

# PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



Rev. Justin Panzer | District President



## September Devotion

**"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

**(John 8:31-32)**

### (Part 2 of 3)

It is through the simple preaching of the crucified and risen Christ that people are converted from unbelief to faith in Christ; from darkness into light; from the world into the church; and from death into life.

Jesus wants pastors to preach the Word of God. Jesus commanded His apostles saying in **Luke 24:47** that **"repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations."** Jesus wants His Word preached because this is how faith is created and nurtured. In his 1879 address, "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod," C.F.W. Walther writes: "Pastors must direct people to Christ and say, 'You see, we proclaim the pure Word of God, which contains the eternal Gospel. That is why you should cling to us, and that is why we maintain that the moment we no longer do that, you should leave us! For salvation is not in any way dependent on us, nor the Missouri Synod. So, if it does not proclaim the pure Word of God, it is worthless, and you should leave it.'"

Just as the human body cannot long exist without food and water, so also the human spirit needs nourishment

to survive. That food and water for the spirit comes from the Word of God. Spiritual food is so important that the Bible describes God's Word as *"bread of life"* and *"living water"* (**John 6:35**). Jesus explained in **Matthew 4:4**, *"It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

**The baptized "abide in the word" as we are gathered at the pulpit, font, and altar to receive the gifts of Christ in Word and Sacrament. This is real, life-sustaining food. Receiving these gifts gives you a good conscience before Christ (Heb. 10:22; 1 Tim. 1:5). With sins forgiven and faith in Christ strengthened, you are set on the path to serve the living God.**

Dear friends, abide in God's Word. How? Be regular for every Sunday worship. Commit yourself to giving two-hours at worship—one hour in the Divine Service and one hour in Bible study. Go to Bible study. Continue this pattern of receiving the Word of God at home throughout

the week. Commit yourself to a time of the day when you can do devotions and personal study of God's Word. There are many resources that you can use including the *Portals of Prayer*. Use it and read the Scriptures that go along with the daily reading. If you would like to pursue something more advanced, I encourage you to purchase the *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. Commit yourself to a yearly Bible reading plan. There are many to choose from. Fathers, teach your children the Word of God and how to pray in the home. Have that weekly faith then further nurtured on Sunday morning.

If we are a church body that prides itself in having the true Word of God, then we must be in and abide in the Word of God. **1 Peter 5:8**, *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* **2 Peter 3:18**, *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* **1 Peter 3:15**, *"Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."*

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