

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

With thanksgiving

How does each sermon connect to this theme?

As we continue in our Season of Thanksgiving, we also continue with our theme - **With thanksgiving**. Once again, we can turn to Psalm 100 to frame our sermons in this month. The last verse reads: *"For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations."*

These attributes of God are experienced by us today, but as they proclaim, will become a deeper reality in the future - everlasting, and enduring to all generations. The messages of our sermons have a similar characteristic in that they point to something for today and also focus us on something for our eternal future.

November 2, our Service for the Departed, explores Jesus' discourse in chapter 10 of John on being a shepherd. We are His sheep; we *hear and follow Jesus*, and are secure in our relationship with and salvation in Him. November 9 examines the eschatological parable of the sheep and goats, encouraging us to *practice active love* today.

November 16 expounds on our doctrine by explaining the two returns of Christ and how we can *live in readiness*, between the promise of His return and the prayer in Revelation - *"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"*

On November 23, we will celebrate Thanksgiving Sunday - please use the separately attached DSG and Study Guide written for this holy day. Our verse from Colossians prompts us to *practice gratitude in word and deed*, not only in this season but in every aspect of life. (Congregations in other countries will use the DSG and Study Guide titled - *Walk in newness*.)

The November midweek assures that we can accept *His calling and judgment*, because God is an impartial and true judge. Finally, November 30 brings us to the first Sunday of Advent - a season of anticipation and light, which the sermon will address from Isaiah 60. Jesus Christ has come in the incarnation, and will come again - *we await His coming!*

NOVEMBER 2025

November 2

With thanksgiving:
Hear and follow Jesus!

November 9

With thanksgiving:
Practice active love

November 16

With thanksgiving:
Live in readiness

November 23

With thanksgiving:
Walk in newness

**USA congregations - use
the Thanksgiving Day DSG**

November 30

With thanksgiving:
We await His coming

November midweek

With thanksgiving:
Accept His calling
and judgment

(based on the Nov 26/27 DSG)

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 2

Where are we in the Bible?

The 9th chapter of John centers on Jesus' healing of a blind man, which leads to a confrontation with the Pharisees (verses 35-41). In the 10th chapter, Jesus uses a metaphor of a shepherd and sheep to contrast Himself with the religious leaders of the time. He refers to these false shepherds as "thieves and robbers," those more interested in their own gain than the well-being of the people. The people that Jesus was speaking to would have related well to Jesus' Good Shepherd discourse, as the Old Testament repeatedly compares God's people to sheep (Psalm 100:3, Numbers 27:17, Ezekiel 34:5). Along the way, Jesus also makes the third and fourth of seven "I am" statements found in this gospel, where He professes His divinity (John 10:9, 11). These teachings cause division amongst the Jews (verses 20-21).

John's gospel then jumps several months to the Feast of Dedication (modern day "Hanukkah"). While in Jerusalem, Jesus is cornered by an angry mob of religious leaders. They challenge Him to repeat His teachings (verse 24), which He does, despite their inability to believe (verse 25). This leads to the verses for the sermon.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. The sheep are known.
2. The sheep are listeners and followers.
3. The sheep are secure

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Hear and follow Jesus**

SERVICE FOR THE DEPARTED

John 10:27-29

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
John 9-10

Catechism
6.2.3.5

Discussion Questions

God the Father and God the Son are unified in will and mission. How does John 10:25-30 express this?

Read Psalm 139 together and discuss all the ways you are known by God.

In a world full of uncertainty, how does the Good Shepherd ensure your security?

What is one new thought you walked away with?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 9

Where are we in the Bible?

Chapter 24 centers on the coming of the King, while chapter 25 points to our readiness for His coming. More specifically, the chapter stresses the fate of being unprepared, shown through the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, and also the fate of those unwilling to use the gifts God has given in service of Him, shown through the parable of the talents.

Matthew 25:31-46 is an explanation of the foregoing parables, and is a “word-picture” of the Last Judgement. The message is clear - God will judge us according to our reaction to human need, and the help that we do (or don’t) provide. The actual judgement itself is also made clear through the example Jesus provides of the sheep being divided from the goats in verses 31-34 (note the connection here with the November 2 sermon).

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Help that’s simple
2. Help that’s uncalculating
3. Help that serves Christ

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Practice active love**

Matthew 25:40

And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Matthew 25

Catechism

8.2.9, 8.2.12

Discussion Questions

Discuss how parables in Matthew 25 are focused on preparation and readiness for Christ's return.

What would classify as unspectacular acts of mercy, or help that is simple?

How can we spiritually care for one another, in addition to tangible help?

How can we prepare ourselves to recognize Christ in others, especially the inconspicuous, the weak, or the annoying?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 16

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Live in readiness**

Where are we in the Bible?

From the first pages of Scripture, when sin entered the world, God set in motion His rescue plan for humanity. Through the stories, the certainty of divine order is revealed - there is no randomness because the universe is subject to the omnipotent One. The story of the Bible is the story of a saving God, one who relentlessly pursues lost souls for His glory. By the time we reach the very last chapter, the final words of Revelation, we arrive at the closing note of this divine mission. Here, the risen Lord Himself speaks, and His testimony is short, but it carries eternal weight: *"And behold, I am coming quickly"* (verse 12). Then again in response to the Lord's final statement (verse 20), John the apostle does what every believer longs to do, he answers with eager faith: *"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"*

This is where we are in the Bible; living between the promise and the prayer. Christ has spoken - He is coming soon. With the same eager expectations as John: our response is to live in readiness, and our belief defines our lives as disciples..

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Our understanding of the two returns of Christ – see DSG
2. Our response is to live in readiness
3. Our belief defines our lives as disciples

Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Revelation 22: 12-21

Catechism

10.1-10.4

Discussion Questions

In Genesis, God promises rescue for humanity and in Revelation, John utters the prayer: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" What does it mean to live between the promise and the prayer?

Share how Christ's coming effects how you make decisions.

Read James 5:7-12. How do these verses expound on how we should be watchful over our patience, thoughts, and words.

Note: The return of Christ and the apostolate's duty to prepare the bridal congregation are central teachings of our faith. The first return of Christ is when He comes to take His bridal congregation, and they will be caught up for the marriage feast. The second return is when Jesus Christ returns with the bridal congregation to the earth to establish the kingdom of peace, where the gospel will be preached to all.

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 23

Congregations in the USA should use the separately attached Thanksgiving Sunday DSG and Study Guide.

Where are we in the Bible?

The message at the heart of the book of Revelation is the announcement - "Behold, I make all things new" (21:5). This is not only news for the end of time, but also for the present age - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Consequently, we can already walk in the newness of this promise.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. The new creation is a promise of God's eternal presence.
2. The new creation is a promise we live in already now.

WITH THANKSGIVING: **Walk in newness**

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Revelation 21:1-5

Catechism
10.6

Discussion Questions

Read Leviticus 26:11-12, Ezekiel 37:26-28, 2 Corinthians 6:16, and Revelation 21:3-4 and discuss how God's promised presence is woven through the Bible.

What do these promises mean to you?

How can we walk in the newness of life that God has promised us already today?

How did the sermon inspire or instruct your understanding of the Bible verse and/or its context?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 30

Where are we in the Bible?

Isaiah 60 is a fitting book of the Bible with which to begin Advent, a season of anticipation and light, the very topics which are addressed in this text. Chapter 59 depicts the utter moral collapse of the people and God's displeasure with this profusion of sin and iniquity. Yet, right at the end of the chapter, deliverance is promised: *"The Redeemer will come to Zion"* (59:20). Chapter 60 seizes on this promise with excitement - *"Arise, shine; for your light has come!"* (60:1). While the current situation is dark, the promise of future glory provides comfort because circumstances will change (60:2-3).

Chapter 61 introduces us to the Anointed One, with the very words that Jesus speaks in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30). He is the Redeemer and the coming Light. In this illumined season, we celebrate His incarnation, but also anticipate His future coming, when we will experience the Lord as our "everlasting light" (60:19). Arise, then! Lift up your eyes, and be filled with joy! He is coming!

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Current darkness
2. Coming Light
3. He has come, and is still coming.

WITH THANKSGIVING: **We await His coming**

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 60:2-3

For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Isaiah 59, 60, 61:1

Luke 4:16-19

Catechism

3.4.6.1, 3.4.15

Discussion Questions

What darknesses cover humanity today?

Discuss how transformation and gathering are markers of Jesus' coming.

"The manner in which we wait for the Lord is indicative of His presence in our lives today." Share why you agree or disagree with this comment.

How did the sermon inspire or instruct your understanding of the Bible verse and/or its context?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER MIDWEEK

Where are we in the Bible?

In the first five chapters of Romans, Paul walks through the dimensions of sin and grace. In chapter 1, he exposes the wickedness of the Gentiles. Then in chapter 2, Paul utilizes a new format where he speaks with an imaginary conversation partner (an interlocutor), which allows the audience to learn from their discussion. Perhaps some people thought after listening to chapter 1 that they were doing good, but Paul chides, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man (the conversation partner), whoever you are who judge... you condemn yourself” (2:1). Then, he reminds them that “there is no partiality with God” (2:11).

Verses 1-11 reveal insight on how we as humans judge and condemn others, compared with God’s judgment. This revelation should temper our desire to put ourselves in the place of the true and righteous Judge, and instead strive to see others as He does - with no partiality.

What are the key themes based on the Bible verse, its context, and the DSG?

1. Our judgment is faulty and limited.
2. God’s judgement is impartial and true.
3. All will be called and all will be judged... but God provides grace through Jesus Christ.

WITH THANKSGIVING:

Accept His calling and judgment

Romans 2:11

For there is no partiality with God.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Romans 1-2

Catechism
4.2.1.2

Discussion Questions

What is faulty about human judgment?

Why is God's judgment impartial and true?

Discuss how and why God's goodness leads us to repent.

How did the sermon inspire or instruct your understanding of the Bible verse and/or its context?