

**Immersed in God’s Word,**

**following Jesus – together**

*His disciples came to him, and Jesus began to teach them.*

 *~ Jesus, Matthew 5:2*



**Monday, Week 3: Theme: Living under Jesus’ authority**

 *“I want you to know that the Son of Man*

 *has authority on earth to forgive sins.”* ~ Jesus

**Pondering Point:** IMMERSION’s theme for this week deals with

****(1) acknowledging God AND

(2) living under His authority, particularly under Jesus who

 has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

The question being posed in today’s devotion is whether you specifically acknowledge God’s authority in Jesus. Keep in mind that to merely acknowledge God and to live under Him are not automatically one in the same. A reminder of this is found in James 2:19 where we are told that even demons acknowledge God, but do not willingly live under Him.

Some believe that the question to answer is whether Jesus, who died on the cross, is the Lord of Heaven and Earth. But that question has already been addressed in the courts of Heaven; His resurrection from the dead and ascent to the right hand of the Father are evidence of it. The real question is whether it has been addressed in your heart. Do you confess that Jesus is the Lord of Heaven and Earth – and if so, how are you acknowledging and living under His authority?

**Prayer for the week:** Oh Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that You have authority not just to forgive sins, but that You had the authority to lay down Your life for my sin – and had the authority to take it up again (John 10:18). I acknowledge Your authority as my Savior and as my Master. By Your Holy Spirit, inspire and compel me to live under You and Your Word as my ultimate authority, giving You weight above the opinions and authority of all others, including myself; under Your authority I pray and live this, Amen.



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:4-6**

***Read*** *verses 1-6, then re-read 4-6*

1 The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters.

3a He restores my soul: (3b) he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**4a Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:**

**for You are with me;**

**4b Your rod and your staff they comfort me.**

**5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.**

**6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

***Mark*** the words or phrases that catch your attention.

***Meditate****:* Talk (better yet write) with God about those words. Ask him to impress things upon your heart and mind; expect responses

**Pondering Point:** What valleys has the Lord been bringing your through lately? Have you been able to chase away any fear by finding comfort in the presence of your Shepherd Jesus? Where is your cup running over? Praise God for these blessings.

**Tuesday, Week 3: God’s Mission seen in Mark 2:1-11**

*“But,” Jesus said, speaking to the teachers of the law “I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”* – and then healed the man. Mark 2:10 adapted

Read the entire account (maybe even Matthew’s version 9:1-8). When considering God's mission, this facet fits very comfortably in the skin of life-long Lutherans. Sin and forgiveness of sin are central even in the miraculous and crowd-awing healing of a disabled man. Jesus comes to forgive sins and this story shows that even His other (secondary) actions point toward the primary goal of bringing forgiveness. But don’t make the mistake of seeing this story as limited to forgiveness of a previously lame man. It was also about forgiveness for those watching Jesus exercise His authority also: *“But,” Jesus said, speaking to the teachers of the law “I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”* – and then healed the man, showing His authority over physical and spiritual maladies. The teachers of the law, like everyone in the crowd also need forgiveness in Jesus’ name. But they needed to acknowledge Him as Lord. Like He told another teacher in John 3, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of the Spirit – the Holy Spirit, which teaches that Jesus is Lord.

**Prayer prompt:** Imagine yourself as part of the story: one of the people in the crowd, one of the friends, the lame man or maybe a teacher of the law. Take note of your thoughts and emotions and dialog with God about them in prayer.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:4-6**

**Ps 23:4a Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For You are with me;

***Teaching or Command of God:***

 If God is for us, who can be against us?

  *Romans 8:31b*

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along

 *Romans 8:32* with him, graciously give us all things?

**Pondering Point:** When you reflect back to the dark valleys of your past, envision the stories in such a way as to see how God comforted and led you through to the other side.

Sharing Task: take time to share a dark valley moment in your life and how you have come to see God’s presence through that time.

*My notes of God’s presence in my dark moments:*



**Wednesday, Week 3: Your Identity in Christ**

**In Christ I am called to live a holy life**

**under the authority of my Lord and Savior Jesus.**

We acknowledged in previous weeks that *in Christ we are born of God and cared for as His beloved children*. It follows that part of being people who are *born of God* is acting like people who are *born of God.* According to Jesus, this includes denying ourselves, following Him and learning His ways. You could say it like this, which I encourage you to speak aloud:

*Jesus, I agree to live under Your authority and let*

*You and Your teachings rule my decision-making.*

**Prayer prompt:**

Finish these thoughts related to living under Jesus’ authority and teachings, embracing His lifestyle:

* Lord Jesus Christ, because I am born of God…
* Lord Jesus Christ, because I am your disciple…
* Lord Jesus Christ, because I am living under your authority…



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:4-6**

 Ps 23:4bYour rod and your staff they comfort me.

**

 ***Teaching or Command of God:***

 Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God; Believe also in me. *John 14:1*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the

 *2 Cor. 1:3-4* God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our

 troubles, so that we can comfort those in any

 trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive

 from God.

**Pondering Point:** Bring to mind whatever is troubling your heart or mind and ask then God to comfort you regarding it. One simple but effective prayer is *Holy Spirit comfort me.*

**Thursday, Week 3: Re-Center around God**

Today we introduce a new wrinkle to Immersion: Review and Re-center on God. The review day is placed on Thursday as a midpoint of the week knowing that many of us mentally begin our week on a Monday. It's also kind of midway between trips to Father's house on weekends to worship with your brothers and sisters. This makes it a great time to look at your week and re-center around the Lord and His will.

This wrinkle consists of three parts: *Review (your day or week), Repent (as necessary) and Return (if necessary).*

***Review for the week:*** As you review your life, you will likely find sins that you did not want to commit or places that you failed to act in a godly fashion.

***Repent if necessary***:

Acknowledge these and let Jesus forgive for whatever sins that have come to mind.

***Return as necessary***: The third part is returning to God from any idol or lack of focus you’ve had. In doing so, you will find yourself renewed as described in Romans 12:1.

Tomorrow we extend our review and re-center into a discipleship point as we build around a reading from 1st Thessalonians.

For your prayer prompt today, review your past week as a

follower of Jesus, repent as necessary, and return God to

His rightful place as center of

your life. Then adjust your

schedule and attitude where appropriate and prepare for the rest of your week.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:4-6**

Ps 23:5You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

*****Teaching or Command of God:***

For no matter how many promises God has made,

they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the

“Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed

us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts

as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. *2 Cor. 1:20-22*

 It will be good for those servants whose

master finds them watching when he comes.

 Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve,

 *Luke 12:37* will have them recline at the table and

 will come and wait on them.

**Pondering Point:** Who/what do you see as enemies in your spiritual journey?  Who/what might the Holy Spirit point out? How are you preparing to battle them day-to-day?



**Friday, Week 3: Discipleship Point from 1 Thess. 4:1-8**

*As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living… we urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.*

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. Our *Discipleship Point* is built around the first of the four worlds we frequent as disciples: Along with the world of you and God is the world of family, of work or pleasure, of church. God is to be central to all four of these worlds. Using snippets from today’s reading, ask yourself a few questions to evidence that His proper place is secure in your heart and mind, thoughts and actions, attitude and awareness:

*… It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable… that no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.*

* Do I view myself as sanctified (set apart) for God?
* Am I avoiding sexual immorality as requested by God?
* Am I learning to control my body in ways that are holy and honorable to God?

**Discipleship Prayer**: Father God, I desire to let You have Your proper place, Your central place in my life – and to abide by Your instruction. Help me by Your Holy Spirit to identify any idol or person, anxiety or pleasure that has nudged You aside. Take Your rightful place on the throne of my heart. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:4-6**

** Ps 23:6Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my

 life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

***Teaching or Command of God:***

 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand

 elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the

house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. *Ps. 84:10*

 His mercy extends to those who fear him,

 from generation to generation.

 *Luke 1:50*

**Pondering Point:** How many generations of your family have been believers in Jesus as Lord? How are you passing down God’s message of mercy to the next generations?

 **Saturday, Week 3: Scripture’s Story for the Week**



 Jesus heals a crippled man

 **Mark 2:1-11, Matthew 9:2-8**

This gospel story from Mark adds a dimension to the Matthew 9 version that is fascinating. It includes four friends bringing their disabled friend to Jesus to have him healed. I love the faith of his friends who end up being integral to this man experiencing forgiveness and healing. Wouldn't you be thrilled to be a part of someone else's awesome encounter with Jesus? Imagine yourself peering down the hole in the roof that you just tore open and seeing your friend receive his heart's desire from Jesus Christ?

**Prayer prompt:** Ask God for a heart for your friends like we see in this Gospel story. Don’t stop there; ask which people specifically – family, friends, acquaintances – God might have in your world to for you expressly to love on.

**Acquaintances**



**Family**

**Friends**

**Sunday, Week 3: Call to worship God, to gather together**

Here are a few verses relating to Jesus’ authority and His rightful place in your life, and God the Father having His rightful place on the throne of your heart:

* *“I want you to know that the Son of Man has*

 *authority on earth to forgive sins”* ~ Mark 2:10

* *Return to me and I will return to you.* ~ Zechariah 1:3
* *Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”*

 ~ Revelation 5:3

Worship is meeting at the center so that our lives are centered in God and not lived eccentrically. We worship so that we live in response to and from this center, the Living God. Failure to worship consigns us to a life of spasms and jerks, at the mercy of every advertisement, every seduction, every siren. Without worship we live manipulated and manipulating lives. We move in either frightened panic or diluted lethargy as we are, in turn, alarmed by specters and soothed by placebos. If there is no center, there is no circumference.

 *~ Edmund Clowney*



**Prayer for Worship:** Lord Jesus Christ, on this day of worship for so many around the world, I give you Your rightful place in my life. Sweep off and out any part of my heart that has risen up in opposition to You and has sought to displace You. I include my own ego and my anxieties that plague me. I want nothing but You in the center of who I am and all that I live for. In Your name I pray, Amen.