



# Come and See!

Week of August 24, 2025, 21 OT

## The Word...

“Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord  
or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines;  
At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain,  
yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it.  
So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees”  
(Hb 12: 5-7, 11-13).

“Strive to enter through the narrow gate,  
for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough”  
(Lk 13:22-30).

“Go out to all the world and tell the Good News”  
(Ps 117, Mk 16:15).

## Pondering the Word...

Go out and tell the Good News: If the Lord loves you, you will be disciplined! Don't get your hopes up for heaven because many won't be strong enough to enter the narrow gate! *That's* the good news?

The Latin word *discipulus* is about learning. Sometime during the Middle Ages, it came to mean punishment, which is likely responsible for the trend of kids not wanting to go to school! 😞

Anyone with a few years to their credit can attest we often learn more from our trials than from our successes, but only IF we allow ourselves to learn and retain trust in God's providence. Even young children can be reminded of difficult lessons that have helped them grow. (It's important to celebrate what kids struggle through rather than just what they achieve. It is from age-appropriate struggle that self-efficacy develops.)

We know the saying, “Calm seas do not a skillful sailor make.” Allow trials to teach you what God wants you to learn. Strengthen your drooping hands and weak knees through prayer. Spread the Good News: By learning from Jesus and taking his wisdom to heart, we can walk with courage and righteousness through the narrow gate.

## Living the Word...

In his classic book, *A Road Less Traveled*, the late Dr. M. Scott Peck lists discipline as key to a sound mind and spiritual growth. Although the original edition of the book (1978) is outdated from a psychological and diagnostic perspective, it contains wisdom about the intersection of spirituality and mental health.

It's important to be aware, however, that some people can be overwhelmed by trials, suffering, and mental illness, some of which we might not know or see. So, preaching the value of discipline or “this is how God is teaching you” is not only misguided, but cruel and dangerous. The real Good News is of God's unconditional love and mercy, and as those who are called to spread that news, we do so by our loving actions and support.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... \_\_\_\_\_

**Mon, Aug 25:** *"For the Lord takes delight in his people"* (Ps 149). **Provision: Reflect on God's delight in you!** *"God sees nothing in us that He has not given. Everything is empty until He places what He wishes into it. The soul is like an uninhabited world that comes to life only when God lays His head against us. The delight a child can know tossing a ball into the air, my Lord confessed He experiences whenever He looks at you. God sees nothing in us that He has not given."* (Thomas Aquinas, "Whenever he looks at you," from *Love Poems from God*, transl. by Daniel Ladinsky).

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**Tue, Aug 26:** *"Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but drink down the camel"* (Mt 23:23-26, literal transl.). It's "Hypocrite Week" again! It seems to come around more frequently these days. "Charlatans," "Play actors" ...it depends on the translation. In the past, I've referenced the book, *The Future of Faith*, by Harvey Cox. He suggests we are entering the millennium of the Spirit (like the early Christians), but we will see a backlash from traditionalists (like the elders) trying to hold on to power and control by focusing on "the gnats," making sure all the rituals and little details are "just so," and neglecting the weightier things like caring for the poor, oppressed, and aliens or worshipping God by caring for all creation. **Provision: What are your "gnats?"** Ok, so we all have 'em. It might be a checkbox approach to faith or exerting petty control over others who don't see things the way we do. And in these chaotic times, we are even more inclined to hold fast to the past or to what we know. It's understandable. Let's just make sure we hold on to the "camels" that will keep us moving forward towards God's holy mountain, and not on to those pesky gnats!

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**Wed, Aug 27:** *"Where can I go from your Spirit? ...If I soar to the heavens, you are there. If I bed down in Sheol, there you are"* (Ps 139, Hebrew). God's Spirit is everywhere: in "the heavens" of joy, delight, and happiness. And in "the Sheol" of depression, grief, and death. **Provision: Where have you tried to hide?** In shame? Regret? Unworthiness? Or, conversely, in self-pride? Gluttony? Material riches? When things are good, we, like the Israelites of old, can forget God's sustaining Spirit. When things are bad, we can think God has abandoned us. Come out of hiding. Ask God to help you see the Spirit in every situation, person...in everything!

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**Thurs, Aug 28:** *"Fill us at daybreak with your kindness that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days"* (Ps 90). The psalms are speaking to me this week. We've talked about how challenging it is to keep joy and gladness in our hearts amid fear and turmoil. Of course, some can find joy in family and community, in the miracle of newborn babes, and in selfless acts of kindness and sacrifice. But for many, fear has taken root. Gladness is hard to come by. **Provision: Pray for joy each morning, for yourself and for others.** "Fill us each day with your love, O Lord. Fill us with your kindness so that we can be your face, your voice, your hands, your heart for those in need of your love. May your gracious care be ours and for all who cry for your mercy. Amen."

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**Fri, Aug 29:** *"The Lord loves those who hate evil"* (Ps 97). Well, since we are on a roll with the psalms...although this one is not so comforting! How do you define evil? Proverbs 6:16-19 gives us an idea of what God might see as evil: *"Six things are there that the Lord hates, and seven he utterly loathes: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who stirs up conflict in the community."* (It's interesting: the first six refer not to an individual, but to their actions; it is only that last one—the one who stirs up strife—that God loathes. Just sayin') **Provision: Drive out evil with love.** Some scholars say that evil's root is fear, which is why the most oft-repeated phrase in Scripture is "Do not be afraid." I'm sure we all have things we fear. I am fearful now for the state of the world, due in large part to the actions of my own government. But I cannot let my fear drive me to evil. I ask myself, "What can I do today to counter the evil that I see with love?"

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**Sat, Aug 30:** *"Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities"* (Mt 25:14-30). The master doesn't say, "Since you were faithful, you get to go on vacation!" He says you will be given greater responsibilities. That might lead people like the third servant to bury their "talent." Some don't want more responsibility. **Provision: "What is your opinion?"** How do you read this? I don't believe God will punish someone who is timid or fearful. (I don't believe God punishes at all—we punish ourselves!) But what if we don't use the gifts we have been given because we are lazy, selfish, or our egos are so caught up with success that we won't risk failure? Consider your "talents." How do you invest them to grow the Kingdom?