

Fifth Sunday of Easter April 29, 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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<http://slideplayer.com/slide/6987428/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 633 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not listed
“At the Lamb’s high feast we sing”

“SONNE DER GERECHTIGKEIT was originally the tune to a fifteenth-century folk song, "Der reich Mann war geritten aus," and it was adopted by the Bohemian Brethren for 1566 hymnal, *Kirchengeseng*. The tune is thus a *contrafactum*, changed from the folk/court use to church use. The title is the German incipit (*opening words*) for the chorale most commonly associated with the tune. SONNE DER GERECHTIGKEIT is a bright tune characterized by a rising initial motif and forceful rhythms. Sing it in unison to a full organ registration and at a good tempo. Use brass and timpani for very festive singing. --*Psalter Hymnal Handbook*, 1988”

- https://hymnary.org/tune/sonne_der_gerechtigkei
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1aegCYPV7g> First an organ prelude to get you started. [StDonatusOrganum](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzBs0Y7ymzM> Sing along with the organ. Words are on the screen. [Dennis Northern](#)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIt_ljhr84 A unique organ design. Stops are not where you expect them to be. [fluteceleste](#)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mAf_7nJ_W8 Your thoughts?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDVPiNe5cCU> A different, more commonly used melody. “The tune SALZBURG, named after the Austrian city made famous by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was first published anonymously in the nineteenth edition of *Praxis Pietatis Melica* (1678); in that hymnbook's twenty-fourth edition (1690) the tune was attributed to Jakob Hintze (b. Bernau, Germany, 1622; d. Berlin, Germany, 1702).” – hymnary.org

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 8:26-40; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Acts the same reading (Next week: Acts 10:34-48; RCL, Acts 10:44-48)

“Even if your assignment is a high school graduation ceremony, or a routine trial, find the most interesting person to sit with,” wrote the veteran investigative reporter. “Find the most interesting person to sit with.”

And so the Holy Spirit did.

First, the Spirit sends Philip out from Jerusalem, and then the Spirit prods Philip to go out on that strange “wilderness road” and find the most interesting person to sit with.

You know this Philip, a second-generation leader of the young church. A second-round draft pick -- really a strategic choice, a position player for the Gentiles. (Not to be confused with first-round Philip the apostle -- just Philip the deacon here.)

Philip, sent out into the world by the Spirit, away from the central activity of the church in Jerusalem. Philip, sent out without knowing what he was looking for or what purpose it would serve. St. Philip, perhaps the patron saint of reading preachers...”

<https://www.faithandleadership.com/laura-everett-fully-preach-gospel-we-need-sit-people-wildly-different-us> [Laura Everett](#) Executive director, Massachusetts Council of Churches

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south^[a] to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. ²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.” [Cited from Isa. 53:7, 8](#)

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?”^[b] ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

- a. [Acts 8:26](#) Or go at about noon
- b. [Acts 8:36](#) Some manuscripts add all or most of verse [37](#): *And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*

“May I just ask a rather simple, straightforward question: Where in the whole wide world did this Ethiopian fellow get a copy of Isaiah??

I mean, it’s not like he had downloaded it onto his Kindle. It’s not as though while he was in Jerusalem he found it on the “remaindered scrolls” table at the local Flea Market nor in the “Used Scrolls” section of the Jerusalem Barnes & Noble.

These things just were not floating around, readily available for rental or purchase. In fact, from what little I know about the world before Guttenberg invented the printing press, all print matter materials were rare. Even most synagogues would be expected to have perhaps at most a single copy of the Scriptures. Nothing in print existed that had not been carefully done by hand as original copies only—carbon sheets and papyrus were notoriously ineffective!—and that just was not that common.

So where did this man—a high official in a foreign court, I will grant you—lay his hands on a copy of sacred Scripture? You don't suppose he stole the thing, do you? Or did he manage to use his wealth to buy it off some Roman occupier who had lifted it from a synagogue? But why would he do that? Was the Queen of Ethiopia a collector of rare manuscripts such that this particular courtier was thinking he'd curry favor with her Majesty by bringing back a new item for her collection?

However it happened that he got a hold of this thing, it seems fair to say that his acquiring a copy of Isaiah was rare. Probably it was not done for any spiritual or particularly noble purpose. Possibly it represents an odd—albeit perhaps not completely unheard of—collision of circumstances, the holy “coincidence” of which is only enhanced when at just about precisely the exact correct moment, Philip finds this guy reading Isaiah's words with a decidedly quizzical and confused look on his face.

In other words, lots of things had to go exactly right for this story to have happened the way it did...

Commentators think this little narrative is inserted into this section of Acts as a kind of “Meanwhile” scene. Sometimes you see this on a TV series or in a movie: the main action of the film is happening in Moscow perhaps or in London but then the screen fades to black and a narrator may say “Meanwhile, on a small farm somewhere outside Tulsa . . .” and then we cut to a whole new out-of-the-way scene that reveals something really important to the plot. In this case, this little “Meanwhile” scene is meant to convey to us that whatever else was happening in the still-forming early church, the gospel was indeed spreading far and wide. The believers had been forced to scatter after the shocking event of Stephen's dreadful martyrdom—and a certain man who will be called the Apostle Paul has not yet arrived on the scene to bring Jesus to the Gentiles—but nevertheless and “Meanwhile . . .” things were on the move in a global sense.

It's not different today. Because among other things, this little story from Acts 8 should remind us that at any given moment—and I do indeed mean at ANY and EVERY given moment—there is always a “Meanwhile . . .” scene to which we could cut and in which we'd witness a stunning work of the Holy Spirit taking place in all kinds of unexpected ways and places and involving all kinds of unexpected folks.

The Spirit of Jesus never stops. Thanks be to God!”

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-5b-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

Psalm 150; RCL, Psalm 22:25-31 (Psalm 98; RCL, the same reading)

"We have now reached the last summit of the mountain chain of Psalms. It rises high into the clear azure, and its brow is bathed in the sunlight of the eternal world of worship, it is a rapture. The poet prophet is full of inspiration and enthusiasm. He slays not to argue, to teach, to explain; but cries with burning words, "Praise him, Praise him, Praise ye the LORD."..."

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=150>

Charles H. Spurgeon

Let Everything Praise the LORD

150 Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens!^[a]

² Praise him for his mighty deeds;

praise him according to his excellent greatness!

³ Praise him with trumpet sound;

praise him with lute and harp!

⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;

praise him with strings and pipe!

⁵ Praise him with sounding cymbals;

praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD!

a. [Psalm 150:1](#) Hebrew *expansive* (compare [Genesis 1:6-8](#))

**"So You Think You Can Dance? True Confessions of a Former Liturgical Dancer
by Kim Grams**

OK, confession time. In 8th grade, I did a liturgical dance number (cringe) for Easter Sunday (double cringe) up by the altar (oh no, she DIDN't!!!). Ran right up the aisle doing something swoopy.

Before I married my husband, now an LCMS pastor, I took adult instruction. As I studied Lutheran doctrine, I learned about worship. It's not about MY performance, but about God giving and me receiving His gifts. Looking back, I'm horribly embarrassed. Now I let my church just be church and my entertainment be entertainment. (As my husband says regarding the trend of turning church into an entertainment showcase: "I can't find the 'Jesus of Entertainment' in the Bible"...")

➤ http://higherthings.org/myht/articles/pop_culture_arts/dance "Kim Grams is a writer and pastor's wife who lives in Scottsbluff, NE. She debuted in myHT (myHigherThings) with her article Diary of An American Idol Junkie."

If you have never seen one, here is an example from St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (ELCA), Jacksonville, FL.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onWB8PGPssk>

“Many proponents of modern Pentecostal-style theatrics in Christian worship often cite II Samuel (LXX: II Kingdoms) 6:14, where David dances before the Ark of the Covenant, and there are of course other references to dancing in the Old Testament.

But neither David nor his priests took that incident as a template for how worship was to be conducted in the Tabernacle, nor was it found that way in Solomon’s Temple nor the Second Temple, nor was it in the synagogues. So Jews didn’t take what happened as a precedent for worship. And the other references to dancing in the Old Testament aren’t in the Temple. And Christians for most of the history of Christianity never took it that way, either.

One of the things I often wonder about is why those who advocate certain things they see in the Old Testament for modern Christian worship seem to ignore the vast, explicit instructions concerning worship that God Himself gave in the Old Testament. They want to see musical instruments and “joyful noise” because there are references to them (though almost never in reference to worship services). They want to see dance because David danced. Yet they’re not interested in liturgics, incense, chanting, priests in vestments, specified times for prayer, pre-written prayers, etc. Yet it is precisely those things which early Christians saw in Jewish worship as worth keeping for Christianity.

What is the basis for wanting to base Christian worship style on references from the Old Testament that the early Christians mainly ignored when formulating their transformation of Jewish worship, while ignoring the very explicit instructions concerning worship that early Christians adopted almost wholesale?

So when thinking of worship, neither Jews nor early Christians used the Old Testament in the way that modern Pentecostal-style Christians do. It’s true that all Christian traditions make choices when it comes to the Old Testament. Those who advocate putting the Old Testament’s non-worship things like dance into worship need to explain why they reject most of the worship things of the Old Testament.

- <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/orthodoxyandheterodoxy/2013/10/12/if-king-david-danced-should-christians-dance-in-church/> “The Very Rev. Archpriest Andrew Stephen Damick is pastor of [St. Paul Orthodox Church](#) of Emmaus, Pennsylvania.”
- <http://www.triunegod.net/studies/contemporary.php> “**What Is Contemporary Worship, Really?**” Copyright © 2003 - Lutheran Church of the Triune God, All Rights Reserved. A confessional Lutheran church (LCMS) in the Minneapolis area.

1 John 4:1-11 (12-21); RCL, 1 John 4:7-21 (1 John 5:1-8; RCL, 1 John 5:1-6)

“When I read this passage, I hear the Beatles’ famous song, “All You Need Is Love.” But I don’t hear John agreeing with John, Paul, George, and Ringo—not completely. Though he insists on the absolute importance of love, John has more important things to say about love than “all you need is love.” Perhaps the most important thing he says is in verse 11. “Dear children, since

God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” That linkage between our love for each other and God’s love for us is the distinctively Christian message of this text. If I Corinthians 13 is a poem on love, then I John 4 is a complex piece of music in which we hear variations on a theme...”

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-5b-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.

Test the Spirits

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God Is Love

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot^[a] love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- a. [1 John 4:20](#) Some manuscripts *how can he*

“This pericope seems to be a review of what we have heard from 1 John over the previous two weeks.

Here again, we find the call to love one another, woven together with that love's foundation in God's prior action for us in the Son. Confession of faith and love for one's brothers and sisters in the church are again inseparably joined, as they were in the previous Sunday's reading. Here again are words about abiding in God and God abiding in us.

So, what's new here? With this pericope replaying the themes of chapter 3, the preacher may have difficulty if (he's) preaching a series on these readings from 1 John. However, perhaps that sense of *déjà vu* is a point that one might explore. We never get beyond God's love for us in Christ and how that is lived out in love for one another. We are always drawn back to that central, and centering, claim. We know God's love, first and foremost, in the Son; and we know God's love because we have witnessed it in love for one another. This text may serve as a reminder that we never grow beyond our need to hear again the gospel of God's love in Christ...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1288 **Brian Peterson** Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC

THE MARK CHALLENGE

Rejected, sent, died, fed, walked, healed – they all happened in Chapter 6. Last chance to be on schedule. Chapter 7 starts on Tuesday.

John 15:1-8; RCL, the same reading (John 15:9-17; RCL, the same reading)

“We now come to one of the most powerful descriptions of the eternal life to which John is bearing witness. Jesus has spoken of the cleansing of the disciples (13:10-11), the coming intimacy with him and his Father (14:20-21, 23), the coming of the Paraclete (14:16-17, 26) and the love command (13:34-35). Each of these themes, among others, is further developed in chapter 15. Jesus begins with the themes of intimacy and cleansing using the figure of the vine (15:1-6), and then he interprets and applies that teaching, tying it in with themes found throughout the farewell discourse (vv. 7-17). Jesus Declares He Is the True Vine and His Disciples Are the Branches (15:1-6) Jesus begins with the Gospel's final "I am" saying. The earlier sayings had focused on Jesus as the life-giver and had included an invitation to come to him and to believe in him (6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 11:25-26; 14:6). Now, however, Jesus is speaking to those who have already come to him, and so his charge is that they remain in him (cf. Michaels 1989:271). The earlier theme of life is now developed in terms of intimate union with Jesus, a sharing in his own life. Thus, this is a fitting conclusion to the "I am" sayings...”

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/John/Jesus-Calls-Disciples-Remain> IVP New Testament Commentaries are made available by the generosity of [InterVarsity Press](#).

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 15th Chapter”

I Am the True Vine

15 *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

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

“It is important to remember in studying the gospel of John that: The Gospel text for this Sunday falls within a series of readings from the Gospel of John that are peppered into this Mark lectionary series. It is found in the heart of Jesus’ final discourse with his disciples recorded in John 13-17. It takes place on the night of the Passover, the night in which he was betrayed. The context, then, is of Jesus’ final hours with his disciples, and before his subsequent arrest, torture, and death.

The imagery Jesus uses in John 15:1-8 is rich both in the history of Israel and in the narrative of the Scriptures. It is the imagery of the vineyard (αμπελών). The prophet Isaiah utilizes this image poignantly as he lays out his inspired critique against the people of Israel in Isaiah 5. Verses 1-3 of Isaiah 5 (NIV) say,

I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My loved one had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
He dug it up and cleared it of stones
and planted it with the choicest vines.
He built a watchtower in it
and cut out a winepress as well.
Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,
but it yielded only bad fruit.
“Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.”

This text paints a vivid picture of the LORD's relationship with Israel: he called them and made them into a people (Deut 7:6); they were to be a *holy* people (Exo 19:6); there were to be as a bride to God, he was their husband (Hos 2:16-23). As the ultimate "Green Thumb," it is only natural to assume that whatever gardening work the LORD of hosts sets his hand is sure to blossom and produce good fruit. After all, it is the LORD who is the source of all life and prosperity through his gracious "blessing" (Gen 1:22, 28; 9:1, 7; 12:2-3; Psa 67). And so it is that we share in Isaiah the prophet's utter amazement at the fact that this special vineyard of the LORD's *does not* yield fruit. The purpose of Isaiah's prophetic words is to cause us to conclude with him that God has no choice but to tear apart this fruitless vineyard.

In similar fashion, the "vineyard" is used by Jesus in his own teaching. Here we think especially of his many parables utilizing this image (e.g., Matt 20:1-16; 21:33-44). But in John 15:1-8, Jesus appears to be doing something different with this image. His aim is not necessarily to convict, but to instruct and to encourage. As his disciples first hear this vineyard image they may anticipate something similar to what Isaiah prophesied. But instead they hear, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you" (15:3). The vine/vineyard image is employed this time to cause the disciples to recognize their status in Christ, and then to frame their living *into* and *out of* this point of reference...

As you preach this text, you might give some reflection to how John 15:1-8 might serve as a lens through which to view the other pericope for this Sunday, especially 1 John 4:1-11 (12-21)."

- <http://www.clba.org/fifth-sunday-of-easter-3/> Church of the Lutheran Brethren Commentary – Prof. Brad Pribbenow "Rev. Brad Pribbenow graduated with a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Dr. Pribbenow serves Lutheran Brethren Seminary as Professor of Old Testament."



(Pinerest is a social media pin-up site.)

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