

**“MEDICINE FOR OUR SOULS”**

Dearly Beloved of Christ, if you have been feeling uncertain or uneasy recently, I’m not surprised.

- Can you relate to this prayer? “I’m on my knees empty, Lord.”

The times, they are confusing.

We are living in what one commentator called a time of “message chaos.”

- Whatever the topic is, there are so many diametrically opposed messages about it.
- There’s an old saying that a person with a watch always knows what time it is, but a person with two watches never does. Why? Because the watches never really agree.
- More than message chaos, we are seeing deep division, outpourings of anger, even eruptions of violence.
- If we ever needed a trustworthy, calming, and healing word, it is now.



A soul can easily get sick at a time like this.

- Sick and injured souls, that’s what we are here for.
- For those of you feeling that you’re on your knees and empty, we can help with that.
- We do have a trustworthy, calming, and healing word for your soul – God’s word, the gospel of Jesus Christ. We can guide you to that divine word.
- We are even audacious enough to trust and proclaim Christ’s claim that God’s word is truth itself → the truth that will set you free → a centering truth that will empower you to be able to wade back into your struggles but better prepared.

Our fall theme at Ascension is “Rooted in Christ” The image is of how our roots need to be firmly planted in Christ. But for today’s consideration of how God’s Word can be medicine for your soul, we need to reverse the image and ask it this way, **is God’s word rooted in you?**

You don’t get better just by visiting a pharmacy every now and then.

- You have to actually pick up your prescription.
- More than that, you have to take it. Doctors say many people never actually take the medicine they need even when they have it.
- If it’s not in you, it has no chance at helping you.

Likewise, is God’s word rooted in your soul where it can do its soul healing work in you?

May you be able to say along with Psalm 119:11, *“I have stored up your word in my heart.”*

That’s huge idea number 1. Is God’s word rooted in you?

Here’s the issue, though.

- For most people, having God’s word take root in your soul is harder than just picking up your Bible and starting to randomly read around in it.

- Sure, that can do some good. But just as easily that could end up frustrating you if you don't have skills yet in reading the Bible. But hang on.

We Lutherans talk about God's Word coming to us in three ways:

- 1) The incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, the word of God made flesh. God's highest word.
- 2) The written Word, the Holy Bible, the inspired word of God.
- 3) The proclaimed Word, God's word of law and gospel preached and taught in your ears in such a way that it goes to your heart and soul.

That third way, the proclaimed word, is not some distant third place in importance. In fact, it is critical because the proclaimed word is the means by which "the word" becomes a personal "living and healing word" for you.

- The mandate of the early church was "let's preach it" not "let's write a book."
- In the earliest church days when the New Testament itself was still a work in progress, some of the early church fathers even had hesitations about writing the gospel down in case it would detract from the more important job of proclaiming that word in a living way into the hearts and souls of living people.
- They argued that it needs to be a living word in the ears, not a dead word on paper.
- Well, the written word can be and is a living word, but their concern is valid. How does this written word become a living word doing its healing work within you?

This is why preachers, Sunday School teachers, and Bible study leaders will always be needed.

- We are proclaimers of the word who help the written word become a living word for others.

Growth into full Christian spiritual maturity, however, also includes growing in knowing how to go directly to the Bible on your own and have that written word become a living word to you directly from the page... through the work of the Holy Spirit, of course.

- That's how you will find the trustworthy, life-giving medicine your soul needs.
- This is exactly the topic we are exploring in the Ascension member virtual Bible study I'm starting today, "I'm On My Knees Empty, Lord."
- Members, check your Tidings for more information on how to participate.
- We'll continue to explore deeper into this same topic in next Sunday's sermon, to provide you some guidance in how to effectively read the Bible on your own.
- But don't wait until then to start reading your Bible. If you need a place to start, I recommend starting with the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.

Let's not leave you on your knees empty! Much better is to be on your knees full!

To be filled with the strength, guidance, and hope of Christ Jesus himself and to be renewed to rise up to meet the challenges of your day. Amen.

## **Scripture**

### **Be Rooted in God's Word - Psalm 119:10-11 ESV**

“With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

### **Be Transformed by God's Word - 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

### **It's Okay that You are Still a Work In Progress - Philippians 1:6 ESV**

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”