

Order of Worship for September 28, 2025

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “Thy Strong Word” - Hymn #578

Confession and Forgiveness

P: St. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy, “Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” But do we continue in that Word? Do we make the time each day for it to come into our lives? Do we say with the Psalmist, “Oh, how I love Your Word”?

ALL: So often we are so busy with other things, we fill our lives with what is on the internet or gossip or whatever gets our attention. We live as if God’s Word means nothing. . . Lord, have mercy on us.

P: Christ Jesus, the very Word of God, gave His life for us on the cross for all the times when we make little of God and His Word. By Christ’s command I forgive you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm: Psalm 119:97-104

P: Oh how I love Your Word!

C: It is my meditation all the day.

P: Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,

C: for it is ever with me.

P: I have more understanding than all my teachers,

C: for Your testimonies are my meditation.

P: I understand more than the aged,

C: for I keep Your precepts.

P: I hold back my feet from every evil way,

C: in order to keep Your word

P: I do not turn aside from Your rules,

C: for You have taught me.

P: How sweet are Your words to my taste,

C: sweeter than honey to my mouth!

P: Through Your precepts I get understanding;

C: therefore I hate every false way.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer for the Day:

P: Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, and inwardly digest them that, by the patience and comfort of Your Holy Word, we may ever embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: *"Thy Word"* (see screen)

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 55:10-11

R: God says, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

P: But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 16th chapter.

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: Jesus said, "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the

dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

Children's Message: (8:30)

Sermon Hymn: "*We Are Called to Stand Together*" - Hymn # 828

Sermon: "*Inspired*" - 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

What does it mean to be inspired? That's what I thought as I stared at the blank computer screen, watching the cursor blink, waiting for inspiration to come. Often, when we talk about being inspired, we talk about the arts. We say that a performance was inspired, that everything came together and worked in a new way. We talk about inspiration striking and something new and special being created. Sometimes we say it because there was something that makes us feel inspired, that it lifted our spirits. The key as we think about the Bible as inspired isn't quite in that way.

Years ago, a missionary in Togo was working to translate the Bible into one of the languages there. But he was stuck on how to translate the Holy Spirit. He knew the word for spirit, and he knew the word for holy, and he thought that he could just put those two words together and be done. But those helping him with the translation told him that the word for spirit was used to refer to the spirits in rocks and trees and people, and would either make the people afraid or let them think they could control it. Finally, after describing the Holy Spirit as wind and breath as well, they decided to translate Holy Spirit as God's good breath. It described who the Holy Spirit is and how the Holy Spirit works.

That's really what inspired means. God-breathed. What does God-breathed mean?

Here's what we know from elsewhere in Scripture:

- To Jeremiah, God said: "Write all the words that I have spoken to you in a book." (Jeremiah 36:2).

- David wrote, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me and His word was in my tongue.” (2 Samuel 23:2)
- Peter tells us that the holy men of God spoke “as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)
- Paul informs us that the things that he taught were expressed in words “which the Holy Spirit teaches.” (1 Corinthians 2:13)

God spoke in different ways at different times to the writers of the Bible. But they weren’t just robots spouting off words. They knew what they were doing. Each writer used his own mental powers, arranged by his thoughts and arguments, chose his words, constructed his sentences, and retained his own style, and it was all directed by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit employed different types of men as His scribes—kings and peasants, fishermen and scholars, priests and prophets—using their unique abilities, learning, and writing styles. The Bible teaches the fact of its inspiration, but not the “how,” and there is nothing in the realm of human experience that can fully explain the inspiration of Scripture to us. These are God’s words, breathed into the lives of some great men of the faith through the Holy Spirit and recorded in their own styles for our benefit so we can hear God’s voice as often as we need.

That’s what Paul is reminding Timothy of in this passage. Towards the end of his life, as he’s in prison again, Paul is reminding Timothy of how he can keep going. Paul is reminding Timothy of what he can trust and rely on. And that is Scripture, the word of God. The word of God that has been God-breathed, and is God-breathed. The Word of God taught to Timothy from his youth, that he still needs to hear.

But that inspiration, the fact that it’s God-breathed, isn’t just something that matters in the past, in how the Scriptures came to be. As NT Wright wrote, "The early Christians believed (and this passage [from 2 Timothy 3] is one of the strong signs of this) the reason the Scriptures were alive was because God had ‘breathed’ them in the first place, and the warmth and life of His creative breath was still present and powerful."

The Word and the Spirit go together. The Spirit, the breath of God, illumines and makes alive through the Word of God; both written and read, preached and heard. “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers through the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1). The Spirit presently speaks or breathes the Word of God which is Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

The amazing truth about the Bible is that it is God’s Word, His very words to us. So many people clamor, “I want to hear God’s voice” in this world, yet the very place where we can be assured to hear from God is His Word. 90% of Americans have at least one copy of the Bible in their homes, but only 11% read the Bible daily. The Bible is the place where we can hear from God every day. Yet too often we ignore it.

Why is the Bible useful for teaching? As we open the Bible, we connect to the One that created us. As we connect to Him, our identity as redeemed, forgiven, and chosen sons and daughters of

the King becomes more real. When that becomes our primary identity, we live to make a difference in this world. That's not only what you and I need more of. That's what the world needs more of, too.

What does the Bible teach you? If this is God's Word, what does God want you to know? All Scripture. Not a piece of it. Or a part of it. Or one of the two testaments. All of it. If I wanted to make sure you got it all, if I read it from front to back, Genesis to Revelation, out loud, so you can learn it all, how long would that take? I looked it up, and it would take about 75 and a half hours to do that. That'd be a good and noteworthy way to spend the next 3+ days, right?

So, clearly, we can't do that today, but what can we do? We can attempt to answer what the Bible wants you to know...but I do believe it's All Scripture. It's the whole thing. You run into the most extraordinary love story ever written when you read the entire thing.

Martin Luther once said, "There is not a word in the Bible which can be understood without reference to the cross." These are the very words of God written for us. In His book, you find the amazing story of us being saved from sin through Jesus' death on the cross. It's the only true story to discover where you came from, what you are called to do right now, and finally, how, in Christ, all things end well for those who believe and receive this book to be the truth and God's Word.

God loves you so much that not only did He create you for His good pleasure, but when we, His most prized possession, abandoned Him and turned our backs toward Him through our sin, He went to the most incredible lengths to rescue us. He went all the way from His throne room in heaven to take on a humble, obedient, servant posture, willing to die a humiliating and excruciating death on a cross. But because our God is powerful, He wouldn't stay dead. Three days later, when He rose from the dead, He fully paid for your sin. Not only this, but this same God fills you today with the Holy Spirit so that you can live with meaning and purpose and help usher in God's Kingdom now. While it certainly can't be fully realized now, we can get glimpses, and you can be a part of bringing glimpses...because you are, after all, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

That's what Paul reminds Timothy of, and reminds us of. All Scripture is God-breathed for a purpose. "So that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Bible's purpose is not to teach, rebuke, correct, and train us so that it would help us maximize this world or so that we would live a long, happy, and healthy life...it's so that you and I, servants of God, are equipped for every good work. This book, the Bible, is more than words and stories to hear, know, and believe. When rightly translated and read, it is meant to produce a faith that is followed by good works. God's Word works.

So, how does the Bible equip you for good works? The reality is that everybody learns. We are learners. Constantly. Whether we try to be or not. So, it's not a question of if you will learn. You learn every day. But, is what you are learning useful for equipping you to do God's work in this world?

So, how is the Bible useful for my life? How does it equip me for good works? Think about it. It's all in that first line. All Scripture is God-breathed. More than ever today, Americans are struggling with their identity. And when you struggle with identity, you also struggle with purpose. The reason we aren't as connected to our purpose is that we aren't as connected to our Creator.

The Bible is about how we connect to our God, ultimately find our identity, and live purposefully in this world because it is God-breathed.

Every temptation still begins with a question: "Did God really say?" But we have an ever more sure Word, the incarnate Word of God, God made flesh in the man Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Bible says Christ came into the world to save sinners, fallen losers like you and me. So, what does God really say? He says whatever is written in his Holy Word, every single jot and tittle of the Old and New Testaments. For the Word of God is living and active, God-breathed, inspired, and inerrant. And in that Word, God says, above all, that he loves you! God says that Jesus died on the cross for your sins. God says your sins are forgiven! God says you have eternal life! God says you are his baptized child, and he will never let you go, no matter how far you run or how hard you try to hide. God says! And that's inspiring.

Confession of Faith on God's Word:

(Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article IV.) **All Scripture ought to be distributed into these two principal topics, the Law and the promises (Gospel). For in some places it presents the Law, and in others the promise concerning Christ, namely, either when [in the Old Testament] it promises that Christ will come, and offers, for His sake, the remission of sins justification, and life eternal, or when, in the Gospel [in the New Testament], Christ Himself, since He has appeared, promises the remission of sins, justification, and life eternal.**

(Formula of Concord, Article V) **We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light, by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided The Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproves everything that is sin and contrary to God's will. For this reason, then, everything that reproves sin is, and belongs to, the preaching of the Law. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, is to believe, namely, that Christ has sacrificed and made satisfaction for all sins, and has obtained and acquired for him, without any merit of his [no merit of the sinner intervening], forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.**

Choir Anthem (8:30): "Arise, My Soul, Arise" by Dan Forrest

Responsive Prayer on God's Word

P: Lord God, we thank You for Your Word. By that Word you made us.

C: “Through the Word all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In that Word was life, and that life was the light of men.” John 1:3-4)

P: We above all thank You that Your Word is Your Son, Christ Jesus.

C: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

P: In Your Word we see our lives anchored on Christ as we are “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.” (Ephesians 2:20)

C: “These are the scriptures that testify about Me.” (John 5:39) “But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)

P: Help us to be in that Word confident that “no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

C: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

P: Show us the power of Your Word to work in our lives.

C: “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:17)

P: Help us to daily be in Your Word.

C: “And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15)

P: Lead us to use Your Word as law and Gospel to work in peoples’ lives.

C: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17) “God has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:6)

(Special requests)

P: O Lord, “You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.” (Psalm 119:114)

C: “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O LORD, God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16)

8:30 continues . . .

Hymn: “Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing” Hymn #584

Closing Prayer:

P: Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from heaven, that Your Word may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve You and in the confession of Your name may abide to the end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage” - Hymn #582

11 AM continues. . .

Offering/Voluntary:

Invitation to Holy Communion:

P: The Holy Spirit uses God’s Word to place faith in our lives. Though that is enough, God is so great in His love to us that He makes that Word real and concrete in the bread and wine, that is the body and blood of Christ Jesus given to us in the Lord’s Supper. Christ calls us now to receive that wonderful blessing:

Words of the Lord:

Lord’s Prayer:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

Hymns: “Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing” - Hymn #584

“Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior” - Hymn #619

Dismissal:

Closing Prayer:

P: Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from heaven, that Your Word may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve You and in the confession of Your name may abide to the end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage*” - **Hymn #582**