



# Shepherd's Staff

## LENT

## ALL WHO HUNGER

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO  
HEAR THE VOICE OF THE GOD OF JACOB,  
WHO SAYS, HOPE IS IN THE LORD,  
WHO SAYS, MY GOD, WHO MADE  
HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE  
SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN  
THEM; WHO KEEPS FAITH  
FOREVER; WHO EXECUTES  
JUSTICE FOR THE  
OPPRESSED; WHO GIVES  
FOOD TO THE HUNGRY. THE  
LORD SETS THE PRISONERS  
FREE; THE LORD OPENS THE  
EYES OF THE BLIND. THE  
LORD LIFTS UP THOSE WHO  
ARE BOWED DOWN; THE  
LORD LOVES THE RIGHTEOUS.  
THE LORD WATCHES OVER  
THE STRANGERS; HE UPHOLDS  
THE ORPHAN AND THE WIDOW.

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

March 2023



**Josh Brecht**  
Lead Pastor

### **The Transformative Power of Spiritual Habits**

I've been thinking a lot about habits lately. Lent is a season where many engage in spiritual practices different than their normal routines, doing so with intentionality. When do new, different *practices* become new, good *habits*? What is the difference?

In his book, "Atomic Habits," James Clear says that all habits have 4 stages: **Cue, Craving, Response, Reward**. Habits originate as an active solution to a problem that needs to be solved, and over time these mental processes become automated. Our lives become *filled* with countless, unconscious habits. (I have an itch, I scratch it. It's time to leave the house, I tie my shoes. The kids go to bed, I turn on Netflix.)

#### **Jesus had habits, too.**

On Sunday we heard the story of Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil. Some of his most regular, yet powerful, habits were on full display. **Prayer, fasting, scripture**, and getting away in **solitude**. We see the power of habits guarding him through this difficult time. Where were his habits formed? Did he have to think about taking time to pray or had it become such a habit that it would begin without effort? What were the cues and longings that prompted his prayer or fasting?

When we long to grow in our discipleship and become more like Jesus, we almost always think about the conscious things, the big things. But what if growing in discipleship happens through the formation of unconscious habits?

When I was a child, we went to worship every Sunday morning. Even on vacation, we found a church to attend. During Lent we went to the Stations of the Cross, mid-week worship, and we did not eat meat on Fridays. (As an Iowa farm kid, I thought that was SO hard! How can you have a proper meal without meat?!?! Thank you to my vegetarian and vegan friends for expanding my palate!) While these all took

conscious, intentional effort, I can look back and trace the origin of habit formation working in me.

- When tired, stressed and feeling alone, I found peace in Wednesday night worship.
- When everyone else was eating pizza with pepperoni Friday night, I eat cheese and I'm reminded to pray and sense God's presence in shared meals and everyday life.
- When I wake up on a Sunday morning, I long to go to worship. (Just to be clear, this habit was formed LONG before I became a pastor!)

### **What can we learn from Jesus' habits?**

Jesus was intentional, but some of his spiritual practices became so common that they just happened.

#### **Prayer**

Jesus knew that in order to have quality time in prayer, he needed to get away from the crowds. (his "cue" was solitude, "craving" time with his Father, "response" prayer, and "reward" a renewed sense of purpose and clarity of his mission.)

When you read the Gospels, you will see over and over and over again, "Jesus got up early...went out... and prayed."

#### **Relationships**

Just as common as his time in solitude and prayer, Jesus made it a habit of being available to people. He was out among the people and thus open to opportunities for ministry. (The Samaritan woman at the well, the blind man, Bartimaeus, the woman who had been sick for years.)

What are the little, daily things you can start doing with intentionality, that could eventually become powerful, automatic habits?

Maybe prayer after breakfast? Or instead of the radio on the commute to work?

Maybe open the bible app on my phone before bed, rather than scrolling a newsfeed?

Maybe a longer walk around the office or neighborhood to be open to Holy Spirit encounters with people?

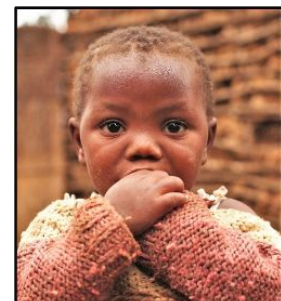
The amazing thing about habits, is they pay off in dividends over the long haul, like compound interest. If we start a new habit today, how much deeper will our relationship with Jesus be years from now?

Peace,  
Pastor Josh

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### **Feed the Need STL MobilePack 2023**

The Feed the Need STL MobilePack is April 13th through the 16th. Our goal is to feed over 3,000 children for a year. And to do that, we need 4,000 volunteers! We are challenging Good Shepherd members to help by inviting 1000 people to join us. Invite friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc. Spread the word! Share our website: <https://feedtheneedstl.org/>.



Our Good Shepherd family and friends have the opportunity to sign up for the pack before the general public this Sunday, March 5th. We will be in the Narthex with laptops at 10:00am and until all are registered after the 11:00 service. You will be able to sign up friends, sports teams, or other groups you are involved with. They do not have to be GSLC members. We can register groups as large as 40 people. Your group will be assigned to the same table or group of tables as needed. Registration will open to the public on March 6th.

Also, there is the opportunity to sign up to help guide people to their spots. We need help with setting up and tearing down the pack. There are sign-up sheets for those opportunities in the Narthex by the Feed the Need display.

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## **Welcome Team Wink Article** **Elliott Haugen**



Welcome to March and the approach of spring!

This is one of my favorite times of the year as temperatures rise, trees and lawns get greener, and we start thinking about plants and flowers. As a youth, I helped on our family farm, and the spring planting season was an important time. Preparing the soil for the seeds was not easy and there would be the uncertainty and challenges of weather, insects and weeds. However, we had faith and hope that by doing the groundwork and tending the crops, we would have a welcomed harvest – and as always with God at our side.

Ok, as usual, by this point in my articles, you are wondering what this has to do with Good Shepherd and its welcoming ministry. Well, it is Lent and we are preparing to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter. It is a time of renewal for us and Good Shepherd as we look to the future. This month we will welcome another group of new members. So, please get to know them as they help grow Good Shepherd, its worship services, programs and ministries. The apostle Paul, in Romans 15:7, reminded us:

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

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**To access your Good Shepherd Connect "member profile",  
click the button below:**

[Good Shepherd Connect Profile](#)

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**Weekly Services Sunday 9am (traditional) & 11am (contemporary)**  
[goodshepherdlutheran.com](http://goodshepherdlutheran.com) | 636-391-6685 | [Calendar](#)

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