

Fourth Sunday of Easter April 22, 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.*

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- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
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<https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/jesuschristthegoodshepherd/>

Hymn of the Day

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

“The King of love my shepherd is”

“Sir Henry Williams Baker,... born in London, May 27, 1821, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated, B.A. 1844, M.A. 1847. Taking Holy Orders in 1844, he became, in 1851, Vicar of Monkland, Herefordshire... Sir Henry's name is intimately associated with hymnody... 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."

This tender sadness, brightened by a soft calm peace, was an epitome of his poetical life."

- https://hymnary.org/person/Baker_HenryW
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il1OeQfkVvI> Sing along with the lyrics on screen. [MassOfTheRock](#) "Even though I'm an atheist, I've always thought Christian music (especially this song) is beautiful."
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3GFVW6m9Qo> Another sing along with lyrics but a Celtic accompaniment. Maranatha Celtic "He is and always will be. Sung this in school (Infants) Overmeade Green, Blackbird Leys, Oxford England. It was true for me at 5 yrs. old and is true today at 55 "
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DyS46N1KXo> A small choral group with a flutes and a harp. [BYU Singers](#) Brigham Young Singers

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.](#)

Acts 4:1-12; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Acts 4:5-12 (Next week: Acts 8:26-40; RCL, the same reading)

*"If only the Common Lectionary had gone on just **one** more verse! Stopping shy of verse 13 deprives us from seeing one of the great passages of the Bible. Because it is there that the ruling authorities—who are seeking to hush up the apostles—find themselves powerfully impressed that the people doing all these things are, all things being equal, hicks and unlettered rubes.*

The word often translated as "unschooled" literally means "unlettered" (Greek: agrammatoi) which might mean unschooled but seems closer to "illiterate." These guys were illiterate idiots. Yet they now possess a boldness and an eloquence for which there was no good explanation except maybe—just maybe, possibly, outside chance—that it had something to do with another thing the authorities take note of: these men had been with Jesus.

They had been with Jesus..."

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4b-2/?type=old_testament_lectionary Rev. Scott E. Hoezee is an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church in North America and Director of the Center for Excellence in Preaching

Peter and John Before the Council

4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus^[a] is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.^[b] ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men^[c] by which we must be saved.”

¹³ *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.*

- a. [Acts 4:11](#) Greek *This one*
- b. [Acts 4:11](#) Greek *the head of the corner*
- c. [Acts 4:12](#) The Greek word *anthropoi* refers here to both men and women

“...Peter serves as the patron saint of the tongue-tied. His lame denials on the night of Jesus’ arrest befit a church of mumblers and mutes.

But a few short weeks after he could not answer simple questions from a poor serving girl, this unlettered, ordinary Galilean makes a stunning address before the Jewish equivalent of the Supreme Court. In the wake of the Resurrection, Peter’s tongue is loosed for speech.

What makes Peter’s speaking distinctive is not its heat, eloquence, or volume. (He is rather respectful of the authorities, though not deferential.) What is positively unnerving to the authorities is that Peter speaks at all. The authorities had put Jesus on trial and demanded, “On what authority do you do these things?” Then they killed Jesus in order to silence him. But here are Peter and John, companions of Jesus, facing the same question and the same threat but not remaining mute despite what the authorities did to Jesus...

According to the settled order of the day, the dead stay dead, the powerful get their way by punishing the lowly, and the wealthy consume at the expense of the poor. But the act of Peter's speaking and the content of his words testify to the same irrepressible reality: *the once-muted church speaks because the dead don't stay dead*. The authorities may have pronounced death on Jesus, but God has overruled their words by raising him from the dead. Far more than a one-off anomaly, Jesus is the beginning of the resurrection of the dead—the beginning of the Easter Revolution that ends the settled order based on death. The dead don't stay dead, so the rule of power and wealth has come to an end. New creation is at hand.

The temple authorities put Jesus in the lowest place they could—an outcast's death outside the city walls, the ultimate in exclusion from the community, the ultimate in silence. But God has raised Jesus to the place of highest honor and authority, at the very center of God's new community. Armed with the words of Psalm 118, Peter puts the temple authorities on notice that, in raising Jesus from the dead, God has made him the cornerstone of *a new temple* with the only power under heaven to heal. On what authority does the once-silent Peter speak? On the authority of the resurrection and God's gift of speech to the church, Peter and John say, "We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard" (v. 20).

At the end of the story, it is the authorities' turn to be speechless. The accusers of Jesus and his people are now silent. The reversal is sudden. Maybe this story seems fantastic, too miraculous, a daydream. But since God raises the dead, perhaps like Peter, we too will wake up to the reality that Easter has ended death's reign and that we no longer need to defer to the authorities that seek to regulate or silence the church's speaking..."

- <http://www.ekkesiaproject.org/blog/2012/04/the-patron-saint-of-the-tongue-tied/>
"Doug Lee serves as one of the pastors of Grace Fellowship Community Church in San Francisco. A former Silicon Valley engineer and high school math teacher, Doug is learning to be a Christian from his wife Amy, his children Sonya and Josiah, his congregation, and its global partners..."

Psalm 23; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 150; RCL, Psalm 22:25-31)

"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.

Psalm 23:1 summarizes the message of the whole. Verse 1a declares, "The Lord is my shepherd" and thus acknowledges God as the one who protects and guides. It is important to recognize, however, that "shepherd" connotes more than someone who herds sheep. Shepherd was a royal metaphor in the ancient Near East. Therefore, to call God shepherd is to acknowledge God as one who rules over one's life, to surrender to the will to God..."

- 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.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.^[a]

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness^[b]

for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^[c]

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely^[d] goodness and mercy^[e] shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell^[f] in the house of the LORD

forever.^[g]

- 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*

“Martin Luther 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. 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?"

- <http://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2015/11/luther-psalm-23/> "The Reformation Commentary on Scripture is a series published by IVP (InterVarsity Press) Academic intended to recover the wealth of biblical commentary produced during the time of the Reformation."

"Psalm 23 is the most loved chapter in the Bible. It is probably the most famous poem ever composed. The only prayer that surpasses it is the Lord's Prayer. Untold millions of people over the millennia have found comfort, healing, wisdom, and guidance from praying Psalm 23. How could David, a shepherd boy, put together such a masterpiece? It was the Holy Spirit who inspired his writing.

Countless Psalm 23 translations into English have been written. There are also many hymns, poems, and paraphrases that have been inspired by Psalm 23. I have gathered these Psalm 23 translations and other works on Psalm 23 because they are so fruitful for meditation and prayer. I've shared them with others on retreat and in groups. Enjoy! Find a favorite and soak your soul in it!...

My Soul Shepherding Psalm By Bill Gaultiere, SoulShepherding.org © 2007

The Lord Jesus is my Soul Shepherd
who meets all my needs and makes me smile.
He gets me to stop working and to relax
with him in his Father's loving arms...

Psalm 23: A David Psalm From *The Message*. A paraphrase by Eugene Peterson © 1994

God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction...

He Leadeth Me By Joseph H. Gilmore © 1862

He leadeth me, O blessèd thought!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

*He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
By His own hand He leadeth me;
His faithful follower I would be,
For by His hand He leadeth me... ”*

- <https://www.soulshpherd.org/2012/08/psalm-23-translations-hymns-and-poems/> Bill Gaultiere , August 20, 2012 ,Devotionals, Experiences For Groups and Retreats

Just as all the first readings after Easter until Ascension are from the book of Acts, so are all the readings for this set of lesson from 1 John. The following articles give a perspective on the readings from 1 John.

“...The six texts from 1 John during the Sundays of Easter are [1:1-2:2, 3:1-7, 3:16-24, 4:1-11, 5:1-8, 5:9-15; adjusted for the LCMS Lectionary/Revised Common Lectionary for Year B which was not complete in 1988 when this commentary was written.]

As our exegetical conversation took place, we followed the order of the texts in 1 John and worked toward 5:1-6. When we arrived at our final text, we realized that we were once again at the heart of both the Gospel of John and 1 John—the cross. We had never left the shadow of the cross projected onto the life of the Johannine community from the gospel, but we had also entered into this shadow within the epistle. And this is as it should be, even in the season of Easter...”

- http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/8-2_Heresy/8-2_Berge.pdf Paul S. Berge, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

“During a cold December interim at Luther Seminary, a number of students gathered with me early one morning to consider six texts from 1 John. In the midst of the deep December darkness of Advent we discussed texts that might be used for preaching during the more halcyon days of Easter. Overall, the study group was impressed with how 1 John seemed to reflect many of the themes raised by the Gospel of John. Still, while we noted a high degree of coherence between the two bodies of literature, we sensed little coincidence between them.

John's Gospel gives all the appearances of being historical narrative riding on a cushion of theology, while 1 John seems to be an extended sermon, deriving themes from the mother work but making its own way theologically. The six texts (for the six Sundays of the Easter season) cohere in subject matter as well as theme. The group thought that the sequence of texts might make for an interesting series of sermons, but some also felt that pastors would need to exercise some ingenuity because of the repetition of themes and ideas. Even so, all perceived an engaging development and progression-and more than a few surprises-as the alleged letter unfolded.

The progressive yet repetitious quality of the narrative reminded some in the group of a concession at the Minnesota State Fair called "The River Ride." In late August when the fair is in session, fun seekers pay to take their places in a circular gondola at the head of a channeled but circuitous stream of rapidly flowing water. The gondola twists, dips, and turns, carrying riders over a series of drops beneath the surface. Water circulates under the vessel and splashes the riders from behind and in front. Yet, in spite of the soaking backwash, the pull of the stream is always forward toward a goal. In the end the riders emerge, drenched but satisfied, having been immersed, propelled, and surprised by both visible and invisible forces.

For the members of our study group the texts in 1 John had a similar unsettling effect. We, the readers, experienced the fast forward movement as well as unexpected backwash in the sequence of readings. We sensed that we were carried along on the swell; but we also had the repeated experience of being unexpectedly drenched by waves of ideas. However, we also had, at the end of the study, a sense of satisfaction with being engaged by the texts, a feeling of having been washed and propelled by both visible and invisible forces..."

http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/17-2_China/17-2_Brusic.pdf **A River Ride with 1 John: Texts of the Easter Season**, Robert M. Brusica, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

1 John 3:16-24; RCL, the same reading (1 John 4:1-11 (12-21); RCL, 1 John 4:7-21)

"...Jerome tells this story about the apostle John. "When the venerable John could no longer walk to the meetings of the church but was borne by his disciples, he always uttered the same address to the church; he reminded them of that one commandment which he had received from Christ himself, as comprising all the rest, and forming the distinction of the new covenant. 'My little children, "Love one another.'" When the brethren, wearied of hearing the same thing so often, asked why he repeated the same thing, he replied, 'Because it is the commandment of the Lord, and if this one thing be attained, it is enough..."

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4b-2/?type=old_testament_lectionary Stan Mast spent 41 years in parish ministry in four very different churches...In 2012, Stan retired and then promptly un-retired to return to Calvin as Adjunct Professor of Preaching.

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

²⁰ for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence

before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God,^[a] and God^[b] in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

- a. [1 John 3:24](#) Greek *him*
- b. [1 John 3:24](#) Greek *he*

THE MARK CHALLENGE

Rejected, sent, died, fed, walked, healed – they all happened in Chapter 6. Do you remember writing them? If not, read Chapter 6.

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

John 10:11-18; RCL, the same reading (John 15:1-8; RCL, the same reading)

“...The Gospel of John is oddly devoid of the much-loved parables of Jesus that make up such a significant portion of the Synoptic Gospels. Maybe by the time John set his gospel down in writing he figured the world did not need a third or fourth re-tread of some of those great stories Jesus used to tell. Instead John took note of another tendency Jesus had when speaking: his use of the “I Am” phrase. Ever the theologian, John knew full well the resonances that phrase carries for those familiar with the divine Name as it first emerged in Exodus 3: “Tell that ‘I Am’ sent you” is what Yahweh told to Moses when he inquired after the divine moniker. And so every time Jesus opened his mouth to start a sentence with the Greek phrase Ego eimi, theologically astute people know the weight and import of those words on Jesus’ lips...” (continued after the reading)

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

“Today we don’t have shepherds in the wider society. Today we have managers. But shepherds and managers are not the same.

Whenever Jesus uses the pastoral image of a shepherd for himself, the point is nearly always the same: as the good shepherd of his sheep, he will risk his life and even temporarily abandon the flock if that's what it takes to save the one lost sheep. As the true shepherd who loves his sheep, he will let himself be killed rather than see one single sheep harmed. In every image of the flock which Jesus employs, it is always clear that as important as the whole flock is, each individual sheep is as important to him as is the larger collective.

But many folks today don't think that way at all. Instead we hear about giant corporations that do cost-benefit analyses for their products. They calculate how much risk they can get away with in an effort to pad the bottom line by not having to lay out any extra money for additional safeguards or further research & development.

So food companies have been known to let certain products hit the market despite their knowing right up front that there is a slight risk that certain people could well get sick from this food and maybe even die. But if the percentage of people at risk for that is small enough as to be statistically insignificant, then they forge ahead. Politicians often live by polls and so base some pretty big decisions on projected outcomes. Even if some people may be disadvantaged by this or that program cut, if the majority will benefit (and so vote the right way once again at the next election), then those who will be harmed are back-handed aside as statistically irrelevant.

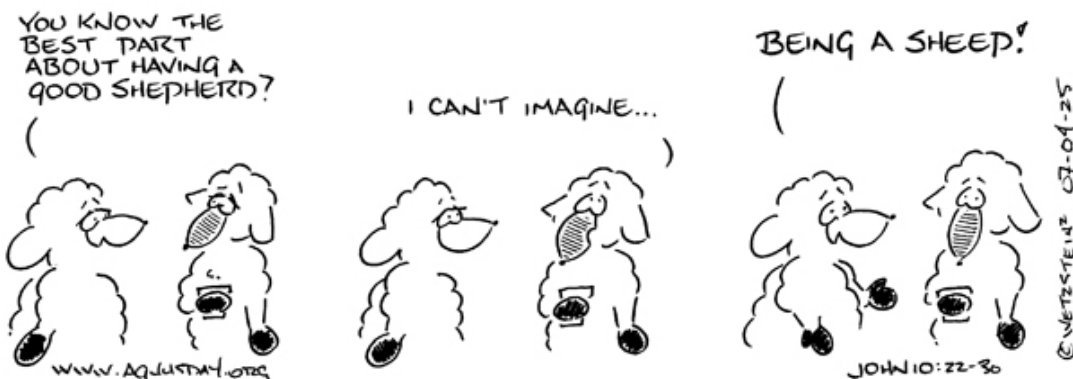
Ours is a world that looks to see how much it can get away with. Ours is a society where the majority rules and the minority had best just learn to live with it.

But not so with Jesus as the good shepherd. A cost-benefit analysis would never cause the shepherd to leave the 99 sheep on their own for a few minutes in favor of finding the one lost lamb. If the shepherd had a risk-management committee, they would never advise him to let the wolf kill the shepherd but would say you could better survive to fight another day even if for the time being the wolf nabbed a sheep or two.

In other words, ours is a world and a society made up of hired hands with very few true shepherds around anymore. We manage risks and outcomes but don't put our lives on the line to avoid all bad outcomes.

But then, perhaps it's for that very reason that we could all use a truly Good Shepherd in our lives. Now, maybe, more than ever...

- [http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4b-2/?type=old testament lectionary](http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4b-2/?type=old%20testament%20lectionary) Rev. Scott E. Hoezee



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