

Second Sunday in Lent February 21, 2016  
**LUTHERAN**

**LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY**

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday.  
An opportunity to make the rhythms of the readings  
become a part of the rhythms of your life.

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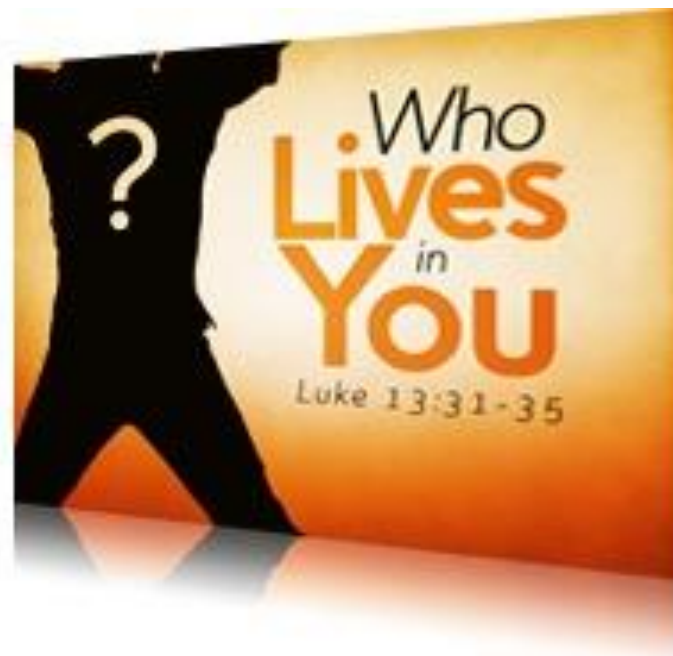
**through Facebook**

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

February 18, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship service on Wednesdays, 5:30pm, at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.)*



[http://www.christianglobe.com/PPS/images/medium/00014382\\_h.jpg](http://www.christianglobe.com/PPS/images/medium/00014382_h.jpg)

**Hymn of the Day**

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 708 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 429**

“Lord, Thee I love with all my heart”

“While Martin Luther has needed no introduction in the foregoing discussion of “A Mighty Fortress,” Martin Schalling is a much less well-known figure... born...1532..he was, therefore, almost 50 years younger than Luther... Consequently, he was very much a child of the Reformation...(and) became a favorite student of Melanchthon... Ironically, it was the signing of the *Formula of Concord* in 1577... that lead to a (second) crisis in his life... (He) refused (to sign it) because he felt it dealt too harshly with his mentor, Melanchthon... This led to his banishment from the court of Heidelberg and deprived of his offices...until 1585.

He is remembered today only because of this hymn (LSB 708) ... being the only hymn Schalling apparently wrote...Despite the neglect with which it has apparently been treated on this side of the Atlantic... (it) is one of the great 16<sup>th</sup> century hymns... in the German Lutheran tradition... Bach, for example, incorporated the hymn into several of his most important works, including two of his cantatas and the *St. John Passion*”.

Excerpts are from *The Earliest Lutheran Hymn Tradition as Illustrated by two Classic Sixteenth-Century German Chorales* by Vincent A Lenti.

<http://www.hymnary.org/files/articles/Lenti,%20The%20Earliest%20Lutheran%20Hymn%20Tradition.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMehxY2-WD8> Listen to this hymn sung at St. Lorenz Evangelical Lutheran Church, Frankenmuth, MI

**Jeremiah 26:8-15, RCL; Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18** (*next week: Ezekiel 33:7-20, RCL; Isaiah 55:1-9*)

*The Genesis reading is about God making the covenant with Abram.*

<sup>8</sup> And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die!” <sup>9</sup> Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?’” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. <sup>11</sup> Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

<sup>12</sup> Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard.

<sup>13</sup> Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. <sup>14</sup> But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and

right to you. <sup>15</sup> Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”

**“ Jeremiah preaches his sermon—it’s what the Lord commanded him to say. When he does, all the priests, the prophets, and the people, seize him, and say, You must die!**

**That’s quite a day at church.**

Then the priests, the prophets, and the people placed him in front of the government officials and said, “A death sentence for this man!”

Jeremiah’s defense for all this? The Lord sent me. He told me what to speak. He told me to warn the city and all the families of his judgment. I haven’t spoken on my own. I’ve only spoken the words the Lord gave me. You will kill me for that?

If the scene were left at that and didn’t go any further, it already would be enough tension and human drama for Hollywood to build a movie around: an innocent man, Jeremiah, who goes around telling people of the Lord’s judgement, hoping they will listen; a bunch of priests, offended that this man is telling their congregation that repentance is needed; a bunch of prophets trying to protect their territory; a crowd of people sick and tired of Jeremiah telling them they may have a problem before God; and a bunch of government officials interested not in justice, but in making sure all the rules and regulations are followed so the king and his government is not weakened—there’s more than enough human drama here to build a movie around.

But then Jeremiah speaks those words that pull us away from looking at the sinners—the sinful priests and prophets and people and government officials—and have us, instead, looking at the Lord and what he is up to.

Jeremiah 26:13: JEREMIAH 26:8-15 · · · · · 2

**[Jeremiah said,] “Now therefore amend your ways and your deeds and hear the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent of the evil that he has pronounced against you.**

**The words startle: the LORD will repent of the evil that he has pronounced against you.**

**They are so startling that most translations try to soften them and say something like, the Lord will change his mind about the misfortune, or, the Lord will relent of the disaster.**

**But in the Hebrew—and that’s the language Jeremiah preached in—there the words stand, those words, the Lord, and, repent, and evil.**

That word repent, it’s the same word the Lord’s prophets use time and again in calling on the sinner to repent.

That word evil, it’s the same word applied to the sinner, to those who murder, those who lie, and also to the demons.

So there the words stand: the LORD will repent of the evil that he has pronounced against you.

What can Jeremiah mean by this? For the Lord is not evil, not the source of evil. There is nothing evil about him. He is the opposite of evil. He is good and true, creating life, not destroying it, he is holy. Never evil.

And does the Lord repent? What, as if he's confused and has to change his mind every now and then, or as if he was on the path of evil and needed to change direction in order to be good?

Jeremiah said,

the LORD will repent of the evil that he has pronounced against you.

The evil Jeremiah speaks of is not the Lord's own evil. There's no such thing as that. It's the evil of the sinner. It's your evil and mine. The sin in our hearts. The malice we hold toward another. The bitterness we hold on to. It's our acts of evil, of how we treat others not in love.

All this evil brings to us the worst evil of all: death. The condemnation of the Law, that is, eternal death.

Death is the worst evil. For the Lord never intended death. It's not natural to us. It's not part of the order of creation. Creation was perfect and healthy, full of life and life-giving. It was peace and good order, and all things living in safety. We sinned, and death entered—evil.

It is of that evil, of that condemnation of the Law, that the Lord repents. JEREMIAH 26:8-15

**He turns back from his wrath. He reverses his condemnation. He pulls back his word of Law, and to the sinner, the guilty one, he speaks forgiveness, pronounces life—he speaks the Gospel. Wrath reversed into kindness. Retribution reversed into mercy. Condemnation reversed into grace. Death reversed into life. The Lord has reversed himself—repented.**

So that's Jeremiah's sermon.

**First, God's Law:**

**Mend your ways and your deeds. Repent of all that.**

**Then, the Gospel:**

**The Lord repents of the evil he pronounced to you in the Law. The Lord turns back from his anger. The Lord forgives you. He gives you life.**

**You can kill me for that sermon, if you want,**

**says Jeremiah,**

**but know this, if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood on yourselves.**

**The Gospel does that. It brings innocent blood on the sinner.**

For Jeremiah is a prophet of the Lord, and as prophet, he speaks of the Christ who will come in the flesh and be crucified on the cross, shedding innocent blood for all sinners.

Because Jeremiah is a prophet, for him it is suffering. That was the lot of all the prophets. They spoke the Gospel, and they suffered for it. Some were stoned, some imprisoned, some insulted, some even killed. But that's the Gospel. The Lord gives it in weakness.

But why would the sinner want to reject the prophet and reject the message of the Gospel?

Because, that's what sin is. It's a rejection of the Gospel, of God's kindness and gifts. Sin is the insistence that we don't need mercy, that we ourselves can live a life that's worthy. Sin is the demand that I will do it my way and I will justify myself. There is no end to the arrogance of the sinful heart.

Yet, God comes to the sinner in weakness to speak his Gospel. In the weakness of Jeremiah being slapped around by sinful priests, prophets, people, and government authorities. In the weakness of Jesus being nailed to the cross by hands which he himself created. In the weakness of water and word being used to cleanse a sinful heart and create faith in the gift of Baptism. Even in the weakness of a common man, a pastor no different, nor better than any other sinner, being used as a voice to proclaim the grace and salvation of Jesus Christ.

God comes to the sinner in weakness. And he comes that way in order to speak his Gospel. If he were coming in power, it would be for the retribution of the Law. But God has reversed himself. The evil belonging to the sinner is not brought down on the head of the sinner, for Jesus took it as a deathblow on his own head. God has reversed himself. JEREMIAH 26:8-15

Repented. To the sinner, he speaks forgiveness.  
IN THE NAME OF JESUS.”

A sermon by Pastor Graff of Grace Lutheran Church of Albuquerque, 7550 Eubank Blvd. NE  
(between Academy and Paseo del Norte), Albuquerque, New Mexico 87122  
<http://www.gracelutheran-nm.org/sermon%20text/2-24-13Jeremiah%2026,08-15.13.pdf>

### **Psalm 4, RCL; Psalm 27 (Psalm 85, RCL; Psalm 63:1-8)**

*Psalm 27 is also “of David” and expresses similar thoughts*

#### **Answer Me When I Call**

**To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.**

4 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!  
You have given me relief when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

<sup>2</sup> O men,<sup>[a]</sup> how long shall my honor be turned into shame?  
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah

<sup>3</sup> But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;  
the LORD hears when I call to him.

<sup>4</sup> Be angry,<sup>[b]</sup> and do not sin;  
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah

<sup>5</sup> Offer right sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?  
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!”

<sup>7</sup> You have put more joy in my heart  
than they have when their grain and wine abound.

<sup>8</sup> In peace I will both lie down and sleep;  
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

1. [Psalm 4:2](#) Or *O men of rank*
2. [Psalm 4:4](#) Or *Be agitated*

## “The Story of Psalm 4

Absalom was one of King David's sons. He tried to kill David because he wanted to become king. David ran away. One evening, David prayed to God, "Show my enemies that you are fighting for me". God answered David and made him very happy. David slept in peace. The peace that God gives means that we do not feel afraid deep down inside us.”  
<http://www.easyenglish.info/psalms/psalm004-taw.htm>

## Philippians 3:17- 4:1 (1 Corinthians 10:1-13)

<sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

4 Therefore, my brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

1. [Philippians 4:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*; also verses [8](#), [21](#)

“Verse 1 There are many enemies of the \*cross. But Christians can look forward to Christ’s return. So, they must be strong. Paul shows his great love for the Christians at Philippi. He calls them his ‘dear brothers and sisters’ and his ‘joy and crown’. He had the ‘joy’ of knowing that they were Christians. The ‘crown’ was not the royal crown of kings. The \*Greek word means a ring of leaves. They put it on the head of an \*athlete who succeeded in a race. Paul’s reward for all his efforts will be his Christian friends at Philippi. The ‘crown’ was also a sign of honour for guests at a feast (a special meal). The Christians at Philippi will be Paul’s sign of honour at God’s ‘feast’ in heaven.” <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>



“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 13th Chapter”

## “Glory to You, O Lord”

Luke 13:31-35, RCL; or Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a] (Luke 13:1-9)

### Lament over Jerusalem

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ <sup>34</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

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

“Luke 13:31-35 begins with a warning from the Pharisees for Jesus about Herod’s plan to kill him, but it becomes a reflection on the nature of Jesus’ life and mission (which reach their ultimate goal in his death) and then on the tragic role played by Jerusalem in the life of Jesus and other prophets.

The passage invites Christians today to reflect on the meaning of Jesus’ life and death and on the role we play in the continuing mission of Jesus.

### The Pharisees and Herod

It is difficult to evaluate the motives of the Pharisees in the story. It is also difficult to evaluate whether or not their warning is either sincere or representative of a real threat. As in all the Gospels, the Pharisees in Luke are largely antagonistic to Jesus and Jesus to them. There are hints, however, of a more positive reception by the Pharisees. In 7:36 and 14:1, for instance, Pharisees invite Jesus into their homes (although the scenes do not play out well for them), and in Acts 15:5 we hear that some Pharisees had actually become Christians. We thus cannot dismiss the Pharisees’ motives as necessarily being negative.

On the other hand, their report seems problematic: Luke 9:7-9 and 23:8 suggest Herod’s interest in Jesus was not in killing him, and when given the chance to condemn Jesus in the Passion account, Herod refuses to do so (23:6-12). We cannot be sure of Herod’s status in the passage, however, because of course Herod had both imprisoned and executed John the Baptist (3:19-20; 9:9).

### Jesus’ Death a Part of His Mission

Whatever the purposes of the Pharisees and Herod, Jesus uses the threat to make clear the nature of his upcoming death as a part of his mission. Jesus is going to die, but it will have nothing to do with the threat of Herod. Rather, his death is the completion of his present ministry. He

characterizes this ministry as “casting out demons and performing cures” (verse 32). Both activities are by themselves important:

- The significance of casting out demons for Jesus’ ministry is given in 11:20: “But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” Casting out demons is part of Jesus’ battle against the devil (see further 11:21-22) and thus a part of his establishment of the kingdom of God.
- Performing cures is likewise a part of the fundamental character of Jesus’ mission, announced in 4:18-19 as being “to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind” (quoting Isaiah), also a statement about the establishment of God’s kingdom.

To reinforce that Herod has no control over him, Jesus adds that he will be doing these things “today *and tomorrow*” (verse 32, emphasis added)...

The important point to note is that Jesus’ death is in continuity with the rest of his ministry -- “today,” “tomorrow,” and “the third day” go together. Jesus’ death is not of a fundamentally different character than his ministry while he was alive: They are all about establishing the kingdom of God. Holding together Jesus’ life and death helps us to make better sense of both...

### **Jesus’ Mission and Death, and Our Own Sometimes-Tragic Role**

Throughout Lent we are preparing ourselves to experience Jesus’ cross. This passage calls us to do so by considering whether our lives lead appropriately to that cross. Can we make sense of our lives as a part of the establishment of God’s kingdom in our world? Or are we frightened from our mission by the threats of earthly rulers? Moreover, if Jesus were to speak prophetically to us, what would his message be? How have we resisted God’s messages and kingdom? Paul refers to the church as a temple, as the dwelling of God’s Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). So how have we played the tragic role of Jerusalem? On the other hand, how have we recognized God’s messages and kingdom, and how can we continue to do so?

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1575](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1575) Scott Shauf is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina. “**Gardner-Webb University** (also known as **Gardner-Webb, GWU, or GW**) is a private, four-year [university](#) located in [Boiling Springs, North Carolina](#), United States, 50 miles (80 km) west of [Charlotte](#). Founded as Boiling Springs High School in 1905 as a [Baptist](#) institution, it is currently the youngest North Carolina Baptist university.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardner%E2%80%93Webb\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardner%E2%80%93Webb_University)





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