

**Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany February 5, 2017**

**LUTHERAN**

## **LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY**

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the  
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

February 2, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.*

*E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jjhAtgS5xA>

### **Hymn of the Day**

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 578   The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed**

**“Thy strong word did cleave the darkness”**

“This is the ultimate LCMS Lutheran hymn as the words were provided by Martin H. Franzmann (1907-1976) a theologian, professor, poet, and composer of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in the United States. The Tune is known as Ebenezer, Thomas John Williams brought it to hymnals in 1890 in Llaw lyfr Molian. No one knows who wrote the music, The legend is that this tune was found washed up on the beach in a bottle. ...” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aBjG1AbPrQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2bhHosLHmI> “This festival arrangement was commissioned for the CUC 2010-11 Academic year. Produced and Released by Concordia University Chicago Wind Symphony, 2011.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EThLBMeTnDM> “Thy Strong Word (Tune: Ebenezer) (arr. M. Boyer) · Concordia University Chicago Kapelle”

A historical article about the LCMS Ebenezer Thankoffering of the 1960’s can be read at <http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/6946/why-do-i-sing-here-i-raise-my-ebenezer>

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**Isaiah 58:3-9a; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), the same reading plus optional addition of verse 9b-12, (Next Week: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; RCL, the same or Sirach 15:15-20)**

*“This final section of Isaiah, known as “Third Isaiah” (Isaiah 56-66), is written to the residents of Jerusalem during and after Israel’s return in 539 BCE.*

***The Back Story (or Historical Context)***

*Taken as a whole book, Isaiah has addressed and tried to explain the Babylonian exile the Israelites had been under for 50 years, within the scope of a divine plan of judgment and restoration. This week’s reading resounds with instruction for people who have returned to rebuild their homeland. In the midst of joyful return, God issues judgment, and the prophet shouts as a trumpet to this indictment.*

***Same Old, Same Old***

*Indeed, the people seem to believe they are doing all the right things and that it is God who has not been keeping faith (verses 2-3). They are genuinely confused. They think that by fasting they will please this God and bring favor. Indeed, they have been formed in this ancient practice, and instructed that it is a pious act to fast and humble oneself before God. It must have been a shock to hear the prophet’s strong rebuke of these faithful acts. How could God not be pleased?...”*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=793](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=793) [Amy Oden](#)  
*Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, Saint Paul School of Theology, Oklahoma City Univ., Oklahoma City, Okla*

## True and False Fasting

- 58 “Cry aloud; do not hold back;  
 lift up your voice like a trumpet;  
 declare to my people their transgression,  
 to the house of Jacob their sins.
- <sup>2</sup> Yet they seek me daily  
 and delight to know my ways,  
 as if they were a nation that did righteousness  
 and did not forsake the judgment of their God;  
 they ask of me righteous judgments;  
 they delight to draw near to God.
- <sup>3</sup> ‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not?  
 Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’  
 Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,<sup>[a]</sup>  
 and oppress all your workers.
- <sup>4</sup> Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
 and to hit with a wicked fist.  
 Fasting like yours this day  
 will not make your voice to be heard on high.
- <sup>5</sup> Is such the fast that I choose,  
 a day for a person to humble himself?  
 Is it to bow down his head like a reed,  
 and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?  
 Will you call this a fast,  
 and a day acceptable to the LORD?
- <sup>6</sup> “Is not this the fast that I choose:  
 to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
 to undo the straps of the yoke,  
 to let the oppressed<sup>[b]</sup> go free,  
 and to break every yoke?
- <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
 and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
 when you see the naked, to cover him,  
 and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
- <sup>8</sup> Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,  
 and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
 your righteousness shall go before you;  
 the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
- <sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
 you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’
- If you take away the yoke from your midst,  
 the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,  
<sup>10</sup> if you pour yourself out for the hungry  
 and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,*

*then shall your light rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be as the noonday.*

<sup>11</sup> *And the LORD will guide you continually  
and satisfy your desire in scorched places  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters do not fail.*

<sup>12</sup> *And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to dwell in.*

- a. [Isaiah 58:3](#) Or *pursue your own business*
- b. [Isaiah 58:6](#) Or *bruised*

“...The historical backdrop for Isaiah 58 is likely the period of fasting that followed the exile. Zechariah 7:3-5 indicates that Israel fasted on the fifth and seventh months for seventy years following the destruction of Jerusalem. For seventy years Israel would fast at least twice a year commemorating the fact that they had lost their home and their king. They fasted and prayed seeking a response, an answer to their troubles...

...It is clear that the salvation God promises is conditioned upon the people’s response. All the promises of Isaiah 58:8-9 are introduced by the word “**then**”:

**Then** *your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly.  
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say,  
Here I am.*

The promise in 58:10 comes in the form of an “If, then” clause:

**If** you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, **then** your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

This conditional emphasis is an extension of the fundamental principle expressed earlier in 56:1: “Maintain justice (mispat), and do what is right (tsedaqah), for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.”...

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1946](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1946)

Bo Lim, Associate Professor, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN7U3ocE9vo> will sum up the past weeks readings from Isaiah with the song, “Here I am, Hineni”. The Liberated Wailing Wall from Jews for Jesus.

**Psalm 112:1-9; RCL adds verse 10 as an option (Psalm 119:1-8; RCL, the same reading)**

*“Psalm 112 is an alphabetic acrostic that presents us, the readers, with a totalizing view of its subject matter: the happy life.*

*Our psalmist, in writing these twenty-two lines that correspond to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, has attempted to be both artistic and thorough. That the psalm does not achieve the high artistry of its twin, the similarly acrostic [Psalm 111](#), or the wide-ranging thoroughness of [Psalm 119](#), also an acrostic, should not distract us from appreciating what it does achieve. The psalm gives us an admirably honest and yet optimistic understanding of life, attentive to the vicissitudes of historical existence and yet faithful to the ancient teaching of the Wisdom tradition that a life characterized by the fear of the LORD is ultimately a happy one...”*  
[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2961](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2961) **Paul K.-K. Cho**  
*Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.*

## Great Are the LORD's Works

**111** <sup>[a]</sup> Praise the LORD!

*I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,*

*in the company of the upright, in the congregation.*

<sup>2</sup> *Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.*

<sup>3</sup> *Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.*

<sup>4</sup> *He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;*

*the LORD is gracious and merciful.*

<sup>5</sup> *He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.*

<sup>6</sup> *He has shown his people the power of his works,*

*in giving them the inheritance of the nations.*

<sup>7</sup> *The works of his hands are faithful and just;*

*all his precepts are trustworthy;*

<sup>8</sup> *they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.*

<sup>9</sup> *He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.*

*Holy and awesome is his name!*

<sup>10</sup> *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;*

*all those who practice it have a good understanding.*

*His praise endures forever!*

## Righteous Will Never Be Moved

**112** <sup>[a]</sup> Praise the LORD!

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,  
 who greatly delights in his commandments!

<sup>2</sup> His offspring will be mighty in the land;  
 the generation of the upright will be blessed.

<sup>3</sup> Wealth and riches are in his house,  
 and his righteousness endures forever.

<sup>4</sup> Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;

he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

<sup>5</sup> It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;

who conducts his affairs with justice.

<sup>6</sup> For the righteous will never be moved;  
 he will be remembered forever.

<sup>7</sup> He is not afraid of bad news;  
 his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

<sup>8</sup> His heart is steady;<sup>[b]</sup> he will not be afraid,  
 until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.

<sup>9</sup> He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;

his righteousness endures forever;

his horn is exalted in honor.

<sup>10</sup> The wicked man sees it and is angry;  
 he gnashes his teeth and melts away;  
 the desire of the wicked will perish!

[Psalm 112:8](#) Or *established*  
 (compare [111:8](#))

### “...A Pair of ABC Psalms: 111 and 112

These two psalms are a pair and should be considered together. They are similar in form: each begins with “Praise the Lord” (“Hallelujah” in Hebrew); each consists of twenty-two lines, divided into ten verses; both are alphabetical acrostics, each line beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, running from alef to tav, that is, from A to Z. (Further alphabetical acrostics are found in Psalms 25, 34, 145, 119 in spades! and Proverbs 31:10-31.)

The contents of these two psalms are complementary. The focus of Psalm 111 is on God and that of 112 is on humans. In other terms, Psalm 111 presents the basics of theology while 112 offers reflections on anthropology. Especially interesting are certain phrases that occur in both psalms. Psalm 111:3b says that the Lord’s “righteousness endures forever.” Psalm 112:3b and 9b use the same words to describe God’s people: “their righteousness endures forever.” Psalm 111:4b declares that the Lord is “gracious and merciful” and 112:4b states that God’s people are “gracious and merciful.” Like God, like people, one might say...”  
[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1692](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1692) **James Limburg**  
*Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.*

**I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16); RCL, the same reading and options (I Corinthians 3:1-9; RCL, the same reading) The Corinthian readings began January 15 and will continue through the rest of Epiphany, February 19. An extensive resource (149 pages worth) about the letters to the Corinthians can be found at:**  
[http://www.preceptaustin.org/2\\_corinthians\\_commentaries](http://www.preceptaustin.org/2_corinthians_commentaries)

*“It has been said, “Any idiot can be complicated; but it takes genius to be simple.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the most effective oral and written communicators are those who take profound truths and make them simple. This has bearing on every area of our lives. When we communicate with others either individually or corporately, we must be clear and simple...*

*Although the apostle Paul is a deep thinker, he always strives to bring his great learning down to common folks like you and me. However, the passage that we will be looking at has endured a most unfortunate history of application in the church. Almost every form of spiritual elitism, “deeper life movement,” and “second blessing” doctrine has appealed to this text; however, each of these is nearly 180 degrees the opposite of Paul’s intent.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, this trend continues today. By appealing to “the deep things of God” and “secret wisdom” all kinds of false doctrines are being perpetuated and widely accepted. Therefore, we must be on the alert against this passage and others like it being abused. Our goal must be to understand why Paul has written this section of 1 Corinthians and how it applies to our lives...”*  
<https://bible.org/seriespage/6-deep-thoughts-holy-spirit-1-corinthians-26-16> “Keith (Krell) is the senior pastor of Fourth Memorial Church in Spokane, WA and associate professor of biblical exposition at Moody Bible Institute–Spokane.”

Proclaiming Christ Crucified

2 And I, when I came to you, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> did not come proclaiming to you the testimony<sup>[b]</sup> of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing

among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup> and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men<sup>[c]</sup> but in the power of God.

### Wisdom from the Spirit

<sup>6</sup> Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup> But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the heart of man imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love him”—Isaiah 64:4

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> *And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*<sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

- a. [1 Corinthians 2:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*
- b. [1 Corinthians 2:1](#) Some manuscripts *mystery* (or *secret*)
- c. [1 Corinthians 2:5](#) The Greek word *anthropoi* can refer to both men and women
- d. [1 Corinthians 2:13](#) Or *interpreting spiritual truths in spiritual language, or comparing spiritual things with spiritual*

“First Corinthians chapter two is a text often mishandled. First, there is a context. Paul is writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the troubled church at Corinth...

...The second chapter begins with a memo (reminder) to the saints at Corinth, that when Paul delivered the gospel to them, the main thing was Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul’s work there (see Acts 18) was not about competing with the highly esteemed wisdom and oratory of men. Paul didn’t care to enter into competition with the highly acclaimed styles of public speaking in the Grecian culture. He came to tell them about Jesus Christ and Him crucified, that their “faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,” (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Next (1 Cor. 2:6-16), Paul affirms the work of the Holy Spirit through the delivery of the gospel message (though Paul and other inspired men). When you come to verse 6 and the phrase, “we speak wisdom,” that “we” is not everybody or every Christian or every preacher. Based on the previous paragraph, the content of this passage and the teaching of the New Testament everywhere, “we speak wisdom” is a claim that pertains to the apostle Paul and the other inspired men through whom the truth of the gospel was delivered and written...”

<http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-1-corinthians-2-1-16.htm> “Expository Files was a monthly electronic journal, edited by Warren E. Berkley & Jon W. Quinn, dedicated to the faithful exposition of Scripture.”

*“The Gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus as the classic authoritative teacher. The 'Sermon on the Mount' is Jesus' masterpiece. In it, readers can find most of the significant themes relevant to the remainder of Matthew's story about Jesus. As Jesus begins, the audience is apparently his closest disciples (5:1); when he ends, the audience is much broader (7:28). The primary theme of the sermon is righteousness or justice (dikaiosune); the content that follows will give the specifics. Jesus' teaching opens with the beatitudes (5:3-11). They point out God's favor toward humanity rather than God's demand. They are not the expected cultural categories: people who mourn are recognized favorably. Developing an active strategy in peacemaking is hardly popular in first-century life under Rome. The sermon closes with God's demand to obey Jesus' words (7:24-29), that is, the new Torah. God grants favor (salvation), but demands the very lives of the ones who follow...” continued after reading*

## “The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 5th Chapter” “Glory to You, O Lord”

**Matthew 5:13-20; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 5:21-37, RCL, the same reading) Chapter 5, which began on January 29, will continue through February 19.**

### Salt and Light

<sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that<sup>[a]</sup> they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

### Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great

in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

- a. [Matthew 5:16](#) Or house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before others that

## “This is the Gospel of the Lord”      “Praise to You, O Christ”

“...**Matthew 5:13-16** In the Gospel narratives, Jesus' short pithy saying about "salt" appears in different contexts in each Gospel (cf. Matt 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34). In each instance, salt is a common image Jesus used for painting a picture of how he hoped his followers would act and be in the world.

The link between "salt" and "earth" is not so clear. The genitive construction may refer to the "earth's salt," to be used for its (i.e., the earth's) good. It could also refer to the salt that comes *from* the earth; that is, the earth is the source of this seasoning (cf. Job 6:6), purifier (cf. 2 Kings 2:19-23), and preservative. The last function makes the most sense. **Whatever function Jesus had in mind, in all cases salt is not an element useful to itself. Its value comes in its application on other things.** So, likewise the followers of Jesus are called to exist for others. Yet, Jesus warns that salt may become (literally) "foolish" (*moraine*), that is, losing its taste or value....

...The images of "salt" and "light" evoke the imagination of Jesus' listeners and may represent more than one meaning. Jesus gives them more specific substance in what follows...

...**Matthew 5:17-20** Just as "salt" and "light" relate to the functions of Jesus' faithful followers in the world, so Jesus' emphasis on the law is about doing good. In this sermon, Jesus explores the meaning of the law for his contemporary reality...

**Summary for Preaching** Though the thrust of 5:13-20 is on the actions of this "higher righteousness" that a light may make clear (e.g., 5:16), the intent behind the action is equally (more?) important (cf. 5:21-22, 27-8, 38-9, 43-4; 7:12!). Interpreters spend a lot of time and effort--as I do here--trying to figure out Jesus' meaning of the images of salt and light. More important is the context of those images for Jesus. Who are 'salt' of the earth? They are the humble, the ones who mourn, the meek, and those who thirst after doing what is right in the world. Who are 'light'? They are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who receive abuse for standing up for what is right.”

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=842](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=842) **Emerson Powery**  
*Professor of Biblical Studies, Messiah College, Grantham, PA*

“Youth ministers are a vicious lot. They are wonderful human beings, but they are vicious.

Youth ministers are wonderful because they work with a population that many people are either afraid to work with or simply don't know how to work with. They have a life-long, enduring impact on the youth they serve; but youth ministers are vicious because they have come up with the following activities:

- Take an onion. Put a stick in it at cover it with caramel. Have the youth bit into it.

- Take some Oreo cookies. Remove the cream filling and replace with tooth paste. Have the youth eat the cookies.
- Take a Twinkie. Remove the cream filling and replace with mayonnaise.

I told you they were vicious....”

If that got your attention read <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2017/01/11/you-are-the-salt-of-the-earth-epiphany-5a-february-5-2017/> to see how it fits the Gospel.

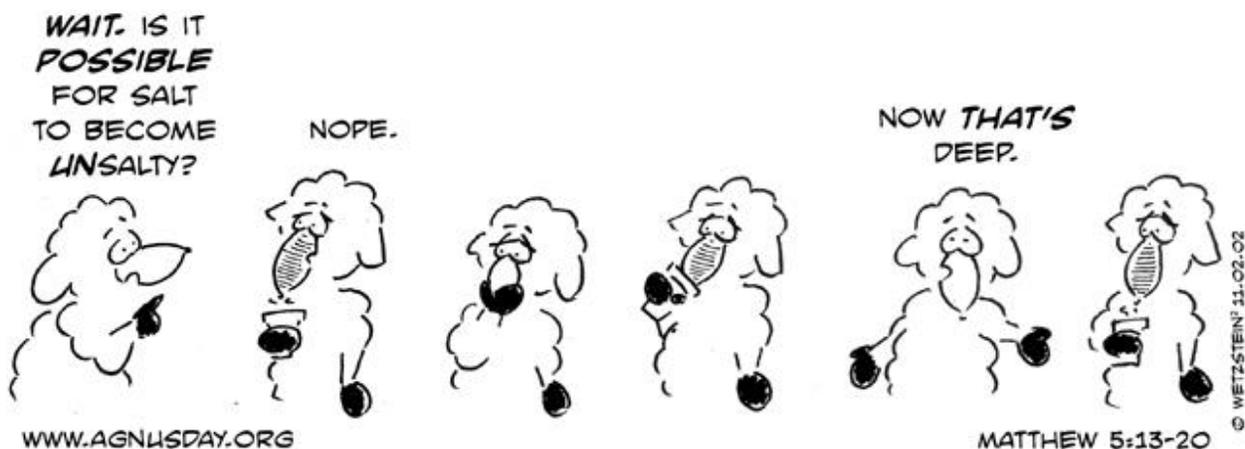
**Godspell** (also known as *Godspell: A Musical Based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*) is the 1973 [film adaptation](#) of the [Off-Broadway musical](#) *Godspell* created by [John-Michael Tebelak](#) with music and lyrics by [Stephen Schwartz](#). Directed by [David Greene](#) with stars [Victor Garber](#) as [Jesus](#) and [David Haskell](#) as [Judas/John the Baptist](#), the film is set in contemporary [New York City](#). [John-Michael Tebelak](#) is credited as co-writer of the screenplay and served as the creative consultant, although director David Greene said Tebelak did not write the [screenplay](#).<sup>[2][3]</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godspell\\_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godspell_(film))



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zg4GOgZ-L1I> Godspell version of “You are the light of the world”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivBFmfvSTS8> Movie version



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