

January 25

The Light in Our Footsteps

Learning Steady Confidence Beside the Horse

Word of God

Isaiah 9:1-4

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.
In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Psalms 27:1-9 (10-14)

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a
rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!
You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I
seek."

(10–14) For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
but the LORD will take me in.

Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the
living!

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

1 Corinthians 1:10–18

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you,
but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.

(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Matthew 4:12-25

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is

called Peter) and Andrew his brother,
casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.
And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of
Zebedee and John his brother,
in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called
them.
Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and
proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom
and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.
So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick,
those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and
paralytics, and he healed them.
And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from
Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Reflections in the Field

Horses walk with a quiet confidence that is shaped by light, space, and the calm steadiness of the one who leads them. In the early morning, when the sun first stretches across the pasture, a horse often lifts her head—not in alarm, but in gentle awareness. Light helps her orient herself. It reveals footing, herd mates, and the familiar world she trusts.

In this week's readings, the theme of light breaking into darkness echoes through Isaiah and is fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. Light does not shout. It simply appears—and in its appearing, everything becomes clearer. A horse does not analyze light; she responds to it. She moves with greater ease when she sees where she is going. Likewise, when Christ's light shines into our confusion or fear, we gain a way to walk—not always with certainty about the future, but with confidence in the One who goes ahead of us.

As you stand beside the horse this week, notice how she adjusts to shadows, brightness, and shifting light. Let this become a living reminder that Christ's presence reveals the next step, even when the whole path is not yet visible. His light illumines your footing, steadies your breath, and shapes your trust: one quiet, confident step at a time.

Lutheran Reflection

“The Gospel is nothing else but the preaching about Christ, the Son of God and David, true God and man, who by His death and resurrection has overcome for us the devil, death, and sin.” — Martin Luther, *Smalcald Articles*, II.ii.1

Luther teaches that the Gospel is not merely information to understand but light that breaks into darkness and changes everything. It gives certainty where human strength fails, hope where shadows linger, and direction where our steps feel unsure. Just as a horse responds to steady guidance, the Christian learns to move in confidence because Christ has already walked the path before us.

This means that following Christ is not about creating our own light. Rather, it is about receiving the light that Christ Himself shines—a light rooted in His cross, His resurrection, and His living promise: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Reflection Prompts

- Where do you feel Christ bringing light into places of fear or uncertainty in your life?

- How does your horse respond to light, shadow, or shifts in the environment? What can this teach you?

- What does walking in confidence—not arrogance—look like in your spiritual life?

- Where might Christ be calling you to take a small, faithful step this week?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Light of the world, guide my steps when the path feels dim or uncertain. Shine upon my heart so that I may walk in Your truth with peace and confidence. As I stand beside the horse, teach me to notice the quiet ways You illumine my life and steady my soul. Lead me in Your mercy and help me trust that wherever You go before me, I can follow without fear. Amen.

*“The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”
— Numbers 6:24–26*