



# Words of Blessing

EMAIL ADDRESS: [wordsofblessing@aol.com](mailto:wordsofblessing@aol.com)  
OUR WEB SITE: [www.wordsofblessing.com](http://www.wordsofblessing.com)

## Epiphany 2003

### Week 6. February 9, 2003

Epiphany is: **A Revelation**

It is the time: **To learn to use your gifts**

Your anchor is: **The Holy Spirit**

Let go of: **Pride**

Take on: **Strength**

Your prayer: **“Lord, I give you my heart, soul and mind.”**

Our journey together continues this week by learning to use your gifts. During the past weeks you have had the turning point, where you recognized your need of me, then the moment of understanding where you gave me your life. Then the transformation time where you grow in your spiritual life. That led to the experience that revealed God's gifts to you - when you heard your call, and then the decisive moment where you said yes. Now it is time for the Revelation and the learning of how to use your gifts in the world. I thank you for your faithfulness to this journey. For some of you, it has not been easy to find the time to give to yourself and to me. For others, the work of looking at what Epiphany is and can mean to you, has been a greater challenge. The Christian journey is not easy. But, the rewards and the joy that come with it, are wonderful indeed. I am with you each step of this journey of Epiphany. Many others are praying for you. Keep going forward. Continue to stretch your faith and trust in me by sharing these words with more people this week. Set aside pride and fear. I will give you the strength needed for this commitment and the work ahead. I am at your side and I love you very much.

A revelation comes when you open your heart and eyes to see what I have done for you, to see what my Holy Spirit has blessed you with. It is so easy to see the limits of your life, what you don't have and what you need. A revelation shows you the strengths you have, the blessings you have been given and the gifts you have to use. A revelation shows you Christ in your life. But, you have to be open to that revelation of Christ. It means letting go of your pride and taking on my strength. Then you can go out into the world and begin to use your gifts. It is not easy to learn anything. It takes time and commitment. It means paying attention to the “teacher”. It means acknowledging what you don't know and being open to gaining wisdom. A revelation for you today may be seeing that your life does have blessings and joy, that you can go forward and experience new life, and that you have special gifts to be used in my name for the world. A revelation for you may be the acceptance of your burdens, with a new awareness of the strengths you have to bear them. It may also be letting go of pride so that you can seek the help needed

from others to live with your burdens or struggles. A revelation this week will come to you through my Holy Spirit and you will begin to see how to use your gifts. Are you willing to give me your heart, soul and mind to go forward? I wait with love and open hands to receive you. It is time.

In the week ahead, if you are willing to give me your heart, soul and mind - I will reveal my Holy Spirit to you and show you how to use your gifts. You will have to be strong by staying focused on prayer and my words. My Holy Spirit may come to you quietly without any great fanfare, or it might be a special moment of light and overflowing joy. You may be very surprised or it may be a gentle awareness. Be open. To prepare for this part of the Epiphany journey, it is important to look at what can anchor you, what you need to let go of and what I ask you to take on in order to learn how to use your gifts.

My child, the biggest thing that gets in the way of using your gift is pride. Pride is so subtle as it can be a good thing too. The pride I am talking about now is the kind that says "you can do this on your own". Pride also comes in when we think we should have more important gifts than we were given. Though in your heart you know that all the gifts are needed. It is also when we think we know the right way, and others just don't listen and give us our due. One of the hardest things to yield in the Christian journey of full commitment to me, is your pride. It is hard to let go of what you want for yourself or even to let go of self. People who walk with me find that they can give up jobs, homes or things, but "self" or what they want is another matter. Pride or self is the biggest obstacle in the path with me and to using your gifts. What is the answer to dealing with it? It is strength. It is the kind of strength needed to do battle with self - to recognize what it is and what it is doing to you. It is the strength that comes from the infilling of my Holy Spirit.

Strength for the journey and for how to use your gifts, comes from me. I am here right now, to remind you of my unfailing love for you. I will always be here, to hold you in my hands, to encourage you and sustain you. There is nothing in all the world that you and I cannot face together. When I walked with my disciples, my love and words gave them strength. When they went out into the world on their own, my love and strength still sustained them. My child, trust in me. You will be given the courage and wisdom to go out. Be strengthened with the knowledge that my presence and love will guide you in using your gifts for my people.

My child, you are special and unique. There is no other person like you in the world. That means that your gifts are also special. And how you use them is not like anyone else. Though two people may have the gift of praying, how and where they pray will be different, where they are needed will be different. Two people may have the gift of healing, but how it is used will be different. One may even have a combination of a healing gift and a gift of prayer. The other may have the gift of healing and the gift of evangelism. Thus, how they use their gift of healing will be special and different. You are needed. I need you to take my love, reality and words out to the world using your own special gifts. I will send my Holy Spirit to remove any obstacles. BUT, you have to say 'yes' to the gift and then ask my Holy Spirit to fill you and strengthen you. I need you to bless and help my people. Let my Holy Spirit be your anchor, strengthen you and show you what to do and how to use all of your gifts.

My Holy Spirit will fill you and show you how to use your gifts. But, you will also have to be

open and prayerful Remember the prayer? Give me your heart, soul and mind- then the revelation of my love for you, and how I would use you and your gifts to change the world - can happen. Are you willing to let me reveal myself to you? Will you let me show you your gifts and how to use them? Are you willing to go out and be my love and witness to the world, willing to let me use you? If you are willing, then keep focused on me.

Trust in me. The path may be difficult at times, but gifts are worth waiting for! You will have the strength to go out, if you set aside pride. My Holy Spirit will fill you and guide you each step of the way. Come, walk with me. Listen to me when I speak to you. If you do not hear me, persevere with courage and strength. Have faith that in time I will reveal my plan for you and where your gifts are needed. I will bless you.

In the week ahead, I ask you to read and think about the words and questions that follow. Share your answers with a companion. Say my prayer each day “Lord, I give you my heart, soul and mind.”

- Seek time with me each day. It is in our time together that I will reveal myself to you. It is in that time that my Holy Spirit can reveal your gifts to you. Some of your gifts you may be aware of, but are you using them? And if you are - how are you using them? There are gifts you have that you have not opened yet! But with prayer and courage, with a desire to serve my people - I will show them to you. And as you grow in faith, I will show you how to use them....and then when you are ready, I will show you where to use them.

- Do not let yourself be brought down by pride, or by thinking your presence and gift is not as important as someone else's gift. Work with others. You are part of the body. You are not the whole body. See how you can use your gifts with others so that more people -the whole church can come to know me. You are called to use your gifts in your own unique way, but you are also part of the whole body. Work there too.

Where are you being called too work on your own? Where are you called to work with others? Look.

- How you use your gifts is up to you - you can use them fully, or just share a little bit. You take them out one day, and then choose to hide them away for a long time. But, be aware that gifts can spoil from not being used! And know somewhere your gift and presence is being waited for. Think on that.

- Do not let pride get in the way. I have given each unique gifts in order to build up my church and its people. Do not be tempted to compare your gifts to others. Do not be tempted to think others are using them in greater or better ways. Let my Holy Spirit fill you with humility and courage, and teach you how to work with others so that the light you are able to shine out to the world is but brighter. The light you can bring to the world, working along side others with different gifts can renew and encourage the world. Where are you being called now? What are the gifts you have or think you have?

- You saw the 'perfect' place to serve me and use your gifts. You had dreams of how you could reach people and bless lives. You would be using your gifts in great ways to serve my people.

But, it did not work out as you planned or hoped. You did not get selected for that position, people did not come to the program you planned, attendance at your class dropped, people did not praise your last idea, the leadership did not listen to you, the support you expected did not happen. Many things can happen in life that are not part of our plan or hopes or vision. They may not even be what I hoped for you. But, I do not choose to control all things, for people have freedom and choice. Your pride is wounded and you can be hurt. Unfair things can and do happen. But, my child, you go on. Set aside your hurt and pride. Smile and trust that I will make good out of all things. My strength is enough for you. Be strong. Be faithful and open. Your gifts are still needed and I will show you how and where. You are being shaped. Trust in me and know that it will all work out. I have plans for you too. I have something else that I have planned for you.

- Is your life filled with anxious thoughts or worries? Let my love fill your heart and mind with peace. I will strengthen you and bless you. I will help you through your problems and concerns. Step forward with confidence that all is in my hands. Say the prayer: ‘Lord, I give you my heart, soul and mind.’ and let go.

- I love you my child. You do not have to understand your gifts, or how to use them. Just trust in my Holy Spirit. Let go. Believe in yourself and how special you are. I need YOU. Do you trust in my Holy Spirit?

- I have given you special gifts, your own gifts to use in a special place and way. Be open. Let me lead you and show you. The work I have entrusted to you will be revealed in the year ahead, at least the first part! Your talents are needed to make a difference in the world, to rebuild my church and to bring others to me.

- Is that a mountain ahead of you or just a small hill? Whatever lies ahead?...you can do it. I am with you and together we will climb that mountain. You have all the talents, faith and courage to climb. I will help you and guide you. Do not feel that what you are looking at is too hard. It is not. I am with you. You can!

- Where and how has your pride been most hurt this past year? What have you learned from that?

- Come, spend time with me each day. Listen and I will speak to you. I will strengthen you and help you to overcome all the obstacles you see on your path. This is a year of learning. I will give you several teachers, but look for them. One teacher in particular will help you in a very personal way to overcome all that holds you back, and will clearly show you how to move forward. They will listen with a strong faith and prayer.

- Are you willing to take time for me and for prayer each day? It does not have to take very long, but it is vital to growing in strength and learning what your gifts are and where I need you to use them. Prayer time is not busy time, it is slowing down from the pace of your life time. And it is letting go and being still time.

- Don't think of past failures, disappointments, hurts or struggles for if you do...they will control

your life and your future. They will hold you back and stir up pride and anger. Instead, let my Holy Spirit fill you with a great peace so that you can move past those things and focus instead on my path for you...it moves you forward. I will strengthen you, and give you both confidence and humility. Let your heart be joyful and filled with peace and hope. I am going to show you opportunities in the year ahead to move past what was...to a new place in your journey. Do you want that? Then strive for that and search for that.

- Believe. Believe with all your heart that I am here at your side and that my Holy Spirit will fill you. Believe you have your own special gifts that are needed by my people and the world. All you have to do is say yes, and then follow me. I do not need super men or super women or super teens or super children. I only need the faithful-seemingly ordinary people, like you. I only need people to say yes and then follow me, reaching out to those I put in the path. I need you to go out into the world and let your own creativity, faith, courage persistence, and love bless my people. You can do this. I call you. Are you willing?

Pray and read my words in scripture. Guidance and wisdom is found in them. (Note: if you would like a typed copy of them, please email me with that request. Mary)

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|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| John 14:25-27      | Psalm 89:16-17,20-21 | Jeremiah 1:4-8 & 17 | James 2:18         |
| Luke 14:11 & 33    | Psalm 32:6-8 & 11    | Isaiah 42:1-4       | Romans 5:5 & 15:13 |
| Acts 4:31          | Psalm 8:3-9          | Zechariah 4:6-7     | 2 Corinthians 5:5  |
| Mark 16:20 & 10:45 | Psalm 103:1-2 & 11   | Isaiah 58:9 & 11    | Philippians 2:1    |