

NEW ROADS OF DISCOVERY
WEEK #1 – NEW JOURNIES BEGIN WITH REVELATIONS
January 6-11, 2009

TUESDAY – January 6th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: Help me continue to travel...in the light of your love.

God of love, who is always with me, I praise and revere all that you are. As I begin new roads of discovery with you, help me to see the revelations you have in store for me. I take great joy in the special time we have together. Help me to always hold onto the knowledge that you are with me. Teach me the lessons I need to show your glory to those around me. In the name of the one who showed love in his every action, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: John 1:10-18

KEY VERSE: John 1:18:

“No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known” (NRSV).

Epiphany, the festival of light and the appearance or manifestation of God in Jesus has come. As our key verse states, *“No one has ever seen God.”* So it is through Jesus we see God. *“It is God the only Son...who has made him known.”* The Epiphany season will last until Lent begins and during these next few weeks we will see Jesus baptized and proclaimed God’s Son openly, choose his disciples, announce his authority from God to heal, have his name proclaimed among the people, forgive sins, announce his purpose in coming – to save sinners, and be transfigured in glory. All of these are revelations of the glory of God made known to us through the Son.

The Christmas season is over. The tree will be taken down (if it hasn’t already), and the decorations will be stored for another year. Life will go back to normal, or will it? Will normal be the same, or have we discovered more of Christ in ourselves and each other? The Epiphany season is sometimes called normal time. And yet, it is during this “normal time” that the Lord’s Son is revealed to us in all his glory. As we move away from the holidays and into everyday life, let us remember the wonder of the Christ Child and the lessons we have learned about ourselves during these last few weeks. We have prepared our hearts to receive our Savior once more through scripture, music, reflection or journaling and various actions. We have rejoiced through all our preparations and learned to savor the experiences life brings our way. We have celebrated Christ’s birth in many different aspects of our lives. Now we need to carry the knowledge into our everyday lives.

God gave us all that God is, can we do any less? As we bring our celebration of the Christmas season to a close, let us re-evaluate our priorities. Are we giving freely to God all that we are? We have received everything we need to live the life God intended for us. Now we must give it to someone else. As James reminds us, *“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead”* (James 2:26 NRSV). We are not saved by our actions, but by our faith, however, our faith is not complete unless it leads to action. If we have truly made Jesus the Lord of our lives, we will be moved by God’s Spirit to do something. It will not always be the same action by each person. What God leads you to do will not be the same as what God leads me to do, but God will lead each of us to do something. And whatever that action is will reflect the glory of God and will witness to the presence of God in the world through the Son, Jesus. We are faced everyday with many opportunities to act out

our faith. Are we watching for them? Are we responding to them or are we ignoring them as irrelevant to our lives? We say we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We say that we believe Jesus is our Savior and Lord of our lives. What are we doing to make these beliefs a part of our everyday lives? If someone were to arrest us today for being Christians, would there be enough evidence to convict us? As we advance into Epiphany, normal time, let's build that body of evidence. Let's prove to everyone around us that we truly believe what we say we believe.

Let us also remember that we are not in this life alone. One of the most precious gifts we were given through Christ was the Holy Spirit. We must always remember that the Holy Spirit works in us and through us both *"to will and to work for his good pleasure"* (Philippians 2:13b NRSV). The love of God, given to us through Jesus is eternal and at work in us. Let's face this New Year of "normal time," this time of revelations about the Christ, with the love of God shining through us in all that we say and do. Love is the key and Jesus holds it. All we have to do is turn it. Hallelujah! Christ is born! Hallelujah! Christ is born in us! Hallelujah! Christ is alive and at work in us!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: James 2:14-26; Philippians 2:12-15; Romans 12:9-21

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. What evidence is in my life of my beliefs in Jesus, the Christ?
2. Are my actions reflecting light and life, or indifference and death?
3. How have I grown through these last few weeks in my walk with the Lord?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. Find a good devotional book or booklet with thought provoking devotionals to continue your daily growth. These devotionals were modeled after the books "15 Minutes Alone with God," and "15 Minutes of Peace with God" by Emilie Barnes, Harvest House Publishers. Her books are written for women, but there are many devotional books available both for men and women. Some books include or have companion journals.
2. Continue the devotionals of Chalice Dove Spiritual Enrichment Ministries found at: www.chalicedovemin.org
3. Find someone to be an accountability partner, someone with whom you can share your problem areas and work through them without worry about betrayal of trust.

Dearest Lord, thank you for all the things I have learned about you and myself through the Advent and Christmas seasons. Help me to continue to grow through the rest of this year. I'm not always good at continuing the things I start. Help me to remember that the journey with you is the most exciting journey I could make and that you are always with me to guide and sustain me. Help me to show evidence of my deepest beliefs so that your glory will shine forth to all who come in contact with me. Although I often stumble and fall, I know that you still love me and forgive me. Help me to remember that the same applies to everyone I know and they, too, are in need of your love and forgiveness. Let me be a conduit of that love and forgiveness. In the name of the God of love, born again in my heart, I pray. Amen.

WEDNESDAY – January 7th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: May I always call...upon the one who redeems me.

Lord of Light, redeemer of the needy, I pray for delivery from the darkness within me. During this special time we are spending together, I would seek to grow in maturity in my faith and humility so that I may serve you and your people more consistently. Help me better understand your ways and become more like you created me to be. In your redeeming name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

KEY VERSES: Psalm 72:12-14

(12) “For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. (13) He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. (14) From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight” (NRSV).

Over two thousand years after the birth of our Lord and the needy are still with us. How is it that we, as believers, have still not gotten the message that we are a part of God’s instruments to deliver the needy when they call and to be helpers for the poor? That, like our Savior, we are to work against oppression and violence, that each one is precious to our Lord? We are quick to align ourselves with the needy when we want something. But, we are slow to answer the call to bring deliverance for those who are forced to the margins of our society by their poverty, skin color, lack of education, religion or sexual preferences. We are often complaisant within our isolation from those who suffer under our society’s prejudices. Even our churches tend to perpetuate these prejudices by looking down upon those who come to our doors seeking aid, even when we give it, and expecting them to be conning us or lying to us and creating obstacles to meeting their needs in the form of procedures and limitations on the aid we give. Now, granted there are those who do try to take advantage of those who freely offer aid or assistance. But, that does not give us the right to refuse aid to those who come seeking our assistance in the name of the Lord. I suspect you are thinking that I have no right to accuse others of such refusals and that I think I have always answered the call to minister to the needs of others without prejudice. But, I have been just as guilty, if not more so, than most of you in closing my eyes to the needs around me and putting limits or qualifications for aid I have given. I often believe that the lessons given in the devotionals I write are more for me than they are for my readers. The point is not, “I help others and you don’t,” it’s, “Let’s do more than we do.”

I think the key to understanding what our key verses are saying to me and hopefully to you comes with the last phrase in verse 14: “*and precious is their blood in his sight.*” Until the “needy” become precious in our sight, we will fall short in bringing delivery from their needs. Seeing others, no matter what their social or economic standing, as people who are precious, not only in God’s sight, but in ours, makes all the difference in the world. It’s part of becoming the creation God intended us to be. Epiphany is all about light and what it reveals. For me, the light today reveals my need to see others as precious so that I can become more like God created me to become. Does that sound like a selfish reason to see others as precious? Perhaps, but seeing others as precious makes me understand a little more how God sees me as precious, even in my unworthy state. The people around me are not just needy in a physical sense, they are also needy in a spiritual sense, just as I am. If the people around me are worthy of God’s love, they are also worthy of mine, even as I acknowledge that neither of

us is really worthy. What we are is “needy.” There is no one who is not “needy” of something. It is because of that need that Jesus was born. That’s good news and it stands in the light being discovered as a part of our faith journey. Since we are all precious in God’s sight and needy in some way, perhaps, as we travel along on our new roads of discovery we can begin to grow in our call to bring deliverance for the poor and needy, the oppressed and those who suffer from violence. What the light brings to our attention can be changed if we begin to view the “needy” as precious in our sight.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 61:1-3; Matthew 5:38-42; Matthew 25:31-46

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. Do I look with suspicion on those who seek my assistance?
2. How do I regard the people around me? Do I see them as precious?
3. What are my needs today? From whom do I need assistance?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. For the rest of this week look for the needs of others which you might be able to help or give them a place to look for what they need.
2. Make a folder with references of places which render assistance in your community. Keep it where you can refer to it when someone needs your help.
3. Find one person outside your immediate family or friends to assist today.

Light of the World, who meets all my needs, help me to look upon your beloved children with mercy and love as you do. Help me to overcome the prejudices which I might have that blind me to your love for others and keep me from holding them as precious as you do. Guide me to those I am called to serve. In your loving name, I pray. Amen.

THURSDAY – January 8th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: May my heart...be filled with light.

Creator of light and life, I come before you today from out of the darkness of my heart into the light of the Christ. When darkness tries to engulf me, let me seek out your light so that I might be separated from the darkness. May I recognize the good your light brings to me and to the world. In your enlightening name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1-5

KEY VERSES: Genesis 1:3-4

(3) “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. (4) God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness” (NIV).

Creation. The very first item God created was light. How awesome! And in the creation of light, our Christ was present and took on the persona of light for us. And God knew the light was good. Interestingly enough, God never said that darkness was bad, only that light was good. There is a need for darkness as well as light. The earth needs time away from the sunlight, a time of darkness, so that the heat that accompanies the light will not overwhelm the earth. Without the darkness, we would not appreciate the light when it comes to us, either. If you read the Advent/Christmas devotionals, *On the Road to Bethlehem*, on Sunday, January 4th, you read about some of the important reasons light is so important to sustain life such as photosynthesis and the need for light in order to have vision. So, though darkness is not, in and of itself, bad, light is very, very good. Yet, in the act of creation, God did not remove darkness completely, he only created light to partner with it so that the life he was about to create could exist. Without light, there can be no life. This goes for spiritual life as well as physical life. This is why we need the Light of the World, Jesus, the Christ, in order to have eternal life, the spiritual life we so desperately crave.

Though we are never told that darkness is bad, we crave light in many ways. Darkness has come to represent things of which we are afraid or are ashamed and wish to hide. The light of Christ reveals these and gives us wisdom to overcome the fear and shame which we would hide in the darkness. He helps us to separate the light from the darkness of our souls in ways we never could. It is not always easy to bring the things which have thrived on the darkness into the light of Christ's love, but every time we do so, we take a step closer to the created image of God which resides within us. Christ's teachings help us to recognize some of the things we have hidden in the darkness which are contrary to the image of God and which would keep us away from fulfilling the calling to be children of God. Without the light of Christ, we might never reveal them, even to ourselves, let alone to God. We are also called to carry the light of Christ to others – to let our light (the light of Christ within us) shine so that others may have the things which have been hidden from them in the darkness revealed as well. We know that there are many who prefer the darkness, who do not want to have their fears and deeds revealed in the light. Yet, we are still called to shine Christ's light into the darkness. And, even those who do not choose to follow the light are loved by God and we can continue to shine forth so that they may have opportunities to choose life by coming into the light. We cannot force them into the light, we can only offer them the opportunity, because our Lord never forces us to choose God. We are always free to choose to turn away from the light and eternal life which the Christ offers. What an awesome calling we have, not only to have the light of Christ reveal what would hide in the darkness of our lives, but to illuminate the fears

and deeds that thrive in the darkness of the world. What an awesome creation was begun with the creation of light! Let us carry that light forth and let it shine through us to day and always!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: John 1:1-14; Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 5:14-16

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. What fears or hidden shames do I need to bring into the light of the Christ?
2. What has the light of Christ's presence dispelled in my life this past year?
3. How can I continue to reflect Christ's light to those around me?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. As you go through the day, note the ways light has an impact on your activities.
2. List some of the things the light of Christ has made known to you and how his light has benefited your life.
3. Look for a way to shine the light of Christ before others today.

Creator God, as I go through my normal activities today, may I carry your light with me. May your light illumine my pathway and show me when I stray into darkness. May I reflect your light in all my encounters with others so that they, too, may know your light and the joy that it brings when fears and shame are put to rest through the light of the Christ. In the light of your Son, I pray. Amen.

FRIDAY – January 9th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: Baptize me...with the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit, wash over me and cleanse me, bringing the fire of your presence and the strength to carry through with the projects to which I am called. May this time together enlighten me in new ways so that I may enter this day renewed and empowered to do your will. In your holy name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:4-11

KEY VERSES: Mark 1:7-8, 11:

(7) “And this was his message: ‘After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. (8) I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’ (11) And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’” (NIV).

The Lord’s baptism is something which most of us never fully understand. Even John, called the Baptist or the Baptizer, didn’t understand why Jesus came to him to be baptized. He certainly didn’t need to repent! Yet, in solidarity with humanity, Jesus came to be baptized by John and the Father was pleased. In this season of Epiphany, the most important revelation concerning Jesus occurs following Christ’s baptism. Though Jesus had no physical or spiritual need to be baptized, he followed the human ritual and God spoke to recognize the Christ’s relationship as God’s beloved Son and how pleased God was that Jesus began his ministry by aligning himself with the ones he had come to save. What better testimony could there be than the voice of God’s own self proclaiming Jesus as God’s beloved Son?

John had come thundering out of the wilderness, railing against the sinfulness of humanity, preparing the way for the Promised One who would redeem those who would prepare themselves to receive him. John included himself in those who needed to be prepared by telling one and all that the one who was to come was much more powerful than he and that he (John) was unworthy to untie his (the Christ’s) sandals. Yet, Jesus came to be baptized by John and John, reluctantly, complied. Though we never learn of it, I am certain that Jesus blessed John for all eternity for agreeing to comply with Christ’s request. I am also certain that, though John would later have his doubts, he heard the voice of God confirming what John had instinctively understood. John baptized with water. Jesus was baptized with water. We have been baptized with water in Christ’s name. But there is a further baptism which we also receive, that of the Holy Spirit. How we perceive that baptism varies, but in essence, it brings the presence of God into our very lives, moment by moment, action to action, thought to thought, forgivingly and lovingly. How we live into the baptism of the Holy Spirit varies from person to person, since we have all been blessed with different gifts and different callings, yet we all respond in some fashion because we have become believers in the Christ. For me, the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, is one of the most precious gifts I have received from my Savior. To know that the Holy Spirit lives within me, praying for me when I don’t know how to pray for myself, working from within to remake me into the image God had in mind for me from the beginning of Creation, comforting me in times of trouble and bringing to my mind the things which Christ taught is a powerful and awesome thought. When I am struggling with my faith journey or launching into new territory or enjoying God’s splendid creation, I reveal in the presence of the Holy Spirit who shares the journey along with me. The Holy Spirit was with Jesus through the temptations which followed his baptism and ministered to him after they were over. We, also, have that same presence because Jesus gave it to us

when he left earth as a human presence. God's beloved Son, proclaimed by God's own self, who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit, enabling us to have God's presence with us day by day, is Jesus, the Christ. There can be no doubt when we have received him because his presence remains with us and sustains us in all situations. What a grand revelation we have re-discovered! Let's share it again together. Jesus is God's beloved Son. God said so and that's the best news we could receive as we travel new roads of discovery!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 3:11-17; John 1:29-34; John 14:15-27; John 20:21-23

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. How has the proclamation of Jesus as God's Son by God's own self impacted me?
2. Have I accepted the gift of the Holy Spirit into my life and understood the impact of God's presence within me?
3. How does the knowledge of God's continued presence within me change how I live my life?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to be an active partner in your thoughts and actions today.
2. Make a study of the role and person of the Holy Spirit. One book I can recommend is: "Life in the Spirit" by Robertson McQuilkin, published by Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee.
3. Praise God for the gifts of Jesus, the Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

O, Lord, how can I ever thank you enough for sending your own Son to live with us on earth and to bring salvation into my life? Your precious gift has brought hope into my life and continues to bring joy and thanksgiving as I live out my life. I don't tell you enough how wonderful I think you are. As I continue to walk new roads of discovery, help me to be open to the revelations you have in store for me. May the Holy Spirit guide me today in all that I do and say. In your precious and marvelous name, I pray. Amen.

SATURDAY – January 10th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: Reveal to me...the redemption in Jesus.

Redeeming Christ, I come to you today in repentance for the things that I continue to do and say that would separate us. I know that I still continue to do and say things that are contrary to your will for my life. Thank you for your salvation which transcends my behavior and redeems me through your sacrifice for me. I come to you today to immerse myself in your name and to learn to live more completely in your will. In your redeeming name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 19:1-7

KEY VERSES: Acts 19:4-5:

(4) “Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.’ (5) On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (NRSV).

Baptism still continues as an important theme in this week’s discoveries. Yesterday, we talked about Christ’s baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Today we look at the difference between the baptism John gave and the one in which we have participated. I’m not talking about water, nor am I talking about the form of our baptism (sprinkled, poured or immersed) nor the age of our reception of baptism (infant, youth or adult). John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, a washing away of the past in order to look forward to the future when the Christ would come. Though we may use baptism as a symbol of cleansing from sin, the difference in our baptism is the name in which we are baptized. Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize his believers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Spirit). Being baptized in the names of God, we are being immersed into God’s own self. We use water, just as John did. But the purpose of our baptism is to symbolize our becoming one with God. Now, I am not advocating that we become God through our baptism, nor do I believe that baptism has any saving qualities. Our salvation comes through Christ, not through our baptism. If I am stepping on anyone’s toes by proclaiming beliefs which you do not share, I do not have all the truth about baptism or any other theological subject. I am only voicing my belief. I know that there are those who believe that baptism is a part of the salvation process. In a way, I also believe that, though I do not believe that baptism is necessary for a person to receive salvation. I do, however, believe that Christ desires for us to be baptized and that it has meaning for us as we continue our faith journey. We do many things in God’s name that God may not approve. Baptism is not one of them. In the act of baptism, we are sharing a oneness with all believers, regardless of the means of that baptism, because we have been baptized into God’s name. We are symbolizing Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. We are proclaiming that we believe in Christ’s gift of salvation. We are obeying Christ’s commandment. These are a few of the reasons for participation in the act of baptism.

In our scripture passage from Acts, Paul finds a group of new believers in Ephesus. Though they professed belief in the Christ, they had not heard about the gift of the Holy Spirit, nor had they been baptized in the name of the Lord. They had, however, been baptized into repentance, a good beginning, but not what Jesus had proclaimed. It is significant that Paul emphasized being baptized into the Holy Spirit, that is, receiving spiritual gifts from the Lord and the Lord’s constant presence through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Though not everyone agrees in the exact nature of the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and how it takes place in today’s world, we can agree that the presence of God’s Spirit in our lives can make a major difference in our faith journey. If you have difficulty in this matter over whether one needs to

Speak in tongues, etc. in order to receive the presence of the Holy Spirit or the gifts of the Spirit in your life, remember, though there is one Spirit, there are many gifts. Not everyone who has received the Holy Spirit in their lives has the same gifts, including speaking in tongues. Don't be afraid of the Holy Spirit's gifts because you don't believe in speaking in tongues or doing miracles. There are many other gifts of the Spirit that will be compatible with your beliefs. If you have trouble accepting that the Holy Spirit works in people without speaking in tongues, I would urge you to realize that speaking in tongues is only one of the gifts of the Spirit and that it is not the only evidence that a person has received spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit. Every believer has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some of us have just not yet learned how to access this precious gift. As I suggested in yesterday's suggestions for action, there are studies available to help us to understand the Holy Spirit better so that we can receive God's gifts more freely. I've given you some controversial material here today. If you are uncomfortable with some of it, that's OK. As I said earlier, I don't have all the answers and if I have missed the mark somewhere, God will make it good in the end. Even Paul spoke of knowing in part and seeing in a mirror darkly. As hard as it is for us to admit, none of us has all the truth about everything, or perhaps anything. I certainly know this. Take what resonates with your spirit and place the rest on a back burner for the Lord to sort out later. Receive the Holy Spirit from the Lord in whatever way you can. There is great joy and comfort available for us all.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:12

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. What does my baptism mean to me?
2. What has been my understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's gifts?
3. How can I learn when I don't completely agree with another's beliefs?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. Again, I suggest a study of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians contains a lot of information about the subject as do several of the Epistles. The book I recommended yesterday is one of the most complete studies I have seen and I found it very illuminating even when I did not completely agree with every statement.
2. Prayerfully consider your baptism and how it impacts your faith.
3. Prayerfully consider your understanding of the Holy Spirit's interaction with you and how you can be more open to such interaction.

Lord Jesus Christ, I don't always understand the intricacies of the Holy Spirit and the gifts that accompany the Spirit's presence. Help me to be open to new thoughts concerning your Spirit so that I might be graced with whatever you have prepared for me. Teach me each day so that I might become a mature believer. Use me today in whatever way you desire. May my baptism be a source of joy as I move forward along my faith journey. In service and in your name, I pray. Amen.

1st SUNDAY IN EPIPHANY – January 11th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: Lord of Light...bless me with peace.

Lord of Light, as I come before you at the end of this first week in Epiphany, I ask for a blessing of peace. I give you honor for the glory of your name and bring you worship with a sacrifice of praise. Your presence has brought enlightenment and discoveries amid questions and the darkness of my soul. Stay with me and bless me with your peace throughout this day. In your glorious name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 29

KEY VERSE: Psalm 29:2, 11:

(2) “Give honor to the Lord for the glory of his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. (11) The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace” (NLT).

We come to the end of the first week in Epiphany with one of the lovely Psalms of praise. It is a powerful Psalm full of beauty and the glory and majesty of our Lord. Sunday is a day of worship and it is fitting to close out the week with this Psalm of worship. Our church services will be full of Christ's baptism, but we have already spent time on this subject and let us now stop to just praise and worship the Lord, our God. As God proclaimed Jesus his beloved Son with whom he was well pleased, let us proclaim the power and splendor of God's holiness. Verse after verse in the Psalm honors the power of the Lord's voice, thundering over the waters, breaking the cedars of Lebanon, flashing with lightning, shaking the desert, twisting the oaks and striping the forests bare and the reply from God's people is cries of "Glory!" As we contemplate the splendor of our Lord, let us add our voices and cry "Glory!" Throughout the Psalm the emphasis is on power and glory. Yet, in the final verse, after the gift of strength which fits the rest of the Psalm perfectly comes a final blessing of peace. Perhaps the Psalmist is trying to remind us that we can have peace in our lives by relying on the strength and power of our Lord. Peace does not come to us by giving up strength. But, it is not our strength which blesses us with peace, it is the power and glory of our majestic and holy Lord which accomplishes peace.

In John 14 when Jesus is promising the gift of the Holy Spirit to his disciples (which includes us) he also speaks of the peace that he leaves with us. It is such an integral part of the promise of the Holy Spirit that it might be a part of the same promise. Perhaps, the gift of peace of which Jesus speaks comes along with the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is just a thought, but perhaps Jesus is trying to tell us that the gift of the Holy Spirit's presence brings a blessing of peace along with it. So, our Psalm ends with a blessing of peace secured by the power and majesty of the Lord and our Christ promised peace along with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Both blessings come from the presence of God in one of God's persons. Such a blessing is just one more reason to worship our glorious, majestic, powerful, splendid and holy God. So, strike up the praise songs, raise your hands in surrender, kneel in humility, and worship the Lord your God whose power and majesty are more awesome than we can imagine. Join with others in worship and bring your praise into your private time with the Lord as well. Not only do we have a strong and powerful God who deserves our honor and worship, but we are blessed with peace as well. What a welcome promise to take along with us as we continue to travel new roads of discovery this Epiphany season. Let us rejoice and worship as we travel along.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: John 14:25-31

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. Why do I worship God?
2. How have I been blessed with peace by my Lord?
3. What is my response to the blessings I have received from my Lord?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. Worship the Lord in whatever manner you find appropriate anywhere, anytime you can.

Awesome God, whose power and majesty are beyond my comprehension, how can I possibly bring you the worship and glory you deserve? My poor words are paltry compared to your great and wondrous deeds. As I continue my faith journey today, I offer you what worship I am able and pray that you accept it as a genuine expression of my love and devotion. Thank you for your awesome blessing of peace. Help me to take your blessing along with me today and show me ways to share it with others. In your blessed name, I pray. Amen.