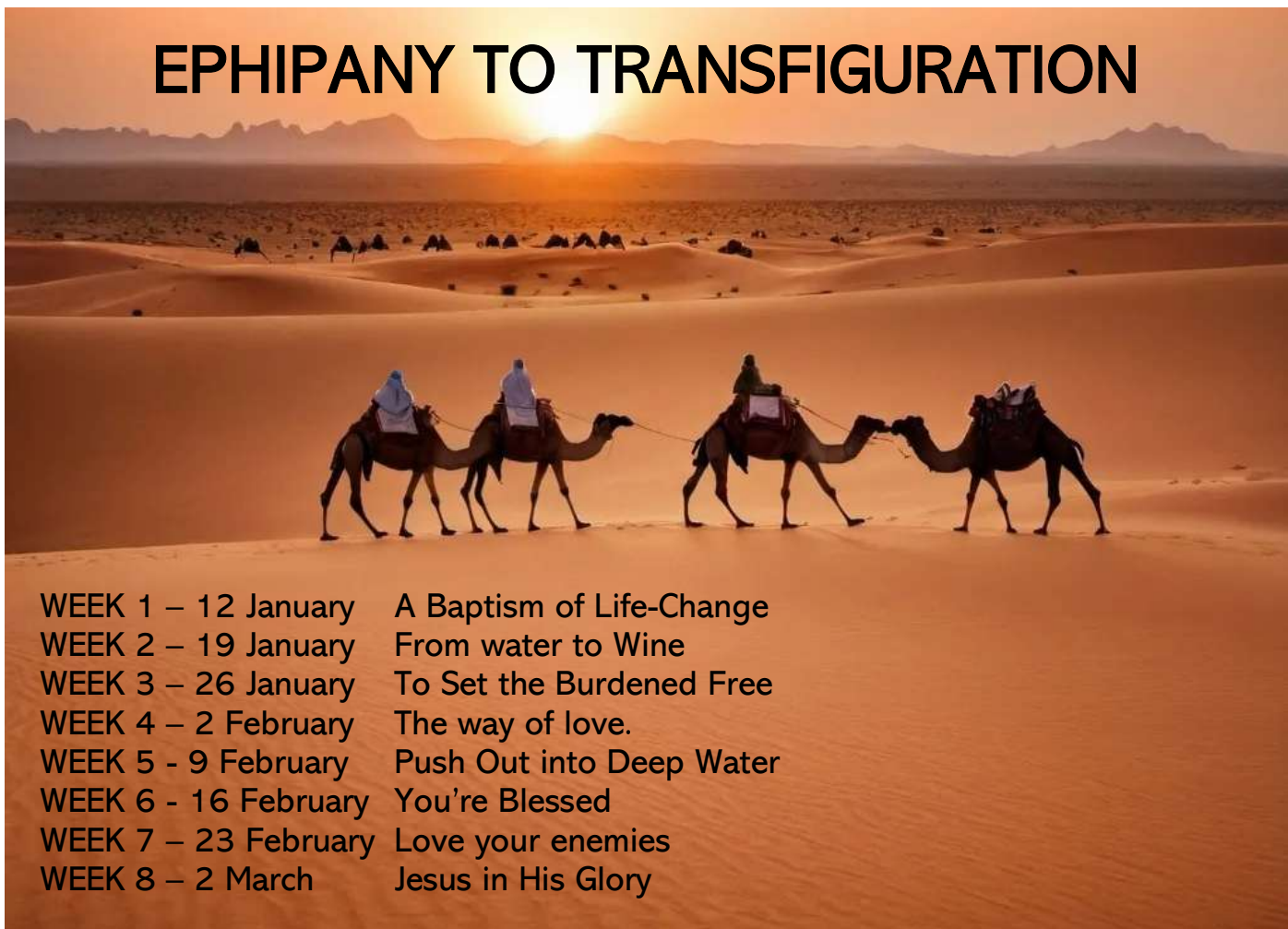


EPHIPANY TO TRANSFIGURATION



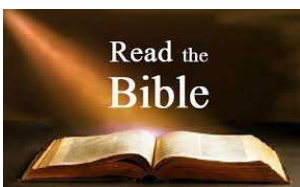
WEEK 1 – 12 January	A Baptism of Life-Change
WEEK 2 – 19 January	From water to Wine
WEEK 3 – 26 January	To Set the Burdened Free
WEEK 4 – 2 February	The way of love.
WEEK 5 - 9 February	Push Out into Deep Water
WEEK 6 - 16 February	You're Blessed
WEEK 7 – 23 February	Love your enemies
WEEK 8 – 2 March	Jesus in His Glory

We welcome you joining us on the Liturgical journey from Epiphany to Transfiguration Sunday. This material reflects the Sunday sermons ensuring the whole church are on the same page and can take the learnings deeper with scripture readings, daily devotions and questions for group discussions. May you draw closer to God whilst learning His truths, find the journey transformative and experience God's love for you in a very deep and real way.



Song: I am set free – All Sons & Daughters & Integrity's Hosanna Music
<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=IVstLwiqBTc&si=S4c52NU4Mblmoopu>

WEEK 3 26 JANUARY - To Set the Burdened Free



Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

Luke 4:14-21 The Message

To Set the Burdened Free

14-15 Jesus returned to Galilee powerful in the Spirit. News that he was back spread through the countryside. He taught in their meeting places to everyone's acclaim and pleasure. 16-21 He came to Nazareth where he had been raised. As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place. When he stood up to read, he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written, God's Spirit is on me; he's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor, sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, To set the burdened and battered free, to announce, "This is God's time to shine!" He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the

place was on him, intent. Then he started in, "You've just heard Scripture make history. It came true just now in this place."



Monday, January 27: Psalm 119:89-96; Jeremiah 36:1-10; 1 Corinthians 14:1-12;

Tuesday, January 28: Psalm 119:89-96; Jeremiah 36:11-26; 2 Corinthians 7:2-12;

Wednesday, January 29: Psalm 119:89-96; Jeremiah 36:27-32; Luke 4:38-44;

Thursday, January 30: Psalm 71:1-6; 2 Chronicles 34:1-7; Acts 10:44-48;

Friday, January 31: Psalm 71:1-6; 2 Chronicles 35:20-27; Acts 19:1-10;

Saturday, February 01: Psalm 71:1-6; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21; John 1:43-51;



This week was written by:
KHANYISO NJWABULE (Local preacher)

Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth after about a year of starting his earthly ministry. This return is without much fanfare because from the text we do not read of anyone from Nazareth shouting in praise or laying down their cloaks to welcome back their local hero. They would have heard of the miracles Jesus did in Cana & Capernaum which are closest towns to Nazareth as it says in verse 14b *"News about him spread through the whole countryside."* From the onset we get a sense that the Nazarenes were so familiar with seeing Jesus since he had grown up there that his return was a non-event. We sometimes can be so familiar with doing 'Church' that we may be blind to the active work that God is doing in lives and the lives of those around us.

God always knows our shortcomings and weaknesses, when Jesus is in the synagogue leading the sabbath worship he turns to Isaiah 61:1-2a to boldly proclaim that he is the promised Messiah. He directly confronts the issue of their sin enslavement (i.e. *"He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners"*). Many of the Nazarenes were still stuck on him being the carpenter son of Joseph and Mary and completely blind to the reality that he is the Son of God who is fully man and fully God. Jesus also tells them that he has come to set the oppressed free however this also receives a cold response from the Nazarene congregation, with not so much as a praise utterance or an Amen utterance. This is the problem with the deceitfulness and power of sin, it blinds us on who our Lord is while keeping us in the enslavement of lack, anguish and destruction of our lives.

The people of Nazareth were not aware of their enslavement to sin while the deliverer was standing right in front of them but instead were drawn to the familiar knowledge of who they thought Jesus was. One of the Christian writers J.I. Parker expresses this condition of being blind to our sinful nature in this way *"He that has learned to feel his sins, and to trust Christ as a Saviour, has learned the two hardest and greatest lessons in Christianity"*. Similarly, in Jesus's discourse with the Jews (John chapter 8) on whose children are those who oppose him, he says to the Jews who believed him *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-32 NIV). The hard-hearted Jews in turn reply to him by saying *"We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"* (John 8:33 NIV).

Perhaps you might identify with the people of Nazareth or the Jews in John chapter 8 where you say 'I am familiar with the church processes and the ways of God since I have been in the church community for a long time and therefore do not see the need to be set free from the sin enslavements in me'. It is important to note that there are visible sin enslavements that manifest in our lives such as someone who is addicted to drugs or alcohol for these we can clearly see. There are however invisible sin enslavements such as holding grudges, lust, greed, pride, self-righteousness, jealousy and so on.

We do not need to despair because today Jesus Christ can set us free from all the sins that are burdening us both the visible and the invisible. Dare to trust him and let him set you free of your sin

burden. Remember you do not walk this path of freedom alone because Jesus makes his intercession in our lives personal because when we believe in him, we are fully in a relationship with him. In fact, in his reading in the synagogue, it is important to note these parts *“Spirit of the Lord is on me”*, *“He has anointed me”* and *“He has sent me”* which shows a personal aspect of the Messianic deliverance.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of the term familiarity breeds contempt?
2. Have you shown contempt before in obeying the will of God due to you being familiar with church?
3. Do you have any sin burdens that you know of. Share with the group at least one.
4. Have you been set free by Jesus from a habitual sin that was ruining your life? Share your experience with the group.



FAMILY TIME:

Written by Jenny Blake
CHILDREN'S PASTOR
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Week 3 - To Set the Burdened Free

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

Key Verse: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim liberty to the captives.”* (Luke 4:18)

Introduction

Have you ever felt like something was holding you back—maybe a fear, a worry, or even a big problem you didn't know how to solve? Jesus came to help us with those burdens and to bring freedom to our hearts and lives.

Bible Story Recap

After spending time praying and fasting in the wilderness, Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. He went to His hometown synagogue and read from the scroll of Isaiah. The words were a promise of hope: freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, and good news for the poor. Then Jesus said something amazing— *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled.”* He was telling them that He was the one sent by God to bring this freedom to everyone.

Family Discussion

1. **What kinds of burdens do people carry?**
Talk about things like worries, sickness, or sadness and how Jesus helps us with them.
2. **Why do you think Jesus cared about setting people free?**
Share how Jesus loves us and wants everyone to live with hope and joy.
3. **How can we help others feel free and loved?**
Discuss small acts of kindness, like forgiving someone or being a good friend.

Activity: Breaking Chains

Cut strips of paper and write down things that might burden people, like fear, anger, or loneliness. Loop and tape them together to make a paper chain. As a family, pray for Jesus to help break those burdens, and then tear the chain apart to symbolize freedom in Him.

Prayer

“Dear Jesus, thank You for coming to set us free from the things that weigh us down. Help us to trust You with our worries and to share Your love with those who are burdened. Thank You for the hope You bring. Amen.”