



Come and See!

Week of January 25, 2026

The Word...

*"One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek:
To dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD and contemplate his temple.
I believe I shall see the bounty of the LORD in the land of the living"*
(from Ps 27).

*"I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that all of you agree in what you say,
and that there be no divisions among you,
but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. ...
so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning"*
(1 Cor 1:10-13, 17).

Pondering the Word...

I was delighted when I perused the readings for this week. There are three of my favorite Scripture phrases and images: "To gaze upon the Lord's loveliness and contemplate his temple" (in the Hebrew, it is the Lord's 'sweetness'); "That the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning;" and tomorrow, "To stir into flame the gift of God." This got me thinking how these three might be linked.

I imagine each of us desires to dwell in the "house" of the Lord every day, our earth being the Lord's house where we see God's bounty and sweetness in the land of the living. (Of course, there are times that we, like Peter at the Transfiguration, might like to set up camp in a sanctuary and hide out for a while. Unfortunately, this is what is happening to some of our brothers and sisters.) Dwelling in the house of the Lord calls us to pay attention, to contemplate God's loveliness as we recognize God's face in all creation and in every situation and person we meet.

But I am reminded of Paul's words that our physical bodies are temples, houses of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). I think of Christ's body upon the cross, not so lovely, not so sweet. Yet, as the symbol of salvation and the mercy of God, its meaning assures us that nothing we encounter is death-dealing. Paul encourages us to unite in mind and purpose under this symbol and the belief in God's great gift to us.

Living the Word...

So how are we to "stir into flame" this gift? I believe we are called to find heaven today in the land of the living, not waiting until some far-off time and place. The seeds of the Kingdom of God are right here and right now, awaiting warmth and light.

When I picture this "flame" we are to stir into life, I don't see the raging, destructive fires of the Old Testament tribes, but a slow and steady flame that is controlled, that gives off a lovely light and the warmth and comfort of the Lord's refuge.... a flame of mercy and compassion. How do we stir this into life? Through simple acts of love. What will you do this week to stir into flame God's gift to you?

Personal Reflections and Ideas...

Mon, Jan 26: *"I am grateful to God, whom I worship with a clear conscience as my ancestors did"* (2 Tm 1:1-8). Paul gets a lot of abuse from his Jewish brethren, saying he is betraying the faith of his ancestors. "Not so," says Paul who affirms his faith in the God of Israel. We can compare this to the situation within Christianity today. **Provision: Ensure your conscience is clear.** I am quick to condemn those I see as using Christianity in ways that don't align with Jesus' teaching, or for that matter, those of the Hebrew Tanakh. I must ensure my conscience is clear and that I am not violating Christ's teachings about judgement and love (I'd like to make a tee-shirt that reads, "I am intolerant of intolerant people! 😊) How clear is your conscience today?

Tue, Jan 27: *"For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother"* (Mk 3:31-35). Have you been following the story of the Buddhist monks on a pilgrimage for peace in the US? If you haven't read this article, please do (<https://tinyurl.com/ys2tm3d6>). The stories shared brought me to tears. In the gospel story today, Jesus is teaching us that "family" extends far beyond blood relations, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and the like. Those who do the will of God—promoting peace and showing mercy and love—are Jesus' family.

Provision: What is your opinion? Are these pilgrims doing the will of God? Do you see them as your family? (I'd like to suggest if you answer these questions "Yes!" you too are doing the will of God!)

Wed, Jan 28: *"And the anxieties of the age and the beguilement of riches and longings for other things intrude, throttling the word, and it becomes fruitless"* (Mk 4:1-20, literal Greek). In every age, there is anxiety. I like to imagine myself as the "rich soil" type in this parable; then I remember soil becomes rich with a good dose of "humus!" Recently, I find a need to access "the word" more frequently to avoid being choked and throttled by the barrage of anxiety, fear, and violence. **Provision: Take to heart God's words to David today:** *"I have been with you wherever you went."* We can fail to notice God with us as we get caught up in worldly anxieties. We may question if God is with us. Even if our "longings" are for things like peace and tranquility, it's easy to get distracted and lose focus on producing good fruit. A little prayer practice from *God, I Have Issues*, by Mark Thibodeaux, SJ (2005, p. 185): Imagine a worse-case scenario for some situation you are facing. List all the terrible things that could happen, but end each sentence with, "but you are with me, Lord."

Thu, Jan 29: *"Bless the house of your servant that it may be before you forever"* (1 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29). Nathan has told David that God has promised his throne "shall stand firm forever." David is blown away and humbled, sitting before God in thanksgiving. He prays for God's blessing that he and his progeny will fulfill their part. Mind you, it doesn't take him long to mess up, as we read tomorrow! **Provision: Get to know David.** The more I learn about this King of Israel, the more I like him. He's a good guy, and like my friend, St. Peter, he messes up bigtime, but is always willing to return to God, take responsibility, and accept the consequences. There's a simplicity, a genuineness about David, just as with his descendent, Jesus of Nazareth. See what you might learn from David's story. (One lesson might be that even as God has blessed us [*"this is my beloved in whom I am well pleased"*], we still need to resist the temptations that can separate us from God, as Jesus did in the desert.)

Fri, Jan 30: *When the men of the city made a sortie, some officers of David's army fell, and among them Uriah the Hittite* (2 Sm 11:1-10, 13-17). This is an awful story. If we focus too much on David's sin, we may overlook that, along with Uriah, other officers were killed. Who else was impacted? The effects of sin are rarely limited to the perpetrator and a single victim. **Provision: Don't overlook the impacts of sin.** Most of us don't sin in the egregious way David did, and yet, there are those among us who have suffered greatly due to the sins of prior generations. Sins like poverty, abuse, and war. Societal sins have far-reaching impacts and can cause those impacted to sin all the more—look at crimes committed in areas of great poverty and despair. And even events of our day-to-day lives can have impacts beyond what we see. One quote I use often: *"To tolerate is to teach."* What sinful or hateful behavior do you tolerate? What are we teaching our kids and grandchildren?

Sat, Jan 31: *"A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me"* (Ps 51). **Provision: Pray psalm 51 early and often!** After you do your nightly examen (remember that prayer?!), if you find you are caught up in negative thoughts or dwelling on sin, pray psalm 51. Yes, it is a prayer of repentance, but more than that, a song of joy and commitment, reveling in God's mercy and justice!