

Fourth Sunday of Easter May 7, 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.*

**\*This lesson is the beginning of year 4!**

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**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,  
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

May 4, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

*(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://pastorboller.com/2015/10/>

*Read about his change from measuring success in ministry from the 3 B's to the 3 C's.*

## Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 709 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 431**

*“The King of love my shepherd is”*

567 hymnals this week! The two major tunes used are [DOMINUS REGIT ME](#) and [ST. COLUMBA](#). The first is the most common, used almost twice as often as the second. The tune used in TLH, [ICH DANK' DIR SCHON](#), is rarely used.

Baker, H. W. (Henry Williams), 1821-1877, author, "...In his simplicity of language, smoothness of rhythm, and earnestness of utterance, he reminds one forcibly of the saintly Lyte. In common with Lyte also, if a subject presented itself to his mind with striking contrasts of lights and shadows, he almost invariably sought shelter in the shadows. The last audible words which lingered on his dying lips were the third stanza of his exquisite rendering of the 23rd Psalm, "The King of Love, my Shepherd is:"—

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,  
But yet in love He sought me,  
And on His Shoulder gently laid,  
And home, rejoicing, brought me."..."

[http://www.hymnary.org/person/Baker\\_HenryW](http://www.hymnary.org/person/Baker_HenryW)

"I grew up in the LCA (a synod that merged into what is now the ELCA). The hymnal I grew up with (Service Book and Hymnal, or SBH) had two beautiful tunes for this great hymn. This was one of them (the 2nd tune, an Irish folk melody). The first tune was by JB Dykes (the composer of the tune for "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"). That tune was what I grew up singing, and is still popular in the Church of England. Wish the TLH had chosen one of those tunes, instead of the one they did." [Keith Deschler](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUv60Q9qEDU> [LutheranWarbler](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cHWMItF9\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cHWMItF9_8) "this music came to me twice in one day out of the blue....beautiful" [Anita Meeker2 years ago](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu83WQdQ7-Y> "From Princess Diana's funeral, The King of Love My Shepherd Is to the tune Dominus Regit Me. Descant on the last verse."

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

**Acts 2:42-47; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next Week: Acts 6:1-9, 7:2a, 51-60; RCL, Acts 7:55-60)**

*"Acts 2:42-47 summarizes the daily life of the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem.*

*The passage is fairly easy to understand in terms of the picture it describes. Its challenge comes in discerning how to apply it. Is the life of this community to be taken as a model for Christian life today? If so, it would be hard to deny that most Christians are missing the mark on some key points. If it is not to be so taken, then what shall we do with the passage?..." (continued after reading)*

## **The Fellowship of the Believers**

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe<sup>[a]</sup> came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their

possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.<sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,<sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

a. [Acts 2:43](#) Or *fear*

“...Most of the activities described as characterizing the community’s life are uncontroversial and have often characterized Christian congregational life throughout history. This is especially so with the opening description of verse 42. Teaching, fellowship, eating together, and prayer have been common Christian practices for ages...

It is verses 43-45 that have tended to cause the most debate about this passage. Verse 43 describes the miracles done in the community. This naturally raises the question of whether and to what extent miraculous activity ought to characterize Christian life today. The importance of the picture here might be mitigated by the fact that God is the initiator of the miracles -- contrary to many of the major translations, including the NRSV, the Greek text says not that they were done “by” the apostles but that they were done “through” (Gk *dia*) them...

...The chief challenge of the passage, however, clearly comes in verses 44-45. The members of the community sold their possessions, held all things jointly, and distributed to others as there was need. Ought all Christians to follow this example? The strongest reason for answering “no” here comes from setting this passage in the context of the overall New Testament witness.

While it is not hard to find examples of the community’s other described activities throughout the New Testament, the New Testament as a whole does not indicate that early Christians broadly lived in this radical communal fashion. We do not even find it in Acts outside of the original Jerusalem community. We certainly find concern for the poor and concern about economic oppression in places like Paul’s letters, James, and Revelation (and the rest of Acts), but all other indications about Christian living, whether direct or implicit, are that Christians retained their homes and basic possessions.

We must beware, however, of dismissing this passage too easily. Most of us have no desire to live in this fashion and are thus overly motivated to find reasons not to do so. And surely it is no coincidence that this activity is described as following the powerful gift of the Spirit and the performance of miracles through the apostles! These points suggest that where God is especially at work and where God’s presence is especially experienced, such giving and sharing is the natural Christian response.

Thus Jesus’ own followers during his lifetime likewise lived in such an intensive community. That our own lives look quite different is likely an indication that we have not experienced such divine work among us. I do not mean this as an indictment but merely as a recognition. We still live in a fallen world, and such powerful experiences of God’s activity are not common. But where they occur, our response should be one of celebration rather than suspicion, and we ought to seek such things, not avoid them...”

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2043](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2043) [Scott Shauf](#) Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina

**Psalm 23; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 146; RCL, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16)**

*“Psalm 23 is one of the best-known and most often-quoted passages in the Bible. The psalm is commonly used in the context of death and the funeral service. But the psalm's language and imagery may be more fitting for the season of Easter when the Church tries to discern how to live in light of Christ's resurrection. Indeed, Psalm 23 is more about how a person lives in relationship to God than how one faces death or finds security beyond the grave...”*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1183](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1183) **Jerome Creach** *Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn.*

## **The LORD Is My Shepherd A Psalm of David.**

23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness<sup>[b]</sup>  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,<sup>[c]</sup>

I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely<sup>[d]</sup> goodness and mercy<sup>[e]</sup> shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell<sup>[f]</sup> in the house of the LORD  
forever.<sup>[g]</sup>

- a. [Psalm 23:2](#) Hebrew *beside waters of rest*
- b. [Psalm 23:3](#) Or *in right paths*
- c. [Psalm 23:4](#) Or *the valley of deep darkness*
- d. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *Only*
- e. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *steadfast love*
- f. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *shall return to dwell*
- g. [Psalm 23:6](#) Hebrew *for length of days*

“Martin Luther (1483–1546) was adamant that Christ as the Lord of Scripture must also be the Lord of our exegesis.

“Every passage of Scripture,” he said at his table in 1532, “is impossible to be interpreted without knowledge of Christ.” Still, he gladly included grammar, history and culture as handmaidens to a Christocentric reading of the Bible. In this explanation of Psalm 23, Luther through his own knowledge of

and experience with sheep unpacks the beloved biblical metaphor of human beings as sheep and Jesus of Nazareth as their Shepherd:

This metaphor is one of the most beautiful and comforting and yet most common of all in Scripture, when it compares his divine Majesty with a pious, faithful or—as Christ says—“good Shepherd,” and compares us poor, weak, miserable sinners with sheep. We can, however, understand this comforting and beautiful picture best when we consider the creature itself—out of which the Prophets have taken this and similar images—and diligently learn from it the traits and characteristics of a natural sheep and the office, work, and diligence of a pious shepherd. Whoever does this carefully will not only readily understand this comparison and others in Scripture concerning the shepherd and the sheep but also will find the comparisons exceedingly sweet and comforting.

A sheep must live entirely by its shepherd’s help, protection, and care. As soon as it loses him, it is surrounded by all kinds of dangers and must perish, for it is quite unable to help itself. A sheep must live entirely by its shepherd’s help, protection, and care. The reason? It is a poor, weak, simple little beast that can neither feed nor rule itself, nor find the right way, nor protect itself against any kind of danger or misfortune. Moreover, it is by nature timid, shy, and likely to go astray. When it does go a bit astray and leaves its shepherd, it is unable to find its way back to him; indeed, it merely runs farther away from him. Though it may find other shepherds and sheep, that does not help it, for it does not know the voices of strange shepherds. Therefore it flees them and strays about until the wolf seizes it or it perishes some other way. . . .

This Shepherd, however, whom the prophet foretold so long before, is Christ our dear Lord, who is a shepherd much different from Moses. Moses is harsh and unfriendly toward his sheep. He drives them away into the desert, where they will find neither pasture nor water but only want. Christ, however, is the good, friendly Shepherd who goes after a famished and lost sheep in the wilderness, seeks it there and, when he has found it, lays it on his shoulder rejoicing. He even “gives his life for his sheep.” He is a friendly Shepherd. Who would not be happy to be his sheep?

Psalms 1-72, ed. Herman Selderhuis, [Reformation Commentary on Scripture](#), OT Vol. VII, pp. 187-88.”  
<http://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2015/11/luther-psalm-23/>

## **1 Peter 2:19-25; RCL, the same reading (1 Peter 2:2-10; RCL, the same reading)**

*“We ought to first note that the lectionary this week has skipped over 1 Peter 2.1-18. The very important passage in 1 Peter 2.4-10 will be next week’s text.*

*The creators of the lectionary have evidently changed the order of the texts so that “Shepherd Sunday” might be celebrated each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. Psalm 23, for example, is appointed for the Fourth Sunday of Easter in each year of the lectionary cycle...”*

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=59](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=59) [Richard Jensen](#) Carlson  
 Professor Emeritus of Homiletics, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, Ill.

### **Submission to Authority**

<sup>18</sup> *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.* \*<sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his

mouth.<sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.<sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.<sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

\* *"Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh" (1 Peter 2:18).*

*This shocking verse is where the epistle for this week should start, with the first sentence of what is obviously a new paragraph. But it doesn't. The lectionary leap frogs the submission of slaves in 2:18 and instead begins with the imitation of Christ in 2:19. How convenient. If we're honest, I suspect that we're glad for this avoidance strategy. Isn't submission to slavery an example of complicity with evil? Aren't Christians called to subvert injustice rather than submit to it?*

*One way to deal with 1 Peter 2:18 is to follow the example of Thomas Jefferson. Whenever you encounter a passage that offends your own modern myths, or is hard to understand, then take your scissors and cut it out. Ignore it, or give the writer poor marks for bad theology, stupidity or gullibility. But the Jeffersonian strategy takes the easy way out. And worse, with Jefferson's strategy you end up with a Bible that's created in your own image and that reinforces rather than challenges your own cultural narratives. We're better off to follow a rule in golf: "Play it where it lies."...*

<http://www.journeywithjesus.net/Essays/20110509JJ.shtml> **"THE JOURNEY WITH JESUS"** A weekly essay on the Revised Common Lectionary A comprehensive index of our lectionary essays may be found at **Essay Index.**"

*"It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering."*

This is difficult. But probably not difficult in the way you might think. The truth is that for most of us -- at least for most of us living in the United States -- living the Christian life and being "aware of God" are less than likely to bring us suffering. Suffering, abuse, threats of physical violence; these are not the barriers to the life of faith that many of us will ever face...

*...The greatest threat to the Christian faith is indifference. It can seem, at times, that we just don't matter that much. Let me be perfectly clear at this point: I am not suggesting that physical danger is to be desired, nor am I pining for the good-old-days of persecution. But does the current state of affairs, at least in North American culture, render a text like 1 Peter 2:19-25 almost irrelevant?*

"For this you have been called. Because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps." Is this a call that we need to answer? Can it be answered? Perhaps the call to suffering or even martyrdom will not be sounded for us, at least not explicitly. But we can follow in Christ's steps, in a figurative sense. Following 1 Peter 2:22-24 here is an attempt to chart the course of following Christ's example.

Verse 22, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in him," is an allusion (in the form of a quotation) of Isaiah 53:9, "They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth." To take this as an admonition never to sin would be to ask the impossible, but honesty -- as a way of life, in our confession not only of sin but of Christ, in our living out of the calling to which we have been called in Christ. This can be within our grasp.

In verse 23 there is another allusion (this time not set out as a quotation) to Isaiah 53, this time verse 7. The author of 1 Peter writes, "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when

he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.” This calls to mind the suffering servant as Isaiah imagines him, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.”

Here too is an example that is within our reach: to stay our lips when we are abused (lied about, insulted, defamed), to refrain from responding in kind when we suffer “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” to entrust ourselves -- in every situation -- to our God...these are things that we, like Jesus, can do...

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2094](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2094) **Karl Jacobson** Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn

Required singing after verse 25: Handel’s Messiah – “All we like sheep”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixmNZQH0NjU> if you would like to listen and watch.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOaSa78\\_NMO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOaSa78_NMO) if you would like to sing along.



## “The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 10th Chapter”

### “Glory to You, O Lord”

#### **John 10:1-10; RCL, the same reading (John 14:1-14; RCL, the same reading)**

*“In the Sunday school room of the church I attended as a child, there was that picture of Jesus with a lamb on his shoulders on the back wall. After a while I didn't really see it anymore. It was just a pleasant portrait on the back wall of our room. There it remains to the present day, in my mind and memory, a hazy, pleasant background picture of Jesus I thought was just meant to be comforting for children.*

*Unfortunately, that placement and purpose is the exact opposite of the way this image functions in the Gospel of John. It was meant to be at the forefront of readers' minds and it was not just intended to comfort...” (continued after reading)*

### **I Am the Good Shepherd**

10 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for

they do not know the voice of strangers.”<sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.  
<sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.  
<sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.  
<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

#### **“In the first-century House Church**

Suppose you time traveled back 20 centuries from that Sunday school room to one of the house churches to which John wrote his gospel. You've been evicted from the synagogue. Maybe you've stayed in Palestine despite the opposition to your faith from Jewish authorities. Maybe you've left Palestine to get away from the conflicts. In either case, you're meeting in a small group praying for strength to withstand popular opposition to your faith. Your brow is probably furrowed.

And then you hear the leader read this passage in which Jesus promises, "I am the Good Shepherd."

From previous worship services you remember other "I am" sayings. Jesus is the bread, the light, a path, a gate, a vine. Your heart is made more peaceful in remembering that Jesus fulfills the necessities of life, providing for your basic physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

If you were a Jewish Christian, these images would have helped you hold onto your heritage, even though you've been evicted from the synagogue because of your belief in Jesus. Your manna in the wilderness has become Jesus, the Bread of Heaven. Your light, symbol of the law, is now identified with Messiah to whom the Torah bore witness. The way promised to the one who follows God's wisdom and law is now identified with Jesus the Way (Koester 233; see below for full reference.) And the shepherd, a common sight across the ancient Mediterranean world and a common metaphor for leadership, is now Jesus the Good Shepherd.

John's Gospel always addresses readers in the plural. These texts were meant to be read aloud in group worship. They are wonderful examples of effective oral communication, brief, colorful, and memorable. In times of testing and persecution, in geographically isolated, small communities of believers, these brief, bold affirmations of Jesus' identity enabled them to hold onto their common faith.

"I am the Good Shepherd" is one of seven "I am" sayings by which John portrays Jesus' identity to the house churches to whom he wrote near the end of the first century. He was writing to a number of communities both in Palestine and beyond. It may be that some Christians moved beyond Palestine because of conflicts with Jewish authorities. This may partly account for John's theme of "scattering" (10:12; 16:32) (Koester, 227). Conflict with the synagogues took the form of attempts to discredit Christian claims about Jesus. Jesus' miracles were those of a charlatan (7:12; 10:10-19). His teaching lacked credibility (7:40-52). A crucified Messiah was ridiculous (12; 34). Jesus' claim to unity with God was a blasphemous challenge to a monotheistic faith. New Testament scholar Craig Koester points out that the symbols in John's Gospel conveyed a confession of faith that distinguished his Christian communities from the synagogue and helped to united a network of house churches that was becoming ethnically and geographically more diverse (Koester, 230). <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Jesus-the-Good-Shepherd-Alyce-McKenzie-05-09-2011> Alyce M. McKenzie is the George W. and Nell Ayers Le Van Professor of Preaching and Worship at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

Luther used this text in a very specific way. “OF THE OFFICE OF PREACHING & OF PREACHERS AND HEARERS: SECTION I. TRUE PREACHERS OF THE WORD MUST BE REGULARLY CALLED.

This Gospel treats of the office of the ministry, how it is constituted, what it accomplishes and how it is misused. It is indeed very necessary to know these things, for the office of preaching is second to none in Christendom. St. Paul highly esteemed this office for the reason that through it the Word of God was proclaimed which is effective to the salvation of all who believe it. He says to the Romans (1:16): "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." We must now consider this theme, since our Gospel lesson presents and includes it. It will, however, be a stench in the nostrils of the pope!..."

<http://web.archive.org/web/20030210182344/www.markers.com/ink/mlpreachers.htm>



*Agnus Day appears with the permission of <http://www.agnusday.org/>*

<http://www.lutheranhour.org/programguide.asp> Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz Don't leave God's grace behind! We are still sheep who need the Good Shepherd. (**John 10:1-10**). May 14

If you would really like to get ahead for the "rest" of Easter, turn the page. The LCMS page on the lectionary will give you various formats to view the readings for the church year and some background on how and why it varies from the Revised Common Lectionary. <https://www.lcms.org/resources/worship/lectionary>

"The three-year lectionary was developed as a result of the Second Vatican Council, initially appearing in 1969. Within a few years, a number of Protestant denominations in North America adopted this lectionary with a variety of revisions. The three-year lectionary was introduced to Lutherans in North America in 1973 with the publication of Contemporary Worship 6. This lectionary was later included in Lutheran Book of Worship (1978) and, with minor revisions, Lutheran Worship (1982)...

...While the Lectionary Committee was mindful of the value of having a lectionary in common with other Christians, it has decided to produce a revision of the LW lectionary rather than to accept the RCL outright. In the course of its study, the committee identified a number of important biblical texts that have been omitted from the RCL, such as Eph. 5:22-33; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:27-32; Gal. 2:11-14; 6:1-6; Phil. 4:10-20; Heb. 12:4-13; 1 John 4:1-6; and Luke 13:22-30. While a lectionary cannot include the entire Bible, it was the committee's opinion that a Lutheran lectionary needed to include such theologically important texts, even if some of the RCL selections were not incorporated..."

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (14 May 2017)**

***The Lord Jesus Christ Is the Way, the Truth and the Life***

Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60

1 Peter 2:2–10

John 14:1–14

**SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (21 May 2017)**

***The Lord Jesus Comforts Us with the Preaching of His Resurrection***

Acts 17:16–31

1 Peter 3:13–22

John 14:15–21

**THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD (25 May 2017)**

***The Ascended Lord Jesus Is with Us Always in His Church on Earth***

Acts 1:1–11

Ephesians 1:15–23

Luke 24:44–53

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (28 May 2017)**

***Our Lord Jesus Is with Us in the Upper Room of His Church on Earth***

Acts 1:12–26

1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11

John 17:1–11