

Gabriel Bowen

Hello my name is Gabriel Bowen and I have been going to Immanuel Lutheran Church for eight years. For my confirmation verse is John 8: 12, which says, "I am the light of the world whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of the life."

Jesus said these words, but the person who wrote it down was Jesus' disciple John. Even though John was the author of this quotation, he did not put himself in it at all. In this book you read about the final days of Jesus who knows he is about to die on the cross. John had written this verse for all to read because he wanted everyone to know about the grace of God through his son Jesus Christ.

I think that this verse promises to all people that they should never give up in believing in Jesus even though they may be ridiculed about it, because when they die they will be blessed with eternal life. The reason why I said they would be ridiculed for following Jesus was because many people like Pharisees and Kings did not believe Jesus to be our savior, so they tried desperately to expose him as a fake, asking him hard questions. But every time they asked him something he stayed calm and answered all the questions perfectly. This made them angry. Soon the Pharisees and Kings had gotten so desperate to get rid of Jesus that they arrested him for no reason, and then excruciatingly tortured him, killing him on the cross.

The Pharisees and Kings thought they had won, but that was far from the truth. Jesus had actually died so that he could take away the sins of the world, so that we would not be doomed to live in Hell forever. He has given us the chance to repent and believe in Jesus, and so have eternal life in Heaven. After Jesus had beaten Lucifer and come back to life, this finished his Fathers Will.

Today, in modern society, I think that most people do not follow John 8:12 at all. It seems that no one wants to express their faith. They want to be popular, and I guess that many people think Jesus is not popular. Nowadays there is a lot more peer pressure and everyone's trying to duplicate the cool kids by following their sinful behavior just because it seems popular. But this is a very foolish thing to do, like Pastor Walt always says, "Our life on Earth is very short compared to the life we will have in Heaven."

If we do not believe in Jesus we will be doomed to eternal suffering in Hell. But if you truly believe in Jesus we will never suffer again eternally, because we will be with God forever and ever. If you do not know where to start in believing in God and having a relationship with him the verse John 8: 12 is a great place to start because it basically sums up what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Olivia Fahr

Ephesians 2: 8-9. This Bible verse has been my favorite verse since I was little. It has continued to be my favorite throughout my life. I have never known why for sure, maybe it is because these verses were some of the first ones that I've learned. Maybe it's because these verses sum up everything I believe in just a few sentences. But for whatever the reason, the words, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works so that no one can boast," have always been a comfort to me.

To me, this verse describes everything that I believe in. By the grace of God, sending down His son to die for us, we are saved. Through faith in this, and faith alone, we have been forgiven. This means that because Jesus came down to earth and conquered death, we can live with him forever. All we have to do is believe in Him and we are saved. This brings hope and comfort to many people, including me.

The message of this verse is very self-explanatory, but when you apply it to your life, it can mean everything. This verse is all about God's will and how all glory belongs to Him. In sports, when you win a game, the glory goes to God. When you get a promotion or raise, the glory goes to God. We should thank Him and praise His name instead of ourselves.

Life on earth is not the end. Thanks be to God, we have something to look forward to: we have eternal life with Him. This means that even though we may die, we will forever be alive. After this life, we will live in paradise with fellow Christians and our Savior. Through our faith and through what we believe in, we have this promise: we can spend eternity with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I don't know about you, but to me that sounds way better than any vacation to the Bahamas.

These few sentences can mean so many different things to different people. For me, they are a message of hope, of forgiveness and of love. But like so much else, the truth is in the eye of the beholder. I will always believe Ephesians 2: 8-9, in God's grace, power and love. I will always turn to the promise it tells, and to the truth of these words, for comfort, in good times and in bad times.

Jamie Gherna

Confirmation Essay- Psalm 118:24: "The Easier Things"

One day out of the year. This might not sound like much to you now, but what if every day you said to yourself this doesn't matter, "it's only one day." What if you keep saying this day in and day out? The days will soon add up. You soon will find yourself with a full week, a month and maybe even a full year of everyday you saying "it's only one day." Imagine yourself in that classroom, work area, or even in the house of the

Lord just waiting. Waiting for the sun to rise, the coffee to brew, class to end, or an e-mail to be sent. What if you just waited?

But on the other hand, what if you rejoice? The days would seem lighter and filled with more joy. That day on which it once was said "it's only one day" is now a moment worth living. The Bible sums up this idea well in the book of Psalms the 118th chapter, the 24th verse. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." This might sound familiar to our ears, but is it really found in the Christian's heart?

Hello. My name is Jamie Gherna; I am 13 years old and am currently in 8th grade at Rogers Park Middle School. As my Confirmation Bible verse, I chose Psalm 118:24 because it's something worth hearing every day. The meaning of this verse can capture your heart and get you thinking "what is this all about?" I guess the ideal question is... what does this mean?

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." A brief message, but in actuality it tells a story of how life was created, is to be enjoyed, and lived by humans today. To me, this verse comes out directly saying, the Lord has created this day for you to live! Why aren't you happy and celebrating every moment you are granted? This verse really feels personal and that there is a strong connection between this message to me and God. Many of you right now might be thinking, connection? She must be crazy! It's a bible verse not a person. My answer to this is "you need to feel it to believe it."

I really appreciate this verse because it makes you realize not to take everything for granted. Since I was little, I was always told this, but it has actually taken me 13 years to really understand this saying in depth. God is trying to tell us that he has created everything we taste, touch, smell, and see, so don't go around thinking it will always be there for you to have. If you do, it will disappear faster than imagined. God has the power to create as well as take back any gift given to us.

So remember how God has taught us to love him as well as his creation. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" is a simple verse, but if we remember this every day it will help us know who we are and our purpose in life.

Kaylee Hancock

John 8:32- "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Hi, my name is Kaylee Hancock and this is my Confirmation Verse Essay. First of all, I would like to say that for the last two years I have had amazing teachers. They never got angry when we went off topic, which was like, every thirty seconds. Especially in our first year Confirmation class. But we have gotten a lot better and managed to get

all of our work done. So thank you Mr. Ruopp, Pastor Walt, and Pastor Joel for everything you've done. And a special thank you for not making us do sermon reports or Bible book logs anymore because they were terrible, and it was also funny to see the reactions of the previous eighth graders who had to do about twenty of them.

The verse that I decided to write my essay on is John 8:32. It says, "Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." This was written by the apostle John who is called in the Bible "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The apostle John also wrote 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and the last book of the Bible which is Revelation. John's purpose was to present the grace of God as revealed in His Son. The apostle John was an eyewitness of many of the events he wrote about. In this book, John refuted several contemporary attacks on God's grace, and he counter-acted those false teachings. He was a prominent figure in the early church.

This verse is not talking about a common-place truth, like finding out about a lie. The "truth" that the Bible is talking about, is belief in Christ, which will lead to our salvation. We will become "free" from ignorance, temptation, and sin. Jesus is the truth and He will lead those who believe away from destruction and away from Hell. Christians become free in mind, body, and spirit; free to serve God.

I find that most of the people I know do follow this verse. It is not a very hard thing to do. One way that people follow it is by going to church. Christians learn the word at church from pastors like Pastor Walt and Pastor Joel. Another way people follow this verse is by going to Bible classes. Children as young as four and five go to Sunday school where they learn the "truth" that will eventually lead them to salvation. Adults go to classes too, where they pray, worship, and read the Bible. Another way that Christians follow this verse is by teaching others who do not know the word of the Bible. Pastors and other members of the church may sometimes go to a non-Christian's house and read the Bible with them. They teach those who are ignorant of the word, the "truth."

Leslie Huinker

Hello. My name is Leslie Huinker and I am an eighth grader in Ridgefield.

Lately, we've all been hearing a lot about the end of the world, the rapture and especially about how May 21, 2011 was the date this was supposed to happen. All this speculation made some people afraid, some people advertise with billboards, a lot of people laugh, and some people prepare like they were going on a long vacation. While the details of God's plan leading up to the end of the world are complicated and hard for me to understand, what I **do** know, is that we **don't** know the exact timeline leading up to the return of Christ. What I **need** to know is written in my Confirmation Verse:

Revelation 2:10, Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

The message of this verse is simple and clearly explains what my faith in God is all about. Its importance is great; not just for me, but for all of us. It directly tells us what God expects of us, and tells us what we can expect from him in return: "*the crown of life.*"

The complete verse of *Revelation 2:10* reads: *Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer, I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

In the book of the Revelation, God makes his ultimate plan known to John through visions and symbols. Through this revelation, God also warns that we will be tested with suffering from Satan and his followers. Life here on earth will not always be easy. Usually, our daily trials are small, but we need to know that some tests may take a great testament of our faith when nonbelievers try to deceive or persecute us. The good news is that "suffering persecution for ten days" means that our suffering will only be for a short time, and that no matter what happens, even if we are put to death, if we are faithful, we are safe in God's hands. God promises that as long as we remain faithful to him, we will receive "***the crown of life.***"

In John 14:3 Jesus promised his disciples that he would prepare a place and come back to take his followers to live with him. In the Revelation, God is reminding us of this promise, to help us stay faithful and strong, a way of keeping our "eye on the prize."

The "crown of life" is not about royalty, but just as a winning athlete would be crowned with a garland or wreath in the days of Jesus, "the crown of life" is truly a victory prize; a victory over our struggle with evil. Jesus was victorious over Satan when he rose from the dead. Through our faith, we too will be victorious when Jesus takes us to heaven to live with Him in perfect everlasting life.

As great as His promise for eternal life is, we must still remember that we are all responsible for our own faith and without it we will not win the "prize" of eternal life. That's why this verse is so important. When my faith is being tested, it will remind me to stay strong. It will remind me that when times get tough God is not failing me, but it is Satan testing me, and that with faith, my suffering will soon pass. When I hear news reports about the rapture and the end of the world coming, like we heard about May 21st, I know that I don't have to worry as long as I stay faithful to God according to His Word. Revelation 2:10 is a good reminder that in good times or bad, we always need to be prepared to grow in faith. The details of God's plan may be complicated, but His message is simple...only through faith in God's Word and His grace will we be victorious and win the "***crown of life.***"

Katie Keller

Hello, my name is Katherine Keller, and I am in my second year of Confirmation. My Confirmation verse is John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."

This means that Jesus is the vine, or the start, of our faith. We are to build our faith on Him to form the branches of this plant. This is our entire faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: to believe in our God, to spread His Word, and to make disciples. These things are the fruit of the Spirit and of the Word. But if we turn away from God, we will not be able to bear fruit.

The author of this verse was the apostle John the Beloved. His Gospel was not written only for one specific age. It was written to show the grace of God, in Jesus. This gift should be shared with everyone, and that is why John has written this verse the way he did: to show us the grace and love that Jesus has for us.

The world has not changed so much since this verse was written by the apostle. Back in the time of the apostles, not many believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Many of the people were Jewish and believed that God was going to send somebody. But they did not believe that Jesus was that somebody because He was breaking many of *their* rules. The truth was that many of the rules He broke were made up by the Jewish priests.

Today, still, not many people believe. Though, just like back then the number is growing. The spread of the faith would not have even gotten started if it wasn't for the apostles and this new church—the branches growing from the vine of Jesus!

We are lucky today to know and to be able to believe in the one true God. In our country there is not just one religion as there are in other countries. Comparing today with the past can show things that we should be thankful for.

Many people ignore this verse, I think. It may be that they don't know what the verse truly means. Sometimes the language of the Bible can be difficult, and we don't always understand it. But I do believe in this verse, even if I don't fully understand it. I ask our God to help me with it every day so that I may grow in my understanding of His Word.

Joe Leo

Hello, my name is Joe Leo, and this is my second year of Confirmation. For my Confirmation I have picked Romans 6:23. It reads, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

This verse was written by the Apostle Paul. This verse relates to my life, because this was the first verse I memorized from the Bible. It is also one of the most important verses in all of the Bible, because it summarizes everything in the Bible.

The first part, "For the wages of sin is death...", is saying that if you do not follow God's laws, you will suffer eternal death. But the second part, "...but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" is saying that, because Jesus died for us we are forgiven and can achieve eternal life. That is why this verse means a lot to me.

Many people follow this verse, because those who believe in the Bible have to believe this to be Christians. Everyone who is a Christian has to believe that Jesus died for them, and so they also believe this verse, which summarizes what Jesus did for us.

On the other hand, some people do not accept this verse, because of ignorance, or just not caring. If people do not know Romans 6:23 then they can't really follow the verse. And of course some people are Christians for reasons other than knowing what Jesus did for us. Perhaps they are a Christian because of peer pressure.

Peer pressure can change many things about your beliefs, things you like, and things you don't like. I also think that the people who have the most peer pressure in their lives are teenagers, because in today's day and age the modern teenager will do many stupid things to fit in with others—such as give up their religion by sinning. If we do not have a strong faith life we may lose it.

So, learning verses like Romans 6:23, or going to Confirmation or church, or even writing speeches about Bible verses, can strengthen our faith life and put an end to bad peer pressure. This might even persuade more and more people to become Christians. So, I would like to close with this: If you are having a bad day, or are curious about your faith life, or wonder what Christianity is all about, open up a Bible and look up Romans 6:23, and the answer will be there.

My name is Devin Menge.

Christianity is still as large as it was about 100 years ago, but you would not know it by the way you see it portrayed and the way people talk about it. People are given many reasons to reject Christianity, not even including the argument against God's existence. In the media, the most obscure and ridiculous examples of Christians are focused on. From the irrational believers in cataclysmic events like The Rapture, to hate groups like the Westboro Baptist Church, who drastically twist the Word of God, a kind and caring example of a Christian is the exception rather than the norm. Many modern thinkers also feel that Christians are too focused on getting into heaven, failing to make any change while on Earth. Those who doubt God also note terrible events that the Church was involved in, like The Crusades long ago, and the

molestation incidences occurring in the Catholic Church today. However, my Dad reminds me something that is all too factual, and that is that the Church is made up of people, and people are imperfect.

My verse is John 14:27, which says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." I picked this verse because it reminds us what the main message Jesus taught was, despite whatever some misguided followers interpret it as. Bring peace to others. Treat your neighbor well, even if you are not met with the same kindness. Help those in need, those who are less fortunate than yourself. This is relevant today because of all the criticism the Church is receiving, and how people act when ignoring God and His Word. Likely due to all the negative attention our religion is receiving, there seem to be more and more of those who reject the Word of God, at least in my personal experience. In 6th grade, when my friends and I were discussing religion, they all answered Christian. Of those friends, one has become an atheist, and a lot of other people I've met this year are also non-believers, or simply don't practice the faith they claim to be a part of.

I have friends that get drunk. I have friends that get high. I have friends that get into fights. My school has posters to discourage drinking and driving, condemn the use of drugs, and to practice safe sex. I have yet to see those kinds of warnings being presented in a Church. When you do one thing more often, you end up doing something else less often, as one action is being replaced with another. In the same way, if God's teachings are pushed and encouraged, rather than treated as a point of view or opinion, I believe that undesirable activity, that endangers the participants and those around them, will decrease in turn.

Aside from God's existence, people should follow his teachings because they are all simply the right thing to do. And seeing all the good that is being done in the world in Christ's name, it is hard to doubt that He is around us in the first place. People have turned to God to get out of depression, to quit addictive substances, and to get over the loss of a loved one. His Word has inspired people to travel to foreign continents and help where famine and disease are too common. God is a constant support in our lives, helping us get through the hard times, and showing us love in the good times. God is a uniting force unlike any other, bringing us all together and keeping us from harm, and I want to be confirmed because I want to be a part of that.

Eilish Nobes

My name is Eilish Nobes. I was baptized and raised in the Lutheran Church, starting with St. Paul's, here in Danbury. I've attended Immanuel Lutheran School since kindergarten. The school and church have taught me about God, the Bible and its stories. I've learned how to defend my faith. I've had good Christian role models in my teachers and my coaches in the different sports I've played. I've also made good

friends who share in the same Christian beliefs. I belong to a family of Lutherans and have seen the importance of church and God in their lives whenever we have visited them in different parts of the country. I also belong to a larger family of Christians and have seen how God is with them every day and how they rely on God's help through all the good and bad in their lives.

I chose John 3:16 as my confirmation verse, which is of course: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16, to me, means that God saved us even though we sin every day. He chose to love us, even though we aren't perfect. God sacrificed his only son just so we could live in heaven and have eternal life with him. This verse also means to me that no matter what happens, no matter what we do, as long as we believe, God will always have a place for us in heaven.

I learned through my Concordia Self-Study Bible that my verse was spoken by Jesus when he was teaching Nicodemus, a Pharisee. Jesus was telling him how we would be born again and how Jesus came from heaven and would return to heaven as our Savior so that we could all have eternal life. I thought that God the Father had made this statement, and not Jesus, and that it was a random statement and not part of other information and instructions.

I hope to apply this verse to my life every day. I hope I can share that God has saved us from our sins so long as we believe. I also like John 3:8, a verse earlier in this same chapter: "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." I know that through my Sunday School classes and confirmation I have the Spirit in me, but like the wind, I still do not know where it will be taking me.

Lindsay Scholten

John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Hi, my name is Lindsay Scholten and to me this verse is probably one of the most important verses in the Bible. This verse means that there is only one way to heaven and to God: to believe in Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made for us.

My hope is that everybody will come to realize that they are lost without Jesus, that He has already laid out the path for us, that He has done the hard part, and that He is the one who went to the cross. Jesus opened the gates of heaven for us, and all we have to do is follow Him.

For me, this verse is a promise, a promise that if I truly believe with my heart and soul that Jesus Christ not only died for my sins, but the sins of the world, then God will be there to take my hand and guide me until the very end. And hopefully later on in life, I will still remember the true meaning of this verse so that I won't lose sight of the true prize: to be in heaven with God. Then I can teach this to my kids so that they too can know the true meaning of life: Jesus.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus is the only way. Jesus is the light in the darkness. Jesus is the gateway to heaven. Such a small verse, such a powerful message. You can't buy your way into heaven, you have to believe in the sacrifice that Jesus made for you and for me. That, to me, is what sums up this verse. Thank you.

Kayleen Walter

Hello my name is Kayleen Walter, I am 14 years old and I go to Scotts Ridge Middle School. I picked Psalm 46:1 for my Confirmation verse, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

This means that God is our safe haven, and that he's always there in difficult times. To me it is comforting just knowing this, because no matter what I will have the help of the Lord.

This verse pertains to my life because when I was in 5th grade my grandma was diagnosed with cancer. It was really tough for my whole family but I was able to get through it knowing that God was there for me. When she passed away the next year I wasn't surprised. She had been sick for a while and God had prepared me for that. However I was still very upset and God helped me get through that too. With His help I have been able to move on and deal with the grief.

Another reason why I like this verse is because I am starting high school next year, and I am absolutely terrified. It is a new school, new teachers, new people, new team, and way more homework. Not to mention the scary upperclassmen. Even though I am not looking forward to my freshman year I take comfort knowing that I can always go to God for help. When I am stressing over homework or classes I remind myself to calm down and ask God to guide me through my problems. When I do, almost instantly I feel better. Whatever I was worrying about at the time seems way easier and less important.

It's the same with sports. I play softball, and at the beginning of the season my coach had me in the number 4 spot. When I wasn't hitting the ball very well I felt bad, because I thought I was letting my team down. So I asked God to help me, and by the end of the season I was hitting the ball hard. I give all the credit to God because I know he helped me to improve and start hitting the ball again.

Even though I am only 14, and my life has been pretty easy with only a few small problems, I have been able to deal with these issues through the help of the Lord. I look to him whenever I have troubles because I know that He is the one constant in my life. He will never give up on me. I know that He will be there whenever I need Him. He is my sanctuary.