



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
EPIPHANY 3 —YEAR B**

INVOCATION

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

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 62

**A: The mighty Lord is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

L: My soul finds rest in God alone;

G: my salvation comes from him.

L: He alone is my rock and my salvation;

G: he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

L: Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;

G: my hope comes from him.

L: Though your riches increase,

G: do not set your heart on them.

L: My salvation and my honor depend on God;

G: he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

L: Trust in him at all times, O people;

**G: pour out your hearts to him, for God is our
refuge.**

**A: The mighty Lord is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty God, you sent your Son to proclaim your kingdom and to teach with authority. Anoint us with the power of your Spirit that we, too, may bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; 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: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching,
preaching, and healing every disease.
(Matthew 4:23 cf. NIV)**

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:

Third Sunday after the Epiphany: Jesus shows his glory in the kind of people that he calls to serve him and in using the gospel to make them willing to follow him. This Sunday it is the epistle lesson that gives unity to the readings, since all of the other readings deal with specific calls to a full time following that leaves behind secular vocations. Jesus still calls such to the holy ministry. To all however comes the call to follow him with a willingness to abandon everything should faithfulness require it; the calls in these readings bid us have a mindset that has forsaken everything, even when we are not required to do it.

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: MARK 1:14-20

Notice the sharp contrast: the first verse makes all the rest of the verses seem foolish. If God could not keep John out of prison, why would anyone want to follow the one whom John proclaimed as the Messiah? The contrast is all the more striking, when we remember that those called in this reading had been disciples of John first. Why haven't they become bitter or cynical? Don't they grasp that this Jesus may well share in John's fate, and they may share in it with him? Why haven't they just given up on religion and set themselves to making the best of it in their occupation? Jesus for his part could have made, humanly speaking, better choices in his disciples than these. Ah, but there it is again: the hidden glory of the Savior is manifest in a call strong enough to overcome despair and cynicism in the ones called, and strong enough to accomplish the work of God on earth through these outwardly frail and inept workmen.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: JONAH 3:1-5, 10

God makes a habit of calling the unfit and the unworthy! He does it to magnify the power of the gospel and show that salvation can only be a gift of God, never a work of man or even a cooperative venture between God and man. No more unfit workman could there have been than Jonah. No city deserved destruction more than Nineveh. But God called both to repentance and showed the power of his Word in giving grace to both according to his good pleasure.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 7:29-31

The general call to discipleship is a call that envelopes the whole of life, not just the Sunday morning part. That God does not always require the sacrifice of everything should not dull our hearts to the reality that we should be ready to make just such a sacrifice. The call of Christ to follow him is the call to see him as our all in all; only then are we what these verses say we ought to be. It is only the glorious power of the gospel that will make it possible for us to learn the lesson. These verses contain all three uses of the law.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: 1 KINGS 19:19-21

When Elisha is called to follow Elijah, God does not force him against his will. He molds his will and shapes it, so that when he goes back, it is not to lament what he is losing by following Elijah. Rather it is to offer it all up as a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the coming honor of service. Elisha was not called in this instance to give up some obvious evil to follow Elijah. He sacrificed good gifts which God had given to him earlier. But at times the call to discipleship bids us make a sacrifice of things earlier given by God that were good. Whether we follow by turning our backs on evil or by giving up even good things for something better, let us do it as Elisha did, with thanksgiving, not with grouching or complaining.

My takeaways:

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:
ACTS 13:1-5**

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?

We do not have direct and specific calls from the Lord the way that the apostles and prophets did. Our calls to follow are those directed to all Christians in the Word of God or, in the case of called servants of the church, calls mediated from God through the church. Either call often entails work that is difficult or inconvenient. It also often means working with people very different from us. Such was the call that God sent in this reading. Like the call to Elisha and Nathanael, it was a call to a whole new kind of life and service with people very different in their backgrounds and lifestyles. What could Barnabas and Manaeen and Saul possibly have in common? Only their faith and commitment to the Word, only their common love for souls, only their zeal to follow where God had promised to send and bless them, only a glorious Savior with a glorious gospel could make such following a reality.

My takeaways: