

# THOUGHTS

BY DOUGLAS W. SCHROEDER  
SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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## ADORING GOD MORE IN 2024

We love it when someone recognizes us for our efforts. Why not spend this year recognizing what a wonderful, gracious, and loving God we have? Adoring God is good for our spirit! Our theme at Our Shepherd Lutheran is “Adoring God More in 2024,” and I hope that you will adopt that theme personally for the year. Let’s look for ways to compliment the Creator, say “thank you,” to the Lord, Jesus, and pray in the Spirit on all occasions (see Ephesians 6:18).

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People in the Bible who were friends of God were enthusiastic about Him and thankful to Him. Let’s join those who are enthusiastic about God and remember to praise and thank Him! Let’s adore God more in 2024!

## GEN Z VIEWS “THE CHOSEN”

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There is a special video of a Gen Z focus group who viewed “The Chosen” (it appears, season 1) together and offered candid reactions. The group included socially, religiously, and sexually oriented diverse persons. Almost uniformly, the reaction was very positive, and they seemed drawn to Jesus as a result. I suggest that is because the initial programs are stuffed with Gospel words and behaviors of Jesus. Very little of the Law of God applied to Christians is emphasized in that first season.

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I appreciated the openness of these young viewers who shared some deep scars and spiritual wounds from Christians. Ouch! The believers have often not shown empathy toward the struggling. However, it must also be appreciated that in some cases rebellion may have played a large role in the young persons’ lives. The video caused a great deal of empathetic feelings, but it goes both ways. While some clearly struggled through the hellish aftermath of parental dysfunction and abuse turned on their children, others chose to depart from conservative parents’ mores and walked away from them. A soft, gentle, Jesus was most welcome among that group.

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I wonder what the outcome would have been if the group was shown a vivid recreation of the book of Acts, wherein the Apostles debate unbelievers, chastise immoral believers, and set exceptionally high standards of behavior such that one is to eschew all forms of non-heterosexual and marital intimacy (i.e. intercourse). I suspect these teens would be less pleased if they saw the rancor in some New Testament churches due to Christians falling prey to false prophets or arguments arising out of envy.

2024

More importantly, would these Gen Z viewers have been drawn to the Jesus of the book of Revelation, wherein He comes to decimate his enemies and get revenge upon those who despise the holiness of God in their perversions and greed? Would they have felt close to the Savior who consigns the unbelievers to the Lake of Fire?

The Word  
Today  
Box 77  
Greendale, WI  
53129



*The Bible is God's Word...Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh...  
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

Part of my mind wishes I would make awesome, gentle productions like Dallas Jenkins, the producer of "The Chosen". But then I think about how the Lord works through our unique personalities, and how this culture is so slow to acknowledge the Creator and repent of sin. Jesus slammed a lot of people, pushing hard on them to repent. The weak, hurt, lowly - these he gently accepted. But the proud, wicked, and mocking he opposes absolutely. Just as there must be a balance of Law and Gospel to understand the Word of God correctly, it seems there needs to be a balance of works that present Jesus gently and those that present Jesus forcefully. My work will never be confused with that of Dallas Jenkins, but my heart is for the same result, that people will repent and be drawn to Jesus.

**"Y'ALL NEED JESUS" REVISITED**

At first, I thought it would be a repeat of a frustrating moment years ago, recounted in my book THOUGHTS, when at the health club I approached a man wearing a T-shirt with the phrase "Y'all Need Jesus," and discovered he was hostile to me. This morning I saw another man wearing a T-shirt with the same slogan. He appeared to be of Eastern Indian heritage and his beard and hair made him look like a Sikh because he had his hair in a bun and had both a beard and mustache. I thought he might be mocking Christians. I felt that the Spirit of God wanted me to approach him, but I did not want to cause him to be defensive. I walked past him a few times, trying to determine the best words to say so that I would give a winsome witness. Even the most well-versed biblical Christians may struggle for the best course of conversation. Do not let hesitance about what you would say stop you from opening a conversation. I determined to approach him with the simple question of what was meant by his shirt to not presume his intention. That would give opportunity for him to clarify and for me to think about a response.

It is easy to prejudge people based on outward variables like clothes and hairstyle. Had I presumed he was hostile to Christians, as the first individual seemed to be years earlier, I may have presented myself as judgmental or sanctimonious. I was pleasantly surprised when he said he is a Christian who came to Christ about 9 years ago and thought the shirt was a good silent witness! Praise God for people who have the intent to make a positive witness to their faith!

A lovely conversation followed in which I explained to him the "I Support Homochirality" T-shirt I was wearing. We both marveled at the wisdom and power of God displayed in the creation of life. The conversation ended with my promising him one of my "Transformed by Christ: Sinner to Saint" T-shirts! It was such a beautiful morning, as months of consistency in wishing other people blessings seemed to blossom. I met a student at a Christian college who is an agnostic (formerly Roman) and was able to give him a copy of THOUGHTS. Yet another man whom I have befriended for a couple of years and gave a copy of the book offered that he is thinking of attending our church because he looked at the website and feels comfortable with me and the church. Wow, I wish every morning was as productive for the Kingdom! It's great to know the Spirit of God is working on peoples' hearts even when we don't see it!

YOUR PRAYERS ARE APPRECIATED; I'M WORKING ON THREE BOOKS NOW!

Blessings,  
Douglas W. Schroeder