

## 3rd Sunday of Easter May 5, 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.*

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### Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
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- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 1:00pm (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VoiRGKXoic>

### Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 483 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed

“With high delight let us unite”

This hymn was written by George Vetter (Or Strey) in the mid to late 1500's. It was not translated into English until Martin H. Franzmann (1907-1976) added it to his list of hymns translated and written. It first appears in the Worship Supplement as hymn #734 in 1969.

- [https://hymnary.org/text/with\\_high\\_delight\\_let\\_us\\_unite](https://hymnary.org/text/with_high_delight_let_us_unite)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=294h6Y7MLcs> Sing along to a voice and piano accompaniment.
- <https://www.cph.org/p-30594-With-High-Delight-Let-Us-Unite-Gehring.aspx> "...This setting of MIT FREUDEN ZART by Philip Gehring is an Easter mini-cantata for unison or two-part voices and keyboard. The first stanza is an aria, the voices singing the unadorned melody with imitative counterpoint in the accompaniment; the second stanza is set as a recitative; and the third is the chorale with a descant..."

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  
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**1<sup>st</sup> Reading – “...confounded the Jews ...by proving that Jesus was the Christ.”**

**Psalm – “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing”**

**Epistle – “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain”**

**Gospel – “*Follow me*”**

**Acts 9:1-22; RCL, Acts 9:1-6, (7-20) (Next week: Acts 20:17-35; RCL, Acts 36-43)**

*...The first time we hear about Saul (7:58), Luke tells us that he was standing guard over the coats of those who would execute Stephen in brutal fashion. But he's not just a passive witness. No, he "approved of their killing him" (8:1a). Moreover, Stephen's is not the only Christian life whose taking he has approved. As we move to chapter 8, Saul's portrait as arch-persecutor is only enhanced as Acts recounts that "ravaging the church ... dragging off both men and women," he shut them all behind bars. And then Luke turns to the impact of these persecutions; leaving the reader for a moment wondering what role this Saul might play in this story.*

*Of course, Acts was written by a Christian for other Christians. That is, Luke's readers know who this Saul is; they know what turns his life will take. In short, they and we know how the movie ends! But by introducing him in this way, Luke establishes the dramatic u-turn Saul's life is about to take. In doing so, he draws a portrait of calling that continues to shape how we understand God's graceful but not always subtle or easy pull on our lives..."*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1624](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1624)  
 Eric Barreto Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament, Princeton  
 Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.

## The Conversion of Saul

9 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.<sup>4</sup> And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”<sup>5</sup> And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.<sup>6</sup> But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”<sup>7</sup> The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.<sup>8</sup> Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.<sup>9</sup> And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup> Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”<sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,<sup>12</sup> and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.”<sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.”<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.<sup>16</sup> For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”<sup>17</sup> So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>18</sup> And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;<sup>19</sup> and taking food, he was strengthened.

### Saul Proclaims Jesus in Synagogues

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.<sup>20</sup> And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”<sup>21</sup> And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?”<sup>22</sup> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

John Holbert takes a quick look at the three Biblical references to Saul’s conversion. “...I do not mean that there is no real history here. After all, Paul himself in several of his letters

points again and again to the story of his conversion, and there is no reason at all to believe that Paul is making all that up as some sort of self-serving fable. However, even a cursory examination of the many places where this story is told will demonstrate several obvious differences in those tellings.

Without showing all the differences, let's look at one famous one. In the direct narrative account in Acts 9, those who accompany Saul to Damascus experience Saul's conversion as follows: "they heard the voice but saw nothing" (Acts 9:7). But when Paul recounts the scene in chapter 22:9 in Jerusalem he says, "Those who were with me saw the light but they did not hear the one speaking to me," exactly contradicting what Luke told us in chapter 9. Then again at Acts 26:13, Paul, now defending himself before Agrippa, says, "I saw a light shining on me from heaven." And after "all had fallen on the ground, I heard a voice." The implication appears to be that the light fell on all, but the voice only sounded for Saul alone...

Rather than argue about which of the accounts of Paul's conversion is "accurate" in some historical sense, why not pay attention to the wonderful ways that the tale itself is actually told? After all, it is the story itself that has been the source of countless conversions to the Way, rather than some provable historical kernel of truth. Read the story then and tell it with passion and joy and conviction. There will be a soul or two within the sound of your voice who will hear it with gladness and may find in its depths a call on their own lives for change and new possibility."

- <https://www.patheos.com/progressive-christian/cracked-pot-saul-john-holbert-04-01-2013.aspx?p=2> John C. Holbert... has been a local church pastor in Louisiana, professor of religion at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, and was Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology, where he joined the faculty in 1979. He retired from this faculty position in May, 2012.

"...The importance of Saul's conversion can hardly be overestimated. Three times in the Book of Acts it is reported, the first time in the third person ("he") by Luke ([Acts 9:1-31](#)), the second time in the first person ("I") by the apostle, as he spoke to his Jewish unbelieving brethren in defense of his ministry ([Acts 22:1-21](#)), and the third time, again in the first person, as his personal testimony to King Agrippa, Festus, and Bernice ([Acts 26:1-23](#)). This three-fold repetition is a clear indication of the importance of this event, especially in the themes Luke is seeking to develop in the Book of Acts.

It is not just in the Book of Acts that the importance of Saul's conversion is evident. On various occasions in his epistles, Paul made either direct or indirect references to his former life of opposition and his radical conversion.<sup>132</sup> Paul's theology, his lifestyle, his ministry, and his methodology, all are rooted in his conversion. This text portrays one of the historical landmarks of the church..."

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/conversion-saul-acts-9-31> This entire document is worth looking at for many aspects of the story of Saul/Paul's conversion

**Psalm 30; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 23; RCL, the same reading)**

*“For centuries, Christians have found the book of Psalms to be a powerful resource for all dimensions of life -- the highs, the lows, and all the places in between.*

*The two dominant kinds of psalms are laments and psalms of praise, reflecting the lows and highs of life. Most of the psalms in the first part of the book are laments, but these prayers usually end on a hopeful note. That hope is sometimes expressed as a promise or vow of praise.*

*Psalm 30 is a fine example of a text that fulfills such a vow. It is a classic psalm of thanksgiving where the speaker declares or narrates to the congregation what God has done to deliver him/her from crisis. The Hebrew term for this kind of psalm is *todah*, a song that confesses how God has acted to deliver. In poetic form, the psalm tells a story of thanksgiving; it narrates the divine action of deliverance that has brought forth praise.*

*The structure of Psalm 30 tells the story:*

- *Verses 1-5 state the intention to give praise and thanksgiving to God.*
- *Verses 6-11 tell the story of the crisis (verses 6-7), the prayer (verses 8-10), and the deliverance (verse 11).*
- *Verse 12 renews the promise of thanksgiving...*

➤ [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=336](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=336) *W. H. Bellinger, Jr.* W. Marshall and Lulie Craig Chairholder in Bible, Baylor University, Waco, Texas

### **Joy Comes with the Morning**

***A Psalm of David. A song at the dedication of the temple.***

30 I will extol **you**, O LORD, for **you** have drawn me up  
and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

<sup>2</sup> O LORD my God, I cried to **you** for help,  
and **you** have healed me.

<sup>3</sup> O LORD, you have brought up my soul  
from Sheol;  
**you** restored me to life from among those  
who go down to the pit.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints,  
and give thanks to his holy name.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For his anger is but for a moment,  
and his favor is for a lifetime.<sup>[c]</sup>  
Weeping may tarry for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning.

<sup>6</sup> As for me, I said in my prosperity,  
“I shall never be moved.”

<sup>7</sup> By your favor, O LORD,  
**you** made my mountain stand strong;  
**you** hid your face;  
I was dismayed.

<sup>8</sup> To **you**, O LORD, I cry,  
and to the Lord I plead for mercy:

<sup>9</sup> “What profit is there in my death,<sup>[d]</sup>  
if I go down to the pit?<sup>[e]</sup>

Will the dust praise **you**?  
Will it tell of your faithfulness?

<sup>10</sup> Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me!  
O LORD, be my helper!”

<sup>11</sup> **You** have turned for me my mourning into  
dancing;

**you** have loosed my sackcloth  
and clothed me with gladness,

<sup>12</sup> that my glory may sing your praise and  
not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give thanks to  
**you** forever!

- a. [Psalm 30:3](#) Or to life, that I should not go down to the pit
- b. [Psalm 30:4](#) Hebrew to the memorial of his holiness (see [Exodus 3:15](#))
- c. [Psalm 30:5](#) Or and in his favor is life
- d. [Psalm 30:9](#) Hebrew in my blood
- e. [Psalm 30:9](#) Or to corruption

“Psalm 30 is a song of thanksgiving. That label is appropriate for **two reasons**.

**First**, and most generally, gratitude for God’s deliverance is the psalm’s dominant theme. In nearly every line the psalmist either expresses thanks and praise for God’s deliverance or describes the circumstances of that deliverance.

**Second**, the language of the psalm is related to descriptions of the thanksgiving offering. The psalm ends with a term translated “I will give thanks” (verse 12) that refers in some other contexts to a ceremony of thanksgiving. The verb used here derives from the same root as the term for “thanksgiving offering” (Leviticus 7:12). Similar language appears in passages that portray such a ritual of thanks (see Jeremiah 33:11). Hence, Psalm 30 is a full expression of praise and it was likely composed as part of a larger offering of gratitude that included tangible signs of thanksgiving.

Psalm 30 is cast as the prayer of an individual, which is fitting if it served as the liturgy that accompanied the thanksgiving offering. But the superscription identifies the psalm with a communal event, “the dedication of the temple.” Rabbinic tradition links the psalm specifically to the Feast of Dedication that recalls the cleansing and restoration of the temple after Antiochus IV Epiphanes defiled it (see 1 Maccabees 4:52; 2 Maccabees 10). Nothing in the psalm suggests that event was the specific occasion of its composition...”

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1689](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1689) [Jerome Creach](#) Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn.

### **Revelation 5:(1-7) 8-14; RCL, Revelation 5:11-14 (Revelation 7:9-17; RCL, the same reading)**

*“...Revelation 5 helps us ask--and answer--a lifelong question, "Who is Jesus?"*

*The setting for the answer given by John the Seer is heaven. Following the letters to the seven churches (chapters 3-4), Revelation shifts in 4:1 to heaven. In the fourth chapter, John's vision centers on God's throne and on praise to God. While chapter five is also a vision of heaven, the chapter begins on a note that is several octaves below the high point reached at the end of chapter 4. God in 5:1 holds a scroll sealed with seven seals. An angel searches for someone who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals, but no one is found who is worthy. If the seals are never broken, God's plan for the defeat of evil and the full coming of God's reign will never happen.*

*So, John appropriately breaks into tears. At that point an elder tells him to stop weeping, because the Lion of Judah has conquered and is worthy (verses 2-5). John turns to see the lion, but what he sees instead is "a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered" (verse 6). The Lamb goes to the throne and takes the scroll. The elders immediately fall before him and worship...”*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=567](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=567) *Walter F. Taylor, Jr.* Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor of New Testament Studies, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

## The Scroll and the Lamb

*5 Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."*

*6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying,*

“Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.”

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!”

<sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,


“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

“...The focus of Revelation 4 was **the throne**. Here, John begins with reference to the throne, but now shifted his focus to the **scroll** held by the enthroned Lord.

**Written inside and on the back:** This means that this scroll was unusual. It wasn't common practice to write on both sides of the scroll. This means that whatever information was on this scroll, there was a lot of it – almost more than the scroll can contain...

**Sealed with seven seals:** When a roll was finished, it was fastened with strings and the strings were sealed with wax at the knots. This scroll was **sealed with seven seals**; there were seven strings around the scroll, each string sealed with wax... These were not seven writings each separated by a seal; but seven seals all set upon one scroll. All the seals must be opened before the scroll could be read...

**A scroll written:** Through the centuries, commentators suggest many different ideas for what this **scroll** is, and what was **written** upon it. It's important to remember that whatever was on this scroll, no one except Jesus was (and is) worthy to open it ([Revelation 5:3-4](#) )...

The best solution is to see the scroll as “God's will, his final settlement of the affairs of the universe.” (Barclay) This is based on the idea that customarily, under Roman law, wills were sealed with seven seals, each from a witness to the validity of the will...

**In the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll:** Remember the emphasis is not on the *content* of the scroll, but on its *seals* and the *One* who is worthy to take it...

**Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth:** Even though the marks of His sacrifice were evident, the Lamb was not presented as an object of pity. He also bore the marks of omnipotence (**seven horns**) and omniscience (**seven eyes**). What a figure! A slain Lamb, who has the marks of omniscience and omnipotence!...

Throughout the Scriptures, **eyes** suggest knowledge and wisdom, and **horns** suggest power. This **Lamb** has knowledge, wisdom, and power fulfilled perfectly: **seven horns and seven eyes...**”

- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-5/> ©2019 David Guzik David Guzik is the pastor of [Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara](#).
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZoxsWl7-XA> Of course it's best if sung along to Handel's **Messiah**.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew8ig612NQc&list=RDEw8ig612NQc&start\\_radio=1&t=50](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew8ig612NQc&list=RDEw8ig612NQc&start_radio=1&t=50) of course if you want to include the **“Amen”** it takes a little while longer.

**John 21:1-14 (15-19); RCL, John 21:1-19 (John 10:22-30; RCL, the .**

*“Mark rings down the curtain on his Gospel before a single human being has as yet shared the news of the resurrection. That was sufficiently frustrating to some in church history that they tacked on a few more verses both to try to spice things up a bit and round the Gospel of Mark off a little better.*



*Luke gives us a memorable post-resurrection story on the Road to Emmaus that happened yet that first Easter day but then rather swiftly fast-forwards to an exceedingly brief account of the ascension 40 days later.*

*Matthew gives us just a handful of verses but you don't really notice how little Matthew gives following the resurrection on account of his presenting the soaring words we now call "The Great Commission." Still, that's all Matthew has post-Easter.*

*Not to put too fine a point on it but the Synoptic Gospels are mighty thin on saying anything about Jesus once he showed up as a living presence again after Easter. I have always found that dearth of post-Easter narrative striking. Of course we ultimately have the Book of Acts to fill in a ton of blanks for us but still . . . the Gospels mostly end a little too soon in some ways.*

*Then again, the only thing that strikes me even more than the absence of post-Easter stories in the Synoptics is the presence of what John does include. After all, in terms of reporting words or events that took place after that first Easter Sunday, Matthew contains 5 verses, Mark contains 0 verses, and Luke contains 4 verses. John contains 33 verses, including one brief story that happened 1 week after the resurrection ("Doubting" Thomas's encounter with Jesus) and then an entire chapter of something that happened at an unspecified post-Easter time (but that happened presumably some weeks later into the 40 days between Easter and Ascension).*

*John wins hands down in terms of the post-Easter Jesus. And yet look at what he gives us: Jesus tending a campfire on a beach!*

*Look, Jesus didn't have to shake up the whole world and all its powers and authorities within the first 12-18 hours of his returning to life but all these weeks later the last place I'd expect to find the resurrected Lord of lords and King of kings hanging around is an isolated stretch of beach and the last thing I'd expect to find him doing in that remote place is frying fish and cooking biscuits...*

➤ [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-3c/?type=the\\_lectionary\\_gospel](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-3c/?type=the_lectionary_gospel) Scott Hoezee

## **"The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 21th Chapter"**

### **Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples**

21 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, "**Children, do you have any fish?**" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "**Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.**" So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. <sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved

therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.<sup>8</sup> The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards<sup>[a]</sup> off.

<sup>9</sup> When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, **“Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.”** <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, **“Come and have breakfast.”** Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

## Jesus and Peter

<sup>15</sup> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, **“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”** He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, **“Feed my lambs.”** <sup>16</sup> He said to him a second time, **“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”** He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, **“Tend my sheep.”** <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, **“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”** Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, **“Feed my sheep.”** <sup>18</sup> **Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.”** <sup>19</sup> (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, **“Follow me.”**

- a. [John 21:8](#) Greek *two hundred cubits*; a *cubit* was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters

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

“What strikes me, however, is how Jesus in this scene offers Peter what many modern psychologists contend **every one of us needs: a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.**

**First, a sense of belonging.** We all need to feel accepted by a larger group in order to have a stable identity and sense of self. This goes against what may seem like common sense – after all, our culture regularly posits that identity is an individual affair, something we carve out for ourselves and by ourselves. But it turns out that the gift of identity is given to us by those around us, as we see ourselves through the eyes of those closest to us. And, just so we’re not confused, belonging is different than fitting in. Indeed, it is the exact opposite (as many of us will remember from adolescence!). Fitting in is changing yourself to be acceptable to the group,

whereas belonging is being found acceptable by your group just as you are. We all need to belong.

In this scene, Jesus asks Peter three times whether he loves him. Three times. Imagine if someone you care about asked whether you really love him/her not once, not twice, but three times. Painful. And Peter is, indeed, hurt by this repetition. I suspect that only later did it sink in that Jesus is not testing Peter but reinstating him to the community of believers by allowing him to confess faith the same number of times he denied faith earlier. Jesus is drawing Peter back into a community to which he belongs and accepts him for whom he is.

**Second, we all need a sense of purpose**, the belief that what we do matters, that if we did not show up people would notice. Purpose, as it turns out, is one of the great motivators in the world. More powerful than money or fame or power, believing that you have something of value to contribute draws us again and again into challenging circumstances with joy.

And so in response to each of Peter's confessions, Jesus responds by giving him good work to do: feed my sheep. Be a leader. Look out for these others. Devote yourself to this community. Peter is reinstated into the community of the faithful and given a sense of belonging, and then he is given good work to do and given a purpose..."

- <http://www.davidlose.net/2016/04/easter-3-c-two-things-everyone-needs/> David Lose

And what about Chapter 21? Is it an add on? Written by a different person? Why ask the question in the first place?

Last week's reading ended with Chapter 20:30-31 which sounds like it was the end.

### **"The Purpose of This Book**

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup>but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Many of the commentators make reference to the possibility. Here is one approach to defining the question:

"Looking at chapter 21, many scholars argue that it was written by another hand. One of the reasons for this is that it seems as though chapter 21 does not follow neatly from chapter 20. In addition to the fact that the 20:30-31 seems to tie up the Gospel narrative in such a way as to conclude the Gospel, some have argued that chapter 21 also seems detached from what has come before it... John Breck lays out the most common reasons given in support of this line of thought:

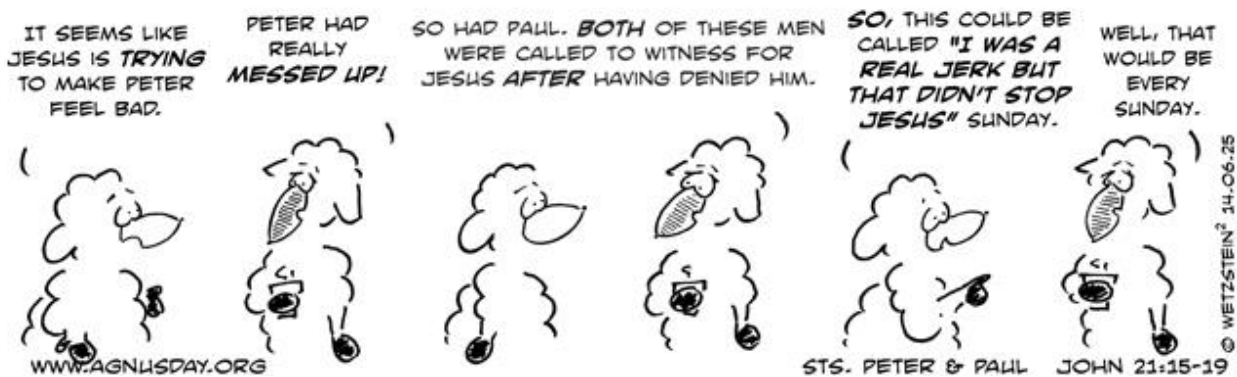
1. The epilogue in chapter 20:30-31 serves as an apparent conclusion, as mentioned above.
2. Chapter 21 does not show us the disciples setting out on the mission given to them by Jesus in chapter 20--rather than going out to evangelize, the apostles go fishing.
3. Whereas chapter 20 called for believing without seeing, chapter 21 seems to emphasize the importance of seeing and believing.
4. There is a reference to "we" in John 21:24, which most see as an indication of later redactional work.

5. 5. Chapter 21 seems to focus on concerns of the Church--addressing issues of the later Christian community.
6. 6. Some of the themes developed in chapter 21 are only found in places in the Gospel where scholars believe later interpolations have been introduced.
7. 7. Chapter 21 contains language and stylistic elements not found elsewhere in the Gospel..."

<http://www.thesacredpage.com/2007/03/john-21-later-addition-or-epilogue.html>

Perhaps what is more important is the conclusion many also come to with comments like: "This chapter of John is likely an addendum written by another, but the questions of its origin should not keep us from the richness of the images." ([Karyn Wiseman](#), Associate Professor of Homiletics) or "According to Gerard S. Sloyan, the text is almost certainly a later addition, written in the Johannine tradition, but not in the hand of John... Impostor or the real thing? According to Sloyan, the center of gravity for this text appears in Jesus' command, repeated twice: "Follow me" (John 21:19b, 22b).<sup>4</sup> "The great matter," according to Sloyan, "is to give the witness required: truthful, faithful witness..." ([Robert Hoch](#) Pastor, First & Franklin Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Md)

Your thoughts?



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"...The Lord is willing to do almost whatever it takes to get people's attention. So we save both God and ourselves a lot of time and energy if we just pay attention to the Lord right away. C.S. Lewis was among the most famous Christian authors of the twentieth century. He, however, initially paid virtually no attention to the Lord. Lewis was, in fact, a virulent opponent of Christianity until God graciously got his attention in 1931. He later called his conversion the result of "the steady, unrelenting approach of him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet..."

➤ [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-3c/?type=old\\_testament\\_lectionary](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-3c/?type=old_testament_lectionary) Doug Bratt