The Word of God describes water as God’s instrument for enacting His will. “Water” is used 649 times in the Bible. In the book of Genesis, we read how water floods the earth and destroys humanity, saving only Noah and his family. In Exodus, we hear of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. In Joshua, we read of the parting the Jordan River, and the children of Israel crossing over into the Promised Land. Throughout the Bible, water is also a lifegiving source and a gift to God’s people. In the Psalms we read: “He will be like a tree planted by streams of water” (Ps. 1), “He leads me beside quiet waters” (Ps. 23), and “He turns a wilderness into a pool of water, and a dry land into springs of water” (Ps. 107:4–9). These passages about water pave the way for the promised Messiah, Jesus. The Lord tells us He is the source of living water for humanity.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” But this He said in reference to the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. [John 7:37–39 NASB]

Continued on page 4
Shouts like “Climb to Glory!” or “All the way!” (To strike fear in enemies)

Terms like “ally” or “friend” (To cause our friends to breathe a sigh of relief)

Words in the military have meaning. We follow orders. God placed those in leadership above us, whom we are to obey. Just as prevailing is the all-encompassing love we have for those who serve alongside us. It is ingrained in every fiber of our being to never leave a wounded comrade behind. Look at the result. Both loyalty to leadership and devotion to our comrades keeps this great nation safe — more than just words. Promises made and promises kept.

St. Paul has something to say about words, in this case God’s Holy Word. It gives life. The Word provides direction, guidance and understanding. As much as we respect the orders of those above us and demonstrate loyalty to those alongside us in our ranks, the Word of God is above all humanly-derived commands, guidance and direction. The Word of God is a gift given by the Holy Spirit to teach us about our sinful condition and need for a Savior, Jesus. It is the treasure of our life and allows us to grasp the death of Jesus for our salvation. Scripture tells us we are indeed poor miserable sinners and we are saved from death, hell and the grave by the Lord Christ’s exclusive activity on the cross with no cooperation on our part.

Luther, in the Small Catechism, explains the origin of the Bible as authored by God the Holy Spirit. It is the Lord who gave the various writers the thoughts and ideas expressed. If you want to know how God really considers us (sinful, wicked, corrupt and enemies of the Lord by nature), the answer is...
in the Bible. Look at the cross where His Son, Jesus, hung. On those rugged rough-cut beams, His Son, beaten and battered, breathed out His life. When we read about the crucifixion of Jesus, we see how God regards you and all humanity. He loves you so very much. He died for you.

Consider the words we use in the military and the power they contain. Even more, consider the effectiveness of the “God-breathed” Word of God. The Bible is rightly divided between Law and Gospel. The Law teaches what we are to do and not do; the Gospel teaches what God has done, and still does, for our salvation. The Law shows our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our Savior and the grace of God.

"The Law shows our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our Savior and the grace of God.”

Stay faithful and spend time in the Word of God.

Go to chapel services to participate with fellow believers.

Attend Bible study.

Participate in a Lutheran-led Communion service. Participation in the Sacrament of the Altar is a wonderful and powerful blessing.

Find and make Christian friends in your unit.

Remember your Baptism.

Stay in contact with your home congregation.

Reach out to LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces for help in your Christian walk while serving in the military. We have literature, worship aids and contact information for LCMS pastors and chaplains.

Be a person of prayer. A prayerful warrior acknowledges their weakness and the strength of Jesus to journey with them through good and bad times.

So … what else would you add to the list?

April-June 2021 | lcms.org/armedforces | 3
To say water is essential to life is an understatement. When in combat operations, an essential warfighting resupply, right next to bullets, is water. Military logisticians know how much water per warfighter is necessary to sustain the fight. Without water, casualties pile up, good people die, the battle stops, the fight is lost. Even in a training environment, it is too high a risk to go without water. The importance of water became clear to me when I was at Airborne School in Fort Benning, Ga. We spent a day of training, a long day. It was hard, very hot, and dirty. Not taking advantage of the breaks to keep my canteen filled, I became so thirsty. I was parched. Then a danger sign occurred with my body: I stopped sweating. Then in that Georgia summer heat, I began to feel cold. I said to myself, “This is the right sensation when in a high heat environment.” I couldn’t quit. The instructors wanted to know who was ready to quit. They would drop us for push-ups and flutter kicks.

To my horror, I was out of water. Both canteens dried up. I was beyond defeated. With the symptoms of becoming a heat casualty, I felt deflated. There was an unknown soldier next to me. I asked him for a drink. He didn’t hesitate. The soldier gave me one of his canteens. I took a deep pull from it. It was as if I drank pure joy! I was never so refreshed. Never had a drink been so satisfying in my life. I knew I was going to make it.

Jesus is the Living Water in a very dry land when we are near collapse. In Psalm 63 we read, “My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and exhausted land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1 NASB). The cause of our thirst is sin. It dries us out and destroys us. In our world sickened by iniquity, some try to quench their thirst in dangerous and destructive ways: alcohol, isolation, illicit drugs, inappropriate sexual behavior, or by simply thinking they are the source of their own living water.

Jesus makes it clear He alone is the font of life-giving water. When talking to a woman at a well in Samaria, the Lord tells her:

Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never be thirsty; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.

(John 4:13–14 NASB)