

# Welcome to Church!

We are glad you chose to join us today to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We hope that your stay has been both meaningful and memorable.

Here are some activities going on with us!

## ☐ Free Blood Pressure & Sugar Check-up

Encouraging those who wish to monitor their **Blood Pressure & Blood Sugar** levels to avail of our free check-up, happening **every after Sunday service!**

## ☐ How can we pray for you?

It is a privilege to pray for you! You may send your **prayer requests** and **praise reports** by text (0912 130 6148), by writing them on the prayer cards provided, or by sending us a private message on our Facebook page.

## ☐ Discover life with our Small Groups.

Looking for deeper connections and a closer walk with God? Our **small groups** are where we cultivate meaningful relationships and grow in faith together. Want to join? Visit our Information Booth after the service to find the perfect group for you!

## ☐ Stay for fellowship and refreshments.

Stick around after the service for **coffee** and **connection!** It's the perfect chance to meet some friendly faces, learn more about our small groups, our ministries, and discover all that our church has to offer. We'd love to see you there!

## Schedules for Services:

### English Service:

Morning 10:00 AM  
Afternoon 01:00 PM

### Cebuano Service:

Afternoon 04:00 PM

2nd Floor,  
Northgate Center.  
across Gaisano Country Mall  
Banilad, Cebu City.

## ways to give TITHES and LOVE GIFTS

BPI Checking  
Acct no: 0421-0041-16

Paypal  
@livingwordnra  
GCash Account  
0912-130-6148

EMAIL ADDRESS  
livingwordnra@gmail.com

FACEBOOK PAGE  
facebook.com/lwnra

WEBSITE  
www.livingwordnra.com

OFFICE TELEPHONE  
(032) 517 5991

TEXT ONLY NUMBER  
(63) 912 130 6148

**GET IN TOUCH  
WITH US!**

Living Word NRA  
Worship God. Advance His Kingdom.

## THE UNEXPECTED GIFT

The Road to the Cross: Following the Suffering King (Mark Series)  
Pastor Nic Sy | August 31, 2025 | Mark 8:31-9:1

### SERMON NOTES

*The gift of God often comes wrapped in ways that don't look like a gift at all.*

*Just because the packaging looks painful doesn't mean the gift isn't good.*

### I. UNWRAPPING PETER'S EXPECTATION.

*The cross was not an accident in Jesus' story. It was the assignment.*

### II. THE SECOND GIFT: YOUR CROSS.

*Taking up our cross isn't about martyrdom in the literal sense for most of us. It's about discipleship in the daily sense.*

### III. THE TRUE GIFT REVEALED: AN INVITATION TO LIFE.

1. Saving and Losing: The Great Paradox (v35)

*The way to real life is not by clutching, but by giving.*

2. The Question of Profit and Loss (v36-37)

*Your soul is the most valuable possession you have, don't trade it for worthless trinkets.*

3. The Challenge of Allegiance (v38)

*When the world pressures you to step away from Jesus, whose approval do you value most?*



We are a church that seeks to bring glory to God, to build the local church through discipleship and to fulfill the Great Commission.

**OUR MISSION**

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of September 1–7, 2025  
“THE UNEXPECTED GIFT”

### Getting Started

*To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.*

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

If you could design the “perfect leader” according to your expectations, what three qualities would you want them to have?

### Group Discussion

#### Read Mark 8:31-9:1

1. What specific details does Jesus share about what will happen to him? How do you think the disciples heard this for the first time? How does knowing difficult truths in advance help us prepare for challenges? In what areas of your life do you prefer comfortable truths over hard realities?
2. What do you think motivated Peter to rebuke Jesus? Read Matthew 4:8–10 and compare Satan's temptation of Jesus with Peter's suggestion here. What similarities do you see in both trying to get Jesus to avoid the cross? Can you think of ways that our own expectations of God sometimes clash with his actual plans? How do we guard ourselves from shaping Jesus into our image, instead of letting him shape us?
3. How does Jesus respond to Peter's rebuke? What do you think he meant by that? What are some “things of man” (v.33) that can distract us from following God's will today? Can you give examples from your own life where you had to realign your thinking to God's perspective instead of your own?
4. Consider the three requirements Jesus gives for discipleship in verse 34: deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. What's the difference between denying yourself and simply being modest or humble? Jesus uses the imagery of a cross, which his audience knew meant death – what does it mean for us to “take up our cross” in practical, everyday terms? How is following Jesus different from just believing in Jesus or admiring his teachings?

5. Compare Mark 8:36–37 with Matthew 16:26 and Luke 9:25. Why do you think this question of Jesus was recorded in all three Gospels? What does it reveal about his heart for people? What are some things people today trade their souls for – approval, comfort, success, control? How can we help each other stay anchored in eternal values in a world that rewards temporary gains?

6. Consider Jesus' warning about being ashamed of him in verse 38. What's the difference between being ashamed of Jesus and simply being private about your faith? Read Romans 1:16 and 2 Timothy 1:8. How do these verses help us understand what it means to not be ashamed of the gospel? In what situations or relationships do you find it most challenging to openly identify as a follower of Christ? What would boldly following Jesus look like in those specific contexts?

7. What's the connection between Jesus' cross and our cross? If someone asked you to explain why following Jesus involves sacrifice when salvation is a free gift, how would you answer them?

### Next Steps

*Just because the packaging looks painful doesn't mean the gift isn't good.*

- I will stay focused on Jesus, not just the benefits of following him.
- I will stop “rebuking” God's plan when it doesn't match my expectations.
- I will daily surrender my plans and desires to God in prayer.
- I will carry my cross with courage, remembering that Jesus walked this road first and is with me every step.
- I will stop equating blessing with ease, and begin thanking God for his gifts even when they come in the form of trials

### Closing the Session

Close the session by taking the time to *pray for one another*. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray for courage to deny yourself, strength to carry the cross, and joy to walk in God's ways.
- Intercede for one another, that God would use you to help bring others closer to Christ.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers, that you will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends, and loved ones.
- Pray for protection, provision, healing and comfort for everyone who's going through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain.

### BIBLE READING GUIDE

September 1	<b>Mark 8:31-9:1</b>
September 2	<b>Philippians 2:5-11</b>
September 3	<b>John 12:23-26</b>
September 4	<b>Galatians 2:19-21</b>
September 5	<b>2 Corinthians 12:7-10</b>
September 6	<b>Psalms 75:1-10</b>
September 7	<b>Revelations 5:6-14</b>