



**DAILY BREAD  
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS  
EPIPHANY 8 —YEAR A**

**INVOCATION**

L: In the name of the Father  
and of the Son +  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**G: Amen**

**PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 119b**

**A: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

L: Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees;

**G: then I will keep them to the end.**

L: Give me understanding, and I will keep your law

**G: and obey it with all my heart.**

L: Direct me in the path of your commands,

**G: for there I find delight.**

L: Turn my eyes away from worthless things;

**G: preserve my life according to your Word.**

L: Fulfill your promise to your servant,

**G: so that you may be feared.**

L: How I long for your precepts!

**G: Preserve my life in your righteousness.**

**A: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: Almighty and eternal God, you govern all things in heaven and on earth. In your mercy hear our prayers and grant us your peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**READING & MEDITATION**

*see next page*

**PRAYER**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**VERSE OF THE DAY**

**A: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end. (Lamentations 3:22, RSV)**

**BENEDICTION**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**A: Amen**

## READING AND MEDITATION:

**Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany:** The Savior's Sermon: Don't worry! Your heavenly Father's steadfast love is constant (Verse of the Day), and he wants to give you peace based not on an abundance of possessions but on the contentment that comes from living out of his hand. The Church prays for God's peace (Prayer of the Day) that teaches Christians that we don't need to worry about anything, but can learn to trust and be content with our Father's care.

**As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther's Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:**

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

## THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:24-34

Slaves can only have one master. You are either a slave to stuff or a slave to God. Material blessings are not evil—God knows that we need them. But a frantic pursuit of earthly blessings or a constant worry about our bodily lives suggests an obedience to the wrong master. When we acknowledge God as the source of our security, we can work hard, pray hard, and then accept what comes from the hand of our Father. Worrying is worthless: it is ineffective and unnecessary. In his sermon today, Jesus says, "Don't worry!" It is not a harsh command, but the gentle reminder of a parent to a child concerned about things he needn't be. Jesus tells us to look at his Father's love, and then draw the logical and inevitable conclusion: Therefore...therefore, do not worry.

*My takeaways:*

## FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 49:13-18

Isaiah foresaw a people who would have every reason to worry. Jerusalem would be conquered, its walls demolished, its leaders exiled, its glory taken away. Christians facing grief and loss today often share Jerusalem's worry that the LORD has forgotten them. Note well the words that God gave his people! He doesn't explain away the grief. He doesn't rationalize the loss by trying to show them some greater good. No, he simply tells them that he could never forget his people. Their names are

engraved on his hands. They are always in his heart, and their welfare is foremost in his mind. What wonderful words for sorrowful or worrying Christians! The heavens and earth are singing, because they know that God will comfort his people and bring them his peace.

*My takeaways:*

## SECOND LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-13

This is the last lesson in the seven-week series of readings from 1 Corinthians. Paul did not let his hardships drag him into worry or despair. Though slandered and cursed, the apostles sought God's kingdom. Though treated badly, they kept their hope in Christ. A Christian who puts his hope and peace in the hands of God will find trust and contentment in any situation.

*My takeaways:*

## SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: GENESIS 32:6-12

Jacob had good reason to worry. He had robbed his brother of his birthright and then robbed him of his blessing. He had fled from Esau's rage years earlier, but now had to bring his family back into the territory of a brother who certainly must hate him. Jacob sent a peace offering, but heard the news that his brother's men of war were marching toward his camp. In great fear and distress Jacob made plans for the worst and then did the best thing a Christian faced with worry can do: he prayed. He remembered God's promises and all his gracious acts, and then sought his peace in the hand of his God. Here is a model prayer for Christian peace: "I am afraid...but you have said..."

*My takeaways:*

## SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON: PHILIPPIANS 4:8-13 (14-20)

God's peace teaches us contentment whatever our lot in life. Yes, contentment must be learned. Paul learned to find his peace not in health or wealth, but in Christ. Whether well fed or hungry, in plenty or in want, we can live without worry because the peace of God guards our hearts and lives. Godly contentment frees us to use our material blessings like the Philippians did, as fragrant offerings to God.

*My takeaways:*