

Third Sunday after the Epiphany January 27 , 2019

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran

Living the ^ Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

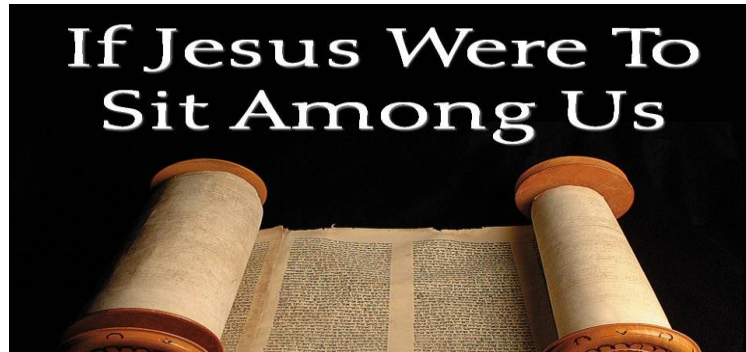
Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
- ✦ Through www.Facebook.com at “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”, “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”, or “Harold Weseloh”
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Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.

If Jesus Were To
Sit Among Us



<http://www.ingodsimage.com/2010/02/if-jesus-were-to-sit-among-us/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 839 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 512
“O Christ, our true and only light”

This hymn was written by Johann Heermann in the 1600's. His biography follows, one that has been presented before, but bears repeating to understand the lives of many believers of this era in Germany. The tune is written in 1676 as it appears in TLH. The setting in LSB updated it in the 1800's (as was copyrighted by the Bavarian Lutheran Church in 1984). Catherine Winkworth translated this and many other German hymns. The LSB contains 46 of her translations.

“Heermann, Johann, son of Johannes Heermann, furrier at Baudten, near Wohlau, Silesia, was born at Baudten, Oct. 11, 1585. He was the fifth but only surviving child of his parents, and during a severe illness in his childhood his mother vowed that if he recovered she would educate him for the ministry, even though she had to beg the necessary money...

Much of Heermann's manhood was spent amid the distressing scenes of the Thirty Years' War; and by his own ill health and his domestic trials he was trained to write his beautiful hymns of "Cross and Consolation." Between 1629 and 1634, Koben was plundered four times by the Lichtenstein dragoons and the rough hordes under Wallenstein sent into Silesia by the King of Austria in order to bring about the Counter-Reformation and restore the Roman Catholic faith and practice; while in 1616 the town was devastated by fire, and in 1631 by pestilence. In these troublous years Heermann several times lost all his moveables; once he had to keep away from Koben for seventeen weeks; twice he was nearly sabred; and once, while crossing the Oder in a frail boat loaded almost to sinking, he heard the bullets of the pursuing soldiers whistle just over his head. He bore all with courage and patience, and he and his were wonderfully preserved from death and dishonour. He was thus well grounded in the school of affliction..."

- https://hymnary.org/person/Heermann_J
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB2L1Ai8DCE> Evening chapel in the Martin Luther Chapel, part of a WELS - Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod college in New Ulm, MN
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU-XSg9qqVs> Piano Accompaniment Track · Robert Vert Piano Accompaniments, Vol. 9: Hymns © 2016 Robert Vert
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lnx2aJCdtVA> Try it in Chinese. Presented by Reverend Freemon Li, a LC-MS pastor in Fremont, CA.

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® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles](#), a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) the same reading, (Next week: Jeremiah 1:4-10 (17-19); RCL, Jeremiah 1:4-10)

*"I challenge you: If you do not choose to preach on Nehemiah 8, then let this passage inspire you to preach on the Torah. **

If your congregation asks you to proclaim the word of God (and I presume they have, or you would not be on this site), consider doing it in a public place,¹ for a gathered group of women, men, and children, with a crowd of folks, lay and ordained, on hand to help you. Stand in the square and proclaim and interpret these books of Scripture -- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy -- for six hours straight, and when six hours are up, begin to celebrate. But I'm getting ahead of myself because I hope you will preach on this stunning passage. Nehemiah 8 is one of the few places where Scripture talks about Scripture as such, showing us what happens when a community comes together to hear the written word proclaimed and interpreted. So what happens?... (continued after the reading)

* "The word "Torah" is a tricky one, because it can mean different things in different contexts. In its most limited sense, "Torah" refers to the Five Books of [Moses](#): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. But the word "torah" can also be used to refer to the entire Jewish bible (the body of scripture known to non-Jews as the Old Testament and to Jews as the Tanakh or Written Torah), or in its broadest sense, to the whole body of Jewish law and teachings..."

➤ <http://www.jewfaq.org/torah.htm> Read more details at this site, "Judaism 101".

Ezra Reads the Law

8 And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. ² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³ And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. ⁴ *And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand.* ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷ *Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites,^[a] helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places.* ⁸ They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly,^[b] and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

This Day Is Holy

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink

sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

- a. [Nehemiah 8:7](#) Vulgate; Hebrew *and the Levites*
- b. [Nehemiah 8:8](#) Or *with interpretation, or paragraph by paragraph*

People bless God. People give voice to their certainty, their faith, and their trust. People let the actions of their bodies match the words in their ears and on their lips, lifting their hands to God in petition because they recognize that God alone grants life (cf. Nehemiah 9:6). People fall to the ground in profound humility, knowing that God alone can lift them up and help them to stand.

When they hear the written word proclaimed and interpreted, people weep because they hear their sins spoken out loud and they know they are not innocent, but guilty. People weep because they fear death and the justice of a God who by no means clears the guilty (cf. 2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34; Exodus 34:7). People weep because they do not know how to bridge the gulf that separates sinful humanity from the faithful God who made them.

But as surely as the Torah reveals to us our sins, it also reveals to us the source of our hope: the God who keeps promises (cf. Nehemiah 9:8)...

Believing in this testimony, every person who leads and teaches this people - governor, priest, scribe, and Levite - tells them not to weep (8:9). Do not mourn, they say, because this day when you have let God's law fill your ears is a holy day. The day when God's people gather together to hear the teaching of Moses can only be a day of drawing near to God in deepest joy: it is the joy of the Lord, the strength of the people (8:10).

The summons to joy is the great surprise of this passage and the summit toward which all its proclamation climbs. This joy is so excessive its grammar refuses to contain it, for "the joy of the Lord" can mean God's own rejoicing over the people who have drawn near with attentive ear and heart; it can also mean the people's joy in God and a joy that comes only from God...

Nehemiah 8 shows us what it looks like when the people gather to hear the written word proclaimed and interpreted and let that proclamation shape and energize their life in community. The biblical text does nothing in and of itself and nothing by itself. When Ezra lifts up the scroll and opens it for all the people to see they stand in reverence before this sacred text that mediates God's efficacious word. But it is not the scroll they revere. They revere and bless the God whose saving actions and presence the words of the scroll disclose. God gave the law to Moses so that Moses could record those words for every new generation. While the lectionary omits the lists of names in verses 4 and 7, those names are important reminders to us of the dynamic and interactive process of transmission, proclamation, interpretation, and understanding that involved many people in many roles. The passage also highlights the inviting, attentive, receptive, and responsive disposition of "all the people," a phrase repeated eight times in this passage. It is the people, after all, who first ask Ezra to bring the scroll to them and read from it (8:1)...

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=496 Anathea Portier-Young, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC

Psalm 19: (1-6) 7-14; RCL, Psalm 19 (Psalm 71:1-6; RCL, the same reading)

“...The event was the regular Sunday evening meeting of the Lutheran Student Association (LSA). The LSA met outside during the fall, taking advantage of the beauty of Decorah (Iowa) until the weather turned cold...

The speaker for the evening was the college president. I remember him talking about the two books which told about God and creation. One book was the Bible which he held in his hand. He read from Psalm 19, “the heavens are telling the glory of God.” The other book, he said, was the book of nature. He paused and pointed at the red, green, and yellow trees surrounding us and at the Oneota River moving through the valley below. Those were the two books: the book of Scripture which used words to tell about God and creation and the book of nature which through its own beauty praised God. Such is my first memory of the psalm assigned for this Sunday...” (continued after the reading)

The Law of the LORD Is Perfect

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

*19 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above^[a] proclaims his handiwork.*

*2 Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.*

*3 There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.*

*4 Their voice^[b] goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.*

In them he has set a tent for the sun,

*5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.*

*6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

*7 The law of the LORD is perfect,^[c]
reviving the soul;*

*the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;*

*8 the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;*

*the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;*

⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean,
 enduring forever;
 the rules^[d] of the LORD are true,
 and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
 even much fine gold;
 sweeter also than honey
 and drippings of the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
 in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² Who can discern his errors?
 Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
 let them not have dominion over me!
 Then I shall be blameless,
 and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
 be acceptable in your sight,
 O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.***

- a. [Psalm 19:1](#) Hebrew *the expanse*; compare [Genesis 1:6-8](#)
- b. [Psalm 19:4](#) Or *Their measuring line*
- c. [Psalm 19:7](#) Or *blameless*
- d. [Psalm 19:9](#) Or *just decrees*

“...what the heavens tell (Psalm 19:1-6)

Psalm 19 falls into three parts. The words of part one (vv.1-6) recall the story of creation in Genesis 1, declaring that the heavens and the “firmament” (NRSV footnote “dome”) tell about the glory of God (Genesis 1:6-8). The biblical worldview at that time imagined the earth as flat, covered by a huge, plexiglas-like dome called the “firmament.” Beneath the flat earth was water, as was obvious every time one dug a well. Above the dome was more water, which accounted for the blue of the skies. Openings in the dome allowed the rain to pour through... Notice that the heavens and the earth are identified as the “handiwork” of God (NRSV; NIV has “work of his hands”). The Hebrew word for God in Psalm 19:1 is *EI* which, like “God” in English, is a generic word for a heavenly being, not the special word for the God of the Hebrews (Yahweh or LORD, as in vv. 7-9 and 14). Note also that the heavens and the “dome” are not to be identified as “gods.” Here is neither polytheism, naming the heavenly bodies as gods, nor pantheism, viewing all that exists as “god” or a part of god. Rather, the God of this psalm is the Creator, distinct from creation, and the earth and the heavens -- the universe -- are “the work of his hands” (NIV)...

...what the scriptures teach (Psalm 19:7-10)

With verse 7, the psalm moves out of metaphor and modulates into a more prosaic key. The focus is no longer on the world and the heavens (v. 4) but on words. The spotlight is no

longer on God's handiwork in space, but on created humans and speech. For the first time the name "Yahweh" (NRSV, LORD) is used for God. The section begins, "The instruction (Hebrew, *torah*) of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul." The psalm then fires off a series of six statements referring to God's instruction as found in Scripture. Here are several words used to designate Scripture or Torah: decrees, precepts, commandment, ordinances. These words will revive life and provide wisdom (v. 7) and supply joy and enlightenment (v. 8). The biblical expression "fear of the Lord" (v. 9) refers to respect and trust in the Lord; the expression occurs frequently in Proverbs (1:7; 1:29, etc.)...

...A prayer for telling and teaching (Psalm 19:11-14)

When I took required classes in Bible and in religion at college, the professor always began the class with prayer. The same was true in the classes I attended at the seminary level. When I became a teacher and pastor, I began my biblical classes the same way. *Most often I used verse 14 of this psalm as the opening prayer.

Considering Psalm 19 as a whole indicates that it deals with essential themes of biblical faith. The psalm tells of nature's praise of God the Creator (vv. 1-5). It also affirms trust in God the Forgiver (v. 12) and rock-solid Redeemer (v. 14). Finally, the psalm offers an invitation to lead a life directed by God's *torah* or teaching (vv. 7-10). This final verse of the psalm remains an appropriate prayer for meditating on God's book of nature, or God's book of Scripture."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2297 James Limburg Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a; RCL, the same reading(1 Corinthians 12:31b – 13:13; RCL, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

"This passage belongs to the discussion "about spiritual gifts", which began in 12:1. It is clear from the way our passage starts that it continues that discussion. It does so by focusing on unity. Claims to spiritual gifts had lead to disunity in Corinth. Paul is not denying the claims to have spiritual gifts, but he is seriously undermining the assumption that if one has such spiritual gifts one is spiritual. On the contrary gifts can be used inappropriately. That includes: divisively. When that occurs, such abilities generated by people's (original) openness to the Spirit, become the enemy of the gospel. By driving a wedge between people's gifts and their ultimate source Paul is able to call people to account whose spirituality is divisive. Next week we shall see that he does this by identifying a higher criterion: love. Whatever does not embody and reflect love is not Christian spirituality according to Paul.

In our passage Paul employs a common image used to understand both the way the world works and the way communities work: the human body. 12:12 is interesting for the way it ends. Having stated that the body is one despite having many parts, he declares not that this is an illustration of the church, but states simply: "so also is Christ". Christ is a body with many members. We are often more familiar with the later use of the image in Colossians and Ephesians according to which Christ is the head and the church is the rest of the body. That is not what Paul is saying here. Here he states that Christ is the body.."

- <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/CEpEpiphany3.htm> Revd Emeritus
Professor William R. G. Loader, Emeritus Professor at [Murdoch University](#), Australia

One Body with Many Members

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves^[a] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts,^[b] yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

- a. [1 Corinthians 12:13](#) “In New Testament times, a *doulos* is often best described as a “bondservant” — that is, as someone bound to serve his master for a specific (usually lengthy) period of time, but also as someone who might nevertheless own property, achieve social advancement, and even be released or purchase his freedom.”
- b. [1 Corinthians 12:20](#) Or *members*; also verse [22](#)

“That’s what St. Paul is saying here in our text. God has been at work in you, to lead you to faith in Christ Jesus your Lord. This happens through the ministry of the gospel, the good news of what God has done for us in our Savior, Jesus Christ. In your baptism, the Holy Spirit created in you the gift of faith, and since then, the Spirit has been nourishing your faith, through preaching and teaching and receiving the Sacrament. This is how the Spirit works, through the means of grace, to build you up in your most holy faith.

Apart from this ministry of the Spirit, you would have no faith, you would not know Christ, and you would still be stuck in your sins... And then the Spirit comes and preaches Christ to us. The Spirit works this faith in us, so that we trust in Jesus for our salvation, and not in ourselves. Thanks be to God!

And the Spirit also brings us into this community of faith called the church. "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." Yes, you were baptized into the body of Christ...

And in this body of Christ, each of us has a part to play. "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." The Spirit has gifted each one of us in a way to serve the common good, to serve the purpose of the church as a whole. Everyone is needed. If one is missing or is not doing their part, the whole body suffers. But when each one is engaged and involved and doing what God has equipped them to do, then the body is built up and strengthened and functions that much better...

Everyone is needed. No one is left out. Each of us has a part to play. Your pastor may be the mouth, at least up here in the pulpit, but you can use your mouth too, out there among your friends and neighbors and family. "You can tell the love of Jesus, you can say he died for all." ...

The love of Christ, demonstrated in acts of kindness: That's what happens in the body of Christ, in our life together...

Now all of this needs to be coated and saturated with love. Love is like the lubricant that keeps the parts of the body fluid and functioning smoothly. Otherwise, without love, at the joints, the bones will rub against one another and there will be friction. We don't need that. It's hard enough being a Christian congregation in a world and a culture that is hostile to Christianity. We don't need the church fighting within itself, biting and devouring one another, and spreading negative talk. That only weighs us down and dispirits us. It is not helpful. Constructive criticism, yes, wrapped in love. But tearing down one another and tearing down our congregation, no. All of us must examine our hearts and the use of our tongue, confess our sins, repent, receive God's forgiveness, and ask God's help to do better..."

<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2016/01/life-and-love-in-the-body-of-christ-sermon-on-1-corinthians-121-1313-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Pastor Charles Henrickson

Luke 4:16-30; RCL, Luke 4:14-21(Luke 4:31-44; RCL, Luke 4:21-30)

"Our text is the Gospel from Luke chapter 4. Jesus is speaking in the synagogue at Nazareth, and in a way, we can call it his inaugural address. For Jesus has just recently been inaugurated into his office as the Messiah. When was that, you say? At his baptism, which we read about in Luke chapter 3. Yes, at his baptism, Jesus was publicly authorized and affirmed to take up his office as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ. The Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove, showing that God's anointing, favor, choice, blessing, and power were resting on just this one, Jesus of Nazareth. And the Father's voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." This divine attestation was as though Jesus were being inaugurated into his office, to bring in the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

And so here in Luke 4, we hear Jesus saying what this will look like. What will Jesus' ministry as the Messiah entail? What does he intend to do? What are his plans and priorities? Jesus tells us, in very direct and succinct terms. And he quotes Scripture to do so:...

“And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”

Well, there it is. Jesus tells us straight out what he plans to do...”

➤ <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2016/01/jesus-inauqural-address-sermon-on-luke-416-30-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Pastor Charles Henrickson

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 4th Chapter”

Jesus Begins His Ministry

¹⁴ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” [Cited from Isa. 61:1, 2](#)

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, ***“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*** ²² And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” ²³ And he said to them, ***“Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘‘Physician, heal yourself.’’ What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.”*** ²⁴ And he said, ***“Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶ and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers^[a] in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”*** ²⁸ When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. ³⁰ But passing through their midst, he went away.

- a. [Luke 4:27](#) *Leprosy* was a term for several skin diseases; see [Leviticus 13](#)

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

“To be honest with you, I have to say that I don’t envy Jesus. I’ve preached at my home congregation, and it can be rough; not this rough, mind you, but bad enough

...these people *know* you, and so it’s hard to preach, because familiarity..., well, you know. The funny thing is, though, that no matter how much they know, no matter how much they’ve seen or remember, they’re usually terribly, terribly gracious, just glad to have you home, pleased that you’ve made good, proud of your accomplishment.

And that’s pretty much the way it starts out in today’s reading. Jesus has come home; he’s preaching to a crowd of people who’ve known him since he was just knee high; and they are pleased, and proud, and gracious... By all accounts it’s a beautiful scene. So what goes wrong? How does this tender little homecoming turn suddenly so ugly.

I hate to say this, but I kind of think it’s Jesus’ fault. Because right in the middle of all their pride and praise, he just goes off...

Let’s not forget that he’s just finished reading Isaiah’s prophecy of a year of favor, of Jubilee, when the blind find sight, the captives release, the oppressed relief, and all the poor of this world consolation. And, lest we be mistaken about the direction Jesus is heading in, it’s just as important to note what he doesn’t read. Because Isaiah goes on, you see, telling of that day when the Lord will trample down all Israel’s enemies, crush them underfoot and restore Israel to its rightful place. But no, Jesus doesn’t read that part. He’s not thinking locally, you see, but globally, and this isn’t a nationalistic sermon, but one in which he declares that God loves *all* the world and has a special concern for the poor.

And so for this to come true, there’s going to need to be some changes...

This is what Jesus is talking about, and the home crowd doesn’t get it. So Jesus gets mad, drives his point home, and this time they do get it, so clearly, in fact, they’re ready to get him...

You see, it really is all Jesus’ fault – he goes and does the one thing you’re never supposed to do, even to strangers, let alone to friends and neighbors: He tells them the truth, the truth about their pettiness and prejudice, their fear and shame, their willingness, even eagerness, to get ahead at any cost, even at the expense of another. And so they want him gone in the most permanent of ways.

And let’s face it; that’s pretty much the way it usually is. Because this text, and Luke’s whole gospel for that matter, isn’t about Jews or Romans, it isn’t about Nazarenes or Jerusalemites. No, it’s about every race and nationality, about all the crowds of every time and place who, when they meet one who tells them the truth about themselves, will go to almost any length to silence the messenger...

And so here we are, at the very outset of Jesus’ ministry, and already we see how it’s going to come out. Because while Jesus somehow gets away today, later on they’ll catch up with him. They’ll listen a little longer, get a little madder, and then lay their hands on him and nail him to the cross.”

- <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1772> David Lose Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.



- *Agnus Day* appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>

“If ... people should ask you to bring them the word of God, bring it. Bless God. Let others help you break it down so that all can understand. And when God's law accuses and convicts, remind the people that the day they choose to listen to God's word is a holy day of rejoicing. Your strength is the joy of the Lord.

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=496 Anathea Portier-Young, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC

“...At a church conference a while back I saw a T-shirt that captured the good news of our text. The front of the T-shirt, the side people read as they approach, said, “I don’t go to church.” On the back, the side you read when you turn around after passing that provocative message, it said, “I am the church.” Church is not a place to go. It is a people on the go. Church is what I am. I am part of the Body of Christ...”

- https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-3c/?type=the_lectionary_psalms Author: Stan Mast

“...Ezra the priest stops reading. He lifts his heavy eyes and looks to the side, seeing nothing. So elegant the words he has just read – so elemental, embracing the whole world – yet to Nehemiah it seems that the priest is bearing a burden greater than any his camels have ever borne. How cavernous are the minds of the scribes of God! How much must they carry in memory....Suddenly Nehemiah realizes that Ezra need not read the words in order to know them. The Book of Moses lives whole within him. He sees all the words and all the Laws in a single glance, as from a high mountain. And though the congregation is receiving the story sentence by sentence, for Ezra the priest every sentence contains the entire story from beginning to end.

**Yet, he reads. He reads because he loves the words themselves,
and to read each is to honor it...”**

The Book of God Walter Wangerin, Jr. Zondervan Publishing House, copyright 1996