

5th Sunday in Lent March 18, 2018

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
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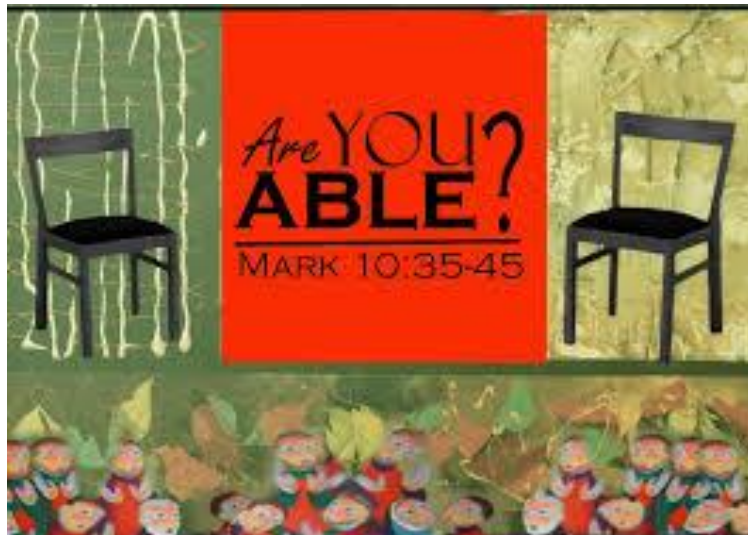
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March 15, 2018 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134

Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (First Sunday of the month at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa. Contact puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<http://seedstuff.blogspot.com/2015/10/proper-24-ordinary-29-b-october-18.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 430 The Lutheran Hymnal Not Listed

“My song is love unknown”

“...Samuel Crossman (1624–83), an Anglican priest, composed this poem in the latter part of the 17th century. It was not originally intended to be a hymn. Instead, Crossman’s poem first appeared as one of a collection of nine that he attached to a conduct book he had written for young men. Here he told religious stories and offered encouragement for godly living that children might grow in the faith...” <https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/lcms-worship-hymn-of-the-day-studies-for-lent-three-year-one-year-lectionary>

This hymn was introduced into Lutheran hymnals in “With One Voice” published by Augsburg Fortress in 1995. If you would like to go deep into the background of this hymn by Samuel Crossman, a contemporary of King James, and the variations in the text visit: <http://etymologyofhymns.blogspot.com/2012/11/my-song-is-love-unknown.html> , otherwise enjoy this hymn as presented in [John Ireland](#)’s melody, *Love Unknown*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOEjZb-rHc0> Still my favorite. “ Sylvia Burnside, accompanied by the New Irish Orchestra.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lv7OZSoA22w> Another well done presentation. Voice, instrument, and lyrics to follow. “ Dom Kelly on Songs of Praise 8th Feb 09. Dom is joined by Emily Ogilvie as they accompany the St Martins Church Choir, who sing "My Song Is Love Unknown".”

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.](#)

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (*Next week:* (Holy Week) Zechariah 9:9-12; *RCL, Isaiah 50:4-9a*)

“The book of Jeremiah is dominated by doom and gloom, condemning the people of Judah for their great sin and announcing the imminent destruction of the nation and the exile to Babylon that would come in 587 BCE.

A Diamond in the Rough

“In the midst of this dark valley of despair and judgment in the book of Jeremiah, however, a dense cluster of promise oracles concentrated in Jeremiah 30-33 radiate like a dazzling diamond. They radiate with bright promises of hope, comfort and restoration. These four chapters proclaim that after the judgment of exile is over, God will indeed bring God's people back to the land of Judah and restore them as a new and faithful people once again. The new covenant passage from Jeremiah 31:31-34 is a key element of a new future that only God can create. "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31)...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=434 [Dennis Olson](#)
Charles T. Haley Professor of Old Testament Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary,
Princeton, NJ

The New Covenant

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

“Rembrandt’s famous *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem* captures what most of us picture when we think of the biblical Jeremiah: the prophet, forlorn, painted against a dark background, leans his head on his hand.

It’s an image of abandoned hope, one that reflects the noun created out of Jeremiah’s name: *jeremiad*, “a long, mournful complaint or lamentation”... It’s no wonder that Jeremiah is often called the “Weeping Prophet.”

Yet despite Jeremiah’s nickname, we find in the middle of the book a passage with a very different tone: Jeremiah 30-31. These chapters often take the reader by surprise, for they are filled with comfort, hope, and optimism. Following such dire pronouncements such as “I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:2), the promises found in what is often called the “Little Book of Comfort” are both surprising and welcome. Within sits Jeremiah 31:31-34, often-labeled “The New Covenant” in study bibles and commentaries. These four verses brim with faith for the future: “The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... ” and, perhaps most strikingly, an astonishing divine promise: “I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.”

If the particular pericope from Jeremiah 31:31-34 sounds familiar, it is likely because we’ve heard it before, but perhaps not from the book of Jeremiah. Rather, our familiarity with the passage might stem from Hebrews 8:8-12, where the Jeremianic passage is reused...

As we consider this passage, we might try to imagine being exiled, far from our home and wondering what will become of us. The “new covenant” of Jeremiah 31:31-34 might seem strangely hopeful and consoling in the book of the “Weeping Prophet,” but the passage is a reminder that Jeremiah’s book offered the ancient Israelites the hope of a new covenant and a continued relationship with Yhwh, even in the midst of exile. For the original survivors, such a promise must have provided balm and comfort in the face of despair...

The words of comfort in Jeremiah 31:31-34 can speak to all of us who are suffering in the world now, to all of us who might feel like Rembrandt's Jeremiah. After all, no matter how broken the world might seem, "the days are surely coming, says the LORD ... ""

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3066 [Kelly J. Murphy](#) Assistant Professor, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Mich. [This link will also take you to a picture of the Rembrandt painting and links to 8 other commentaries, all in the context of Reformation Day.](#)

Psalm 119:9-16; RCL, Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16 (*Psalm 118: 19-29 or Psalm 31:9-16; RCL, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 or Psalm 31:9-16*)

"Since this pericope represents the first eight verses of Psalm 119, it might help to say a word or two about the entire psalm.

Psalm 119 is among several psalms that are arranged acrostically, according to the letters of the Hebrew alephbet. Psalm 119 is the longest of these -- and the longest of all Psalms -- with 22 eight-verse sections corresponding to the letters aleph, beth, gimel and all the way through tav. Even more impressive is the fact that in each eight-verse section, the first word of each verse begins with the letter assigned to that section. So each one of verses 1-8 begins with aleph, 9-16 with beth, 17-24 with gimel, and so on, through verses 169-176, each of which begins with the letter tav.

Martin Luther would have been very familiar with Psalm 119, likely knowing it by heart. As an Augustinian friar doing his daily devotions, Luther regularly recited the entire Psalm, all 176 verses. In Luther's day, monks recited long sections of Psalm 119 as part of the Liturgy of Hours (or Divine Office). As a young man, Luther prayed Psalm 119 at 6:00 am, 9:00 am, noon, and 3:00 pm at the beginning of the week. According to the Rule of Benedict, a faithful monk meditates on all of Psalm 119 once each week, beginning on Sunday and concluding on Monday..."
(continued after the reading)

Beth

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart,

that I might not sin against you.

¹² Blessed are you, O LORD;

teach me your statutes!

¹³ With my lips I declare

all the rules^[a] of your mouth.

¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies I delight

as much as in all riches.

¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts

and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

a. [Psalm 119:13](#) Or *all the just decrees*

“...Luther wanted to underscore that there is sharp contrast between God's ways and the ways of the Evil One. It is worth noting, then, that Luther did not read Psalm 119 as primarily "The Law" by which sinners are condemned but primarily as *Torah* (teaching) by which God communicates the liberating Word. For Luther, Psalm 119 provides a framework for the steadfast theologian committed to *oratio* (praying over), *meditatio* (meditating upon), and *tentatio* (defending the gospel using) divine teaching. The implication is clear: the better one knows God's *Torah* the more equipped one is to beat back the attacks of the devil. In other words, Psalm 119 -- this long and sustained reflection upon the *Torah* of God -- amounts to so many fightin' words. And happy are those who win.

As mentioned, the pericope at hand, Psalm 119:1-8, represents the first section: *Aleph*. So if Psalm 119 is a kind of A-Z description of *oratio-meditation-tentatio* over divine *Torah* (that is, over God's law, teachings, testimonies, commandments, precepts, statutes, judgments, righteousness, way, word, and truth), then you could be cute about it and point out that verses 1-8 delineate the A-game. It is fitting then that the psalm begins with the word "happy" (or "blessed" or "fortunate"). The Hebrew word is *ashrei*. "*Ashrei* are those whose way is blameless," the psalm declares at the outset.

Indeed. You'd be pretty happy, too, if you were blameless, sinless, perfect. Now if only such blameless people could be found, we could ask them for some advice. How do you do it? How do you keep yourselves so blameless? How do you keep God's decrees, seeking the Lord with your whole heart, and do no wrong? (See verses 1-3.) Oh, but wait. Such people do not exist (as the psalmist proclaims in Psalm 14:3 and, later, Paul, in Romans 3:10). There is no one who is blameless. No, not one. Psalm 119 starts by describing something that exists only in the imagination, a chimera, a fancy: namely, one who is blameless according to the Law of God.

Well, there is One. 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells how God made this One who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1487 [Hans Wiersma](#)
Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN

Hebrews 5:1-10; RCL, Hebrews 5:5-10 (*Philippians 2:5-11; RCL, the same reading*)

“Hebrews 5:1-10 establishes the basic identity of Jesus as the heavenly high priest, an important and unique contribution Hebrews makes to our understanding of Christ...”

But it is not until today's passage that Hebrews begins to really make the case for Jesus being high priest. After a brief digression, the argument is picked up again in chapter 7 and continues from there through chapter 10. Our passage has two sections to it: Verses 1-4 give the definition of and criteria for being a priest and verses 5-10 show how Christ meets these criteria...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1414 **Scott Shauf**
Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina

⁵ For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³ Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵ So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”; **Psalm 2:7**

⁶ as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.” **Psalm 110:4**

⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus^[a] offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

a. [Hebrews 5:7](#) Greek *he*

“Melchizedek is one of the most intriguing characters the Bible says almost nothing about. He’s only mentioned in three [books of the Bible](#), but that doesn’t stop people from having lots to say about this character.

Some people say Melchizedek is Jesus. Some people say he’s just a guy who worshiped God. You’ve probably heard all kinds of ways Melchizedek’s life applies to yours. He’s a mysterious figure, and I’ve found that mysterious Bible figures (like [Michael the archangel](#)) attract a lot of speculation, which ends up spreading some extra-biblical ideas. This means that when we sit down to study someone like Melchizedek (or a passage that mentions him), we’re often looking through folklore-tinted lenses.

I’ve found that a good way to approach these figures is just to search for every time they’re mentioned in the Bible, and create a list of observation-level facts. ([Logos Bible Software makes this super easy](#), by the way.)

When I was working on a [guide to the Book of Hebrews](#), I noticed that letter gives some attention to Melchizedek. So I took a break from that project to make a laundry list of biblical Melchizedek facts.

Here's the high-level rundown. I go into more detail below.

[Only three books of the Bible mention Melchizedek](#)

[The New Testament says more about Melchizedek than the Old Testament](#)

[Melchizedek is a contemporary of Abraham's](#)

[Melchizedek has no recorded family](#)

[Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High](#)

[Melchizedek gives blessings \(or at least one\)](#)

[Melchizedek is the king of Salem](#)

[Melchizedek's name means "king of righteousness"](#)

[The order of Melchizedek is royal and everlasting](#)

[Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and Aaron](#)

Enjoy!

<https://overviewbible.com/melchizedek-facts/> [Jeffrey Kranz](#) "I'm a Christian who grew up loving to study the Bible (the whole thing), and I want everyone else to fall (at least) as deeply in love with it as I have."

THE MARK CHALLENGE – Today you wrote.....?



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

Mark 10: (32-34)35-45; RCL, John 12:20-33 (Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-47 or John 12:20-43; RCL, Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)

“This passage plays a key role in the Gospel according to Mark's understanding of why Jesus dies and what his death means.

“It describes the Christian gospel and the community it creates as utterly different from the "business as usual" we encounter all around us. At the same time, Jesus' words in 10:45 are often misconstrued and made to support theological proposals that are foreign to Mark's Gospel. Preachers therefore find themselves given a choice opportunity to get to the heart of the matter of Jesus' death and what it means for our discipleship.

James and John (10:35-40)

In the preceding scene (10:32-34), Jesus gives his final and most detailed prediction of his trial, suffering, death, and resurrection (compare the less formal references to death yet to come in 14:8, 17-28). He is about to enter Jerusalem (11:1-11) and confront the temple-based aristocracy. James and John request privileged places of authority in seats at Jesus' right and left. In doing so, the sons of Zebedee appear to have missed everything Jesus has said and done since 8:27, except maybe for the transfiguration in 9:2-8. They recognize that glorification awaits Jesus. The authority he has exhibited in his ministry will lead to something big, perhaps to a royal rule, and they conspire to capitalize on that..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=435 [Matt Skinner](#),
Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn

Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time (Do you remember the other two?)

³² *And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."*

The Request of James and John

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶ And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸ Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" ³⁹ And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." ⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. ⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ^[a] ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave ^[b] of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- a. [Mark 10:43](#) Greek *diakonos*
- b. [Mark 10:44](#) Or *bondservant*, or *servant* (for the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface)

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

“Location, Location, Location

The old realtor's saw about the three most important factors in real estate also applies to the understanding this week's Gospel reading. An interpreter would be wise to pay attention to the pericope's location, location, location. The word "pericope" literally means "a cutting out" - as in, "taken out of context." Re-placing the pericope into its literary context sheds a bit of light on this story.

Location (Part 1) First, note that this reading -- in which James and John put their feet in their mouths by asking a stupid question (more on that below) -- occurs immediately after the third of Jesus' so-called passion predictions.

These announcements are often called "passion prediction." But that title may not be very helpful. The titles that an interpreter affixes to any given passage can powerfully influence the meaning that the interpreter makes out of that passage. If we call these passages "predictions," how does it shape our reading of these passages?

For many readers, the first question that they will ask about a "prediction" is whether or not it will (or did) come true. Is that the most interesting or fruitful question that an interpreter might ask? What if we renamed these so-called predictions and titled them as "Interpretations of Messianic Identity" or "Announcements of Messianic Mission"? Might these titles foster more interesting conversations about the meaning of these passages?

For the sake argument, and for the duration of this essay, let's rename these passages "Interpretations of the Messiah's Servant Mission."

Location (Part 2) Second, note that after the other two Interpretations of the Messiah's Servant Mission, the disciples also put their feet in their mouths. After the first Interpretation of the Messiah's Servant Mission (8:31-32), which is the only time in the Gospel of Mark that Jesus teaches something "openly," Peter rebukes Jesus and then in turn is rebuked by Jesus. After the second Interpretation of Messianic Identity (9:30-32), the disciples ask Jesus which one of them is the greatest, to which Jesus responds by saying "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

Location (Part 3) Third, note that immediately before the first Interpretation of the Messiah's Servant Mission, Jesus healed a blind man -- but that the healing didn't take right away (8:22-26). That is the only miracle of Jesus' that didn't turn out right the first time. And notice that immediately after this week's passage, Jesus also heals a blind man (10:46-52).

That is to say, the three Interpretations of the Messiah's Servant Mission are framed by the two stories about giving sight to the sightless...

Most American students are convinced by their grade school teachers that there is no such thing as a stupid question. Well, James and John put the lie to that fairy tale. They ask a really bad question. Having just been told by Jesus that his messianic identity is about suffering, death, and resurrection, they ask if they can sit on his right and left side "in your glory."

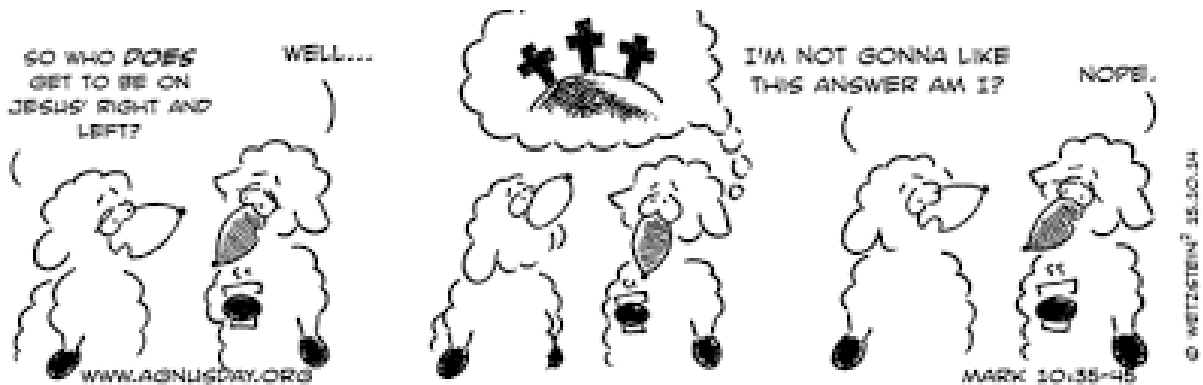
Wow. Talk about not getting it...

What is clear to the reader of this story -- but is not clear to the disciples, who are characters in Mark's story -- is that the disciples think they know who Jesus is and why he has come. But they really don't get it. Not fully.

And because of that, they do not know what it means to follow Jesus...

Taken in the context of the Gospel of Mark as a whole, there is only one event that will finally pull the curtain all of the way back so that Jesus' followers will finally understand that he is a servant king -- the kind of king that God had always wanted Israel's kings to be. That event is the resurrection. But even then -- and this is a warning for all of us who live on this side of the resurrection -- we see, as St Paul says, only in part, as in a mirror dimly."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1486 **Rolf Jacobson**
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A SPECIAL MARK CHALLENGE

Holy Week begins Sunday, March 25. The readings from Mark will cover all of Chapters 14 and 15 and the first 8 verses of chapter 16. If you haven't started the whole book, make this your goal for Easter morning – a handwritten copy of Holy Week according to Mark.