. You will see it.

- A new season in the church is just ahead: it is called Lent. Some see it as a gloomy time when all you do is give things up. For you, this year Lent can be a life-changing time where you deepen your faith enough to really see the path just ahead for you. Your journey is important, for it is about you, your gifts, and your relationship with me. It is also about taking time to make your goals and journey as a Christian real, active, moving forward, and personal. What one thing will you do right now to take a huge step forward in making our relationship stronger? Well?

- Your life and journey have had many ups and downs, but you stayed on the road. When you wandered off or had a bit of trouble or a struggle, you were still faithful in heart and spirit, and your love for me remained strong. I know you have had times of tears, struggles, or disappointments, but you kept your eyes on me. That is part of your witness and story and how you continue to make me real to the world. Bless you, my child, for you have brought many people to know me.

- Healing is a powerful gift that one uses in my name, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to bring hope, grace, and miracles to others. You have this gift and will use it more and more in the years ahead. Many ask for the gift of healing, but you know the gift of healing is given to those who are humble, turn to me, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and are willing to say yes.

- Did you see me the other day? I was right there, and you looked at me. I smiled and blessed you. I told the angel I was with that you were special to me because you are such a good friend to many. You are humble and compassionate. The angel said that you needed a gift in return, but it had to be special. Maybe a little miracle or an answered prayer? Watch for it. It is there. I love it.

- You have a story and witness to tell. You can share it with many different people and in many different places, just as I did. Be open to the power of the Holy Spirit, for you will go out to many places. Tell what you have overcome and how you have been blessed. Share the story of

how your faith became so strong and how the Holy Spirit can help others, too. Tell people what I am calling you to do next in my name. Even though it is difficult, I know you will say yes. Bless you.

-Your mission this year is clear. The journey takes you outward. I want you to share my love, words, and reality with many, many more people. Tell your story of faith and how you overcame difficulties and were blessed by the infilling of joy and the Holy Spirit. You have the gift of prayer, so offer prayers. You have the gifts of love and joy, so share that with everyone you meet.

- Gather a group together to share these words this week. Yes, you can do this. Provide enough time so that each one can answer the questions and actions that come with these words. Provide enough time that each person can take three minutes to share the most powerful memory in their past in which they knew that I was real and that I loved them. That is the heart of your witness to the world. Keep doing this same simple task throughout the year ahead.

- You have a friend who needs prayers and support. Make time to talk to and pray for your friend. You can write a letter or call, but meeting with your friend is even better. Your friend is special and is need of your time and compassion. Making time for others every day is what makes your journey special and what fills their journey with hope. Know that wherever you go, I will be there. Everywhere you go, you will see my journey and love inspiring you to go onward.

-You are special. Your gifts of kindness, humility, and love are a comfort to many. You make me real to others. Tell your story to more people so they can have hope in their lives. Especially focus on the past two years and how my love and reality have guided you forward. You have helped so many people—friends and family—to know me as real in their daily lives. It is so wonderful.

- You don't have to know the Bible by heart or preach sermons. All you have to do is share your own journey. Make it real, honest, and personal. That is what inspired people who came to hear me or Paul, John, Lydia, or my other disciples. They want to know your journey and what you believe. They want to hear about your struggles in life and how Jesus, the love of others, and your faith got you through it. And if you are still going through some struggles, that is okay. You can and will offer hope still, because you keep believing. You will save lives.

- Road trip! I love them. Go out this week. Look for miracles, events, and needs planned by me and orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. You will see my reality in your life. You will make me real to others, and they will see me in an amazing way. My disciples and I went out and met countless people along the way, but, they were not just faces; they became real and personal to me. I remembered them. So go out. You can take a friend or two. Go, and you will see me and remember the faces.

- Healing comes in many ways. Keep believing in healing and miracles for those you care about and pray for. One close friend is in need of healing and a renewed spirit. Be a listener and an encourager. Pray for this friend. Listen to me. Offer hope. Be faithful in staying in touch, praying, and offering help and support. You have all the gifts your friend needs: compassion, faith, and love.

- Think of two friends who do not know your story or about your faith, journey, gifts, or call. Tell them about what you believe and why. Give them three stories and/or miracles to help them see. Then invite them to share my weekly words. Invite them to a group that shares the words together. When you are willing to step out and do this, I will provide a miracle (or two).

- You seek no praise or blessings. You don't ask for miracles, healing, or blessings for yourself. Your heart is always humble and that is your witness to the world. This week your humility empowered someone to apologize to someone and moved someone else to write a note of praise and thanks to someone they were jealous of. Your humble life is the call for everyone. Bless you,

my child. You fill me with joy.

- The year ahead will be a journey of discovery, joy, and faith renewed. It will be a journey of using your gifts more, seeing your talents increase, and growing in confidence and inner peace. You will let go of hurts or things that trouble you. A word or note will put any past struggles behind you. You will be changed forever and will begin a wonderful new time of walking with me out into the world.

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.

Ezekiel 37:1-5

Hosea 2:23 and 14:5-6

Daniel 10:11-12

Joshua 24:15 and 21

Ruth 1:16 and 2:12

Isaiah 42:1-4

Jeremiah 6:16 end with peace

Psalms 138:3 and 8

Psalms 5:11-12

Psalms 31:3-5

Psalms 48:12-14

Psalms 85:6-7

Mark 1:16-20

John 2:5-12

Matthew 14:22-27

Mark 1:29-31

Acts 15:6-8

John 14:15-20

Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26

Luke 11:1-4

Acts 4:32-27

Mark 16:14-18

1 Corinthians 16:5-11

Titus 1:1-4

1 Peter 5:1-4

Ephesians 1:11-12

1 John 5:14-15

2 Corinthians 1:2-4

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Note: For suggestions on how to conduct a weekly words sharing group, go to the Words of Blessing website at:

http://www.wordsofblessing.com/pdf_docs_other/word_sharing_instruct_v5.pdf

And for more details about the Words of Blessing EGGS Project, see the website at <http://www.wordsofblessing.com/eggs.html>.