

The Holy Trinity May 27, 2018

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

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.*

Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
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Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104



<https://pastorjud.org/2017/03/12/when-every-earthly-prop-gives-way/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 498/499 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed
“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest”

This hymn is attributed to Rabanus Maurus or Hrabanus Magnentius Maurus, (c. 776-856). Born well before the Reformation, an interesting thing happened after his death. "He was buried first in St. Alban's, Mainz, and then, during the early days of the Reformation, in St. Maurice, Halle, possibly because of the opposition he is known to have made to the doctrine of Transubstantiation."

➤ https://hymnary.org/person/Maurus_R

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3Bt4RceK4c> As a processional hymn. "Higher Things youth conference, Te Deum 2015, recorded in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Scripture: John [14:16](#); John [14:26](#); Romans 8:5-11; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Corinthians [2:10-16](#)"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqgggBVe7UQ> The prelude... is from BWV 667. Organist is Mark Peters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RK10EwRikE> A different melody, Louis Lambillotte SJ. This melody is in slightly greater use than the one in LSB.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

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

For the rest of the church year, the Revised Common Lectionary offers two systems to read the Old Testament. The first is read semi-continuously, following major stories/themes beginning in Year A with Genesis and ending in year C with the latter prophets. The alternate readings follow the complementary historical tradition of thematically pairing the OT reading with the Gospel reading. The Lutheran Lectionary follows closely with the alternate reading list.

Isaiah 6:1-8; Revised Common Lectionary, (RCL), the same reading or Acts 2:1-21 (Next week: Deuteronomy 5:12-15; RCL, the same reading or 1 Samuel 3:1-10)

"There is hardly a more familiar text in the Hebrew Bible than this one for today, Isaiah 6:1-8, the most famous call of a prophet in the Bible. It is regularly offered in lectionaries on Trinity Sunday, apparently due to the thrice-repeated cry of "Holy" as shouted by the Seraphim, flying about YHWH in the temple in Jerusalem. If that is so, it seems a most far-fetched way to squeeze a text from the Hebrew Bible into a yearly Christian celebration. Perhaps the reason for its inclusion has to do more with the call of the prophet and that prophet's willingness to answer that call, at least as the text is usually construed..."

<http://www.patheos.com/progressive-christian/choose-somebody-else-john-c-holbert-05-28-2015.html> John Holbert is a retired Methodist pastor, well known in the Methodist Church.

Isaiah's Vision of the Lord

6 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train^[a] of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the

seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”^[b]

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

Isaiah's Commission from the Lord

⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

- a. [Isaiah 6:1](#) Or *hem*
- b. [Isaiah 6:3](#) Or *may his glory fill the whole earth*

"In the year that King Uzziah died"!

What significant weight these words carry may easily be lost on us who have no kings, who are removed in time and history from the ancient world, who live in a democratic fluid culture. Yet, significant they are, even to us!

In the year that King Uzziah died.

The death of a king and particularly this king was a tumultuous event in the ancient world. Not long before his death King Uzziah had been smote by God with a serious illness for his pride. He had sought to make the offering of a priest in the Temple despite the attempted intervention of the Priests of the day. The consequence for King Uzziah was living in quarantine until the day of his death.

Add these circumstances to the general sense of dislocation and instability that came with the death of a King, Isaiah's words begin to carry some weight, even for us so far removed.

As one Biblical commentator put it we might begin to get a sense of the event if we compare it to the assassination of JFK in the USA or maybe the more recent events of 9/11, that terrible day when the planes flew into the World Trade Centre.

If we can have a sense of the upset connected with these events we can begin to have a sense of the climate of the time in which Isaiah saw his vision. Now, it may be that some of us feel the dislocation and disturbance in our own era as we consider the global issues which confront us: terrorism, the economic crisis, abject poverty and ecological issues.

It is in the midst of human loss and suffering, in the midst of separation and disconnection that Isaiah sees a vision that despite all this the ever living praise of God continues in the mouths of the seraphim:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:
The whole earth is full of your glory!"

Do you recognise these words? The church invites you and I to join this eternal song of the angels adapted in the *sanctus* of the communion liturgy.

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

These powerful words of praise join us not only with the song of the seraphim but also with the saints and martyrs of every time and place. These words derived from scripture are the oldest known aspect of the modern liturgy of the church. They date back as far as the first century and became an integral part of the Eucharistic worship of the church by the 6th century.

When we say these words we are transported into the throne room of God's presence as the divisions created by time and space crumble away and as the false divisions of our human brokenness as the church are transcended. These words thus act as a symbol of our unity as God's people and with all those divine and earthly who offer praise to God.

They are words not only of praise but of hope. Hope in the unity that we long for and hope that in the face of whatever we might be experiencing God is being worshipped and adored...

The good news conveyed in the story from the third chapter from John is that God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn the world but in order that it might be saved through him.

It is God's work to transform us, by sending the Son and the Spirit to renew us in our relationships as people with one another and with God...

We are the world for whom Christ died; we have been saved, we have been made whole. We are constantly being renewed by his love as we continue to enter his presence to have our lips touch by the burning coal and like Isaiah, like Nicodemus, we are given an opportunity to respond, saying 'Here I am send me', even when the message we carry is a difficult one to understand, live by and proclaim to a world that wants to ignore it."

➤ <http://revplockhart.blogspot.com/2012/05/year-king-uziah-died.html> Peter Lockhart,
Uniting Church Minister, St. Lucia Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Psalm 29; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 81:1-10; RCL, the same Psalm or Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18)

Ascribe to the LORD Glory

A Psalm of David.

29 Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,^[a]
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

² Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.^[b]

³ The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over many waters.

⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.

⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

⁹ The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth^[c]
and strips the forests bare,
and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”

¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.

¹¹ May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless^[d] his people with peace!

- a. [Psalm 29:1](#) Hebrew *sons of God, or sons of might*
- b. [Psalm 29:2](#) Or *in holy attire*
- c. [Psalm 29:9](#) Revocalization yields *makes the oaks to shake*
- d. [Psalm 29:11](#) Or *The Lord will give... The Lord will bless*

“Psalm 29 is a call to worship, not only by the assembled congregation in the Jerusalem Temple, but also by the angels in God's heavenly court.

In all likelihood, the context of this powerful piece was someone experiencing the lightning, thunder, and wind of a storm coming in from the Mediterranean Sea. The Psalm found its way into the Psalter, not to provide a fitting song for the choir on a rainy day. More likely, it proved appropriate for a festival where Yahweh's Kingship (verse 10) or glory (verse 9) was celebrated...

How many will hear a sermon on the Old Testament lesson for the day? It is rarely the case in most of our churches, but this psalm is a powerful word. No, it is not like Jesus, an apostle, or a prophet speaking a word from God. It is some unknown poet followed by a choir director or worship leader calling every living being in heaven and earth to worship the Creator. We may have confessed Him in the creed. We may have lived through a tornado, as two families of my children have. Every time a dark cloud appears on the horizon, we may relive a powerful storm we experienced in the past. But did God speak to us in it?

We modern folks are so secularized that we may not even have prayed when the storm struck. If we go to church, we expect God to speak to us in the texts for the day or the sermon. We may admire God's handiwork in a sunset or a nature scene, but mostly we do not reflect on God's work in nature or history. Most people believe that history is humanly determined, and nature evolved

without divine interference or creativity. Yet, we know far more about the extent of the universe than any people did until recently. The power released in an exploding supernova, or every second by the billions of stars in the Milky Way should get our attention. Let's cry, Glory!..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=782 **Wendell Frerichs** Professor Emeritus, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

*An additional commentary worth reading is by **Matthew Stith**, Pastor, Round Hill Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, Pa.*

As a sample: "...By dint of sheer repetition (not to say brute rhetorical force), the Psalmist focuses the attention of the reader squarely on what matters most here: the voice of the Lord. Six times in the eleven verses of the Psalm, the divine voice and its effects are the center of attention. So it seems that faithful exposition of this text ought to focus there as well..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=322

Acts 2:14a, 22-36; RCL, Romans 8:12-17 (2 Corinthians 4:5-12; RCL, the same reading)

"Today's passage is part of Peter's sermon following the original, powerful experience of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The experience of the Spirit began with a sound like a strong wind and tongues of fire extending to all members of the early Christian community as they gathered in the upper room (2:1-3). The Spirit then enabled the gathered to speak "in other tongues" (2:4), and when the many Jews from disparate nations who were in Jerusalem became aware of the spectacle, the Spirit enabled them all to hear the Christians in their own languages (2:5-13). Peter then stood up to speak to the crowd, as told in the opening part of today's passage (2:14a).

The sermon has two main parts to it, each with its own main point:

The first part (2:15-21) interprets these happenings as the "last days" fulfillment of the prophet Joel's promise of God's Spirit being poured out on all people. {last week's reading}

The second (2:22-36), from which our passage comes, focuses on Jesus, especially his death and resurrection, the main point being that these were part of God's plan as revealed in prophetic Psalms.

The end of this second section then relates the story of Jesus back to the Pentecost events, with Peter demonstrating that it is in fact the risen and exalted Jesus who has poured out the gift of the Spirit (verse 33). The Pentecost events then in turn serve as a call to recognize Jesus' status as "both Lord and Christ" (verse 36). Peter's speech thus serves to link the story of Jesus with the giving of the Spirit and to interpret both as fulfilling Old Testament prophecies..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2041 **Scott Shauf**

Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them:...

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ this Jesus,^[b] delivered up according to the

definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning him, ([Cited from Ps. 16:8-11](#))

“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.
²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ([Cited from Ps. 110:1](#))

“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.””

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- a. [Acts 2:15](#) That is, 9 a.m.
- b. [Acts 2:23](#) Greek *this one*

“...The impetus for Peter's sermon is significant, for he speaks specifically to explain why the Holy Spirit has been given to Jesus' followers. In the sermon's first part he refers to Joel 2:28-32a (in Acts 2:16-21) to identify the presence of the Spirit, to underscore its role in empowering people to interpret God's deeds (prophecy), and to announce the time of God's salvation. Then comes the second part, which is this Sunday's reading (as explained below, preachers must extend today's reading through v. 36). Here, Peter explains that it was Jesus' dying, rising, and ascending that resulted in the sending of the Spirit. Through those things God established Jesus as Lord and Messiah (Christ).

Peter's explanation is not easy to follow; it proceeds as an exegetical argument that is saturated with weighty theological assertions. The argument appeals to at least three psalms and depicts Jesus as superior to his forerunner David. Peter refers to David as the author of these psalms and interprets their words as prophetic testimony concerning the expected Messiah.

Through his exegesis and dramatic assertion that Jesus' death unfolded "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (v. 23), Peter characterizes God's work through Jesus Christ as certain, reliable, and effective...

Peter's statement in vv. 22-24 comprises a single sentence in Greek, one that makes a significant impact. It begins, as in the NRSV, by stating its focus: Jesus of Nazareth. The sermon recounts the story of Jesus, but Jesus functions--both grammatically and theologically--as the direct object. Grammatically, Jesus is the direct object throughout the long sentence. He was the one who was "handed over you" and the one whom "you crucified and killed" through the agency of the Roman government. But Jesus was also God's own object in the story: the one who was "attested to you by God," the one through whom God worked, and the one whom "God raised." Note the contrast in what was done with Jesus, and the dramatic reversal: you killed him, but God raised him..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=50 **Matt Skinner**, Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

THE MARK CHALLENGE

Half way through May. Are you halfway through Chapter 7?



John 3:1-17; RCL, the same reading (Mark 2:23-28 (3:1-6); RCL, the same reading)

"The obvious challenge in preaching this reading may seem to be how to say anything fresh, meaningful, and new about the world's most famous Bible verse.

The less obvious, but I would argue more important, challenge is not allowing the world's most famous Bible verse to cloud the significant and even scandalous message of Jesus that a close reading of the larger passage yields...

There are several fruitful preaching possibilities in this dense passage, though each will require some careful teaching so that the kerygmatic impulse of the sermon can be understood and heard.

The first deals with the matter of "signs." A potent and persistent theme in John, Jesus' actions are understood not as miracles but as signs, pointers to God's mysterious and redemptive work...

A second possibility will be to focus on Nicodemus. ... Has Nicodemus come out of the darkness and into the light at this late moment in the gospel?...

A third possibility is to focus on the matter of being born "from above." Because of the "born again" movement, this can be somewhat challenging...

A fourth possibility involves in a careful unpacking of verse 16. It holds a special place in the hearts of countless Christians for good reason, as it lays bare God's love for the whole world... Interestingly, because world (kosmos in Greek) normally signifies that entity that is hostile to God's will (see 16:33, 17:9-19), one might capture the force and scope of God's unfathomable love by translating the verse, "For God so loved the God-hating world...!" Indeed, God's love is not only unfathomable but also somewhat offensive..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=903 **David Lose**

Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 3rd Chapter”

You Must Be Born Again

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered him, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again^[b] he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.^[c] ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You^[d] must be born again.’ ⁸The wind^[e] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**

⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, **“Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you^[f] do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[g] ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[h]”**

For God So Loved the World

¹⁶**“For God so loved the world,^[i] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**

- a. [John 3:2](#) Greek *him*
- b. [John 3:3](#) Or *from above*; the Greek is purposely ambiguous and can mean both *again* and *from above*; also verse [7](#)
- c. [John 3:6](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
- d. [John 3:7](#) The Greek for *you* is plural here
- e. [John 3:8](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
- f. [John 3:11](#) The Greek for *you* is plural here; also four times in verse [12](#)

- g. [John 3:13](#) Some manuscripts add *who is in heaven*
- h. [John 3:15](#) Some interpreters hold that the quotation ends at verse [15](#)
- i. [John 3:16](#) Or *For this is how God loved the world*

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

“There’s a lot going on in today’s reading from John’s Gospel. And I mean A LOT! This passage, filled with images both familiar and odd, can be a lot to take in. St. Augustine chose an eagle to represent St. John because he felt the theology of the Fourth Evangelist soared so high above the other gospels, but sometimes it reaches heights that can be hard for many of us – both in the pulpit and in the pew – to follow.

My guess is that amid the imagery of water and Spirit and the serpent lifted up in the wilderness and all the rest, our hearers’ attention will be drawn to two places in particular. **The first**, depending on your translation, may be the language about being “born from above” (NRSV) or “born again” (NIV). Popularized by American Evangelicalism with its emphasis on “believer baptism” and the importance of personally accepting Jesus into one’s heart, the language of being “born again” is pretty recognizable...

The second – and probably more reliable – touch point for our folks will likely be John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.” Luther called this verse “the gospel in a nutshell” and it has served that way for so many of our people, signaling God’s profound love for us and indicating the depths to which God would go to convey that love. It too, however, has sometimes served as a wedge between those who believe and are saved ... Because of the way these verses have played out in the popular religious imagination of our time, it may be tempting to use this week’s sermon to offer a corrective to what we may experience as inadequate or damaging theology... I’d suggest not getting caught playing defense but instead offering a robust proclamation of the expansive and surprising love of God this passage invites.

And perhaps the key to doing that is making sure we read to the end of the passage and highlight verse 17, the verse that comes just after “the world’s most famous Bible verse.” (Indeed, one might even consider starting there.) Reading just one more verse offers a larger context and indeed elaborates on the “motive” for God’s sending of the Son. In particular, lest we be confused that God sends the Son out of love – which is of course where v. 16 begins! – in verse 17, we hear the clear explanation, affirmation, and indeed repetition that the Son was not sent to condemn but to save. So it’s not about who’s in and who’s out, but rather about God’s consistent intent to love, save, and bless the *whole* world...”

- <http://www.davidlose.net/2017/03/lent-2-a-just-one-more-verse/> **David Lose**

Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.



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