

First Sunday in Lent

March 5, 2017

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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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

March 2, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

*(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting,
a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.*

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<http://www.slideshare.net/fergie4/sermon-slide-deck-dealing-with-temptation-matthew-6513>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 656/657 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 262

“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

This is a well know hymn. Consider how this mother “hears” it. [Kmac4him1 year ago](#)
 “As a military mom, I realized there are many many armed with "cruel hate", one that we can't even understand and it is pointed towards our soldiers as they defend our freedom. I know my son often shared that with me about how it just baffled him that people could hate so much and not even know you. He used to get so tired of being shot at every single day when he was "in theater". I guess their hatred is not ours to understand, what we need to know is a great age old wisdom that is in this song. Be blessed today all you military families and soldiers continually sacrificing and fighting to defend our freedom and protect our liberty. We owe you a debt we can never repay.”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNeP7bGagqg>

Enjoy several different versions of this hymn;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqczaaFQpVQ> “3,000 Men Singing "A Mighty Fortress..."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2BzsNe4V2s> “National Day of Mourning Service at the National Cathedral on 09/14/2001”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no8b4X2pX3o> “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God arr. V. Nelybel - Diane Bish”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDI-Bqn0Jfg> “A Mighty Fortress is Our God Immanuel Orchestra 내주는강한 임마누엘관현악단 전두필”(Korea)

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by
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**Genesis 3:1-21; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), Genesis 9:8-17 (Next Week:
 Genesis 12:1-9; RCL, Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16)**

“From the beginning of this scene -- before we arrive at the articulated differences between God and the humans -- we hear an astonishing aspect of their relationship. The first sentence tells us that the Lord God walks in the garden. God has come to the place where people are living. It is a pleasant scene in which God walks in the evening breeze without a hint of what seems a bitter denunciation to come. God seeking-out-creation governs the action.

The story then gives us a number of pithy theological questions to ponder. Since God seems not to know where the humans are, does this mean God is not omniscient? When the human explains he was afraid because of his nakedness, does he not know that God will find this strange? How did the human even know there is something to fear in being naked?

God asks the sensible question: How did you know you should hide? Not waiting for an answer, God drives immediately to the suspicion that the knowledge of good and evil has come into the human: "Have you eaten from the tree...?" ...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1285 [Melinda Quivik](#) *Liturgical and Homiletical Scholar, Houghton, Mich. (Dr Quivik is the General Editor for Liturgy, a print and online journal of The Liturgical Conference for pastors and scholars on topics related to worship. ELCA)*

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You^[a] shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,^[b] she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool^[c] of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”^[d]¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring^[e] and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to^[f] your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;
 in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread,
 till you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 for you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.^[g]

²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

- a. [Genesis 3:1](#) In Hebrew *you* is plural in verses [1–5](#)
- b. [Genesis 3:6](#) Or *to give insight*
- c. [Genesis 3:8](#) Hebrew *wind*
- d. [Genesis 3:9](#) In Hebrew *you* is singular in verses [9](#) and [11](#)
- e. [Genesis 3:15](#) Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis
- f. [Genesis 3:16](#) Or *shall be toward* (see [4:7](#))
- g. [Genesis 3:20](#) *Eve* sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the word for *living*

...”In the preceding chapter, we were taught the manner in which man was created on the sixth day; that he was created in the image and after the likeness of God, that his will was good and perfect, and that his reason or intellect was also perfect, so that whatsoever God willed or said, that man also willed, believed and understood. And this knowledge was necessarily accompanied by the knowledge of all other creatures, etc.

For wherever the perfect knowledge of God is, there must also be, of necessity, the perfect knowledge of other things, which are inferior to God. This original state of things shows how horrible the fall of Adam and Eve was, by which we have lost all that most beautifully and gloriously illumined reason, and all that will which was wholly conformed to the Word and will of God...”

http://www.martinluthersermons.com/luthergenesis_chap3.pdf is a long dissertation by Martin Luther on this chapter.

Psalm 32:1-7; RCL, Psalm 25:1-10 (Psalm 121; RCL, Psalm 22:23-31)

“Who knew? The ancient psalmist was a clinical therapist, saying in effect, “Don’t hold in your pain, or it will eat you alive!”

The author of Psalm 32 had discovered this modern truth long ago and acknowledged it to those around him: “While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long” (verse 3). His is a kind of teaching testimony, contrasting this deadly silence with the life-giving release of giving voice to honest confession. Note the deliberate move from “I kept silence...” (verse 3) to “I said...” (verse 5)...”

(continued after reading)

Blessed Are the Forgiven
A Maskil^a of David.

- 32 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
- ² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- ³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
- ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up^b as by the heat of summer. *Selah*
- ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*
- ⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.
- ⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*

Continues through verse 11.

- a. [Psalm 32:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 32:4](#) Hebrew *my vitality was changed*

"...Psalm 32 is one of the seven "penitential psalms" of the early church (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143), psalms so categorized because they were seen as particularly appropriate for the developing Christian emphasis on individual sin and forgiveness. The designation is useful so long as it does not overlook the Old Testament's emphasis on the relation of body and soul, person and world.

Commentators have suggested a late date for Psalm 32, in part because of its movement from a particular expression of confession and forgiveness to a more generalized teaching. My experience, says the psalmist, leads me to say, "Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you" (verse 6); more, "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go" (verse 8). That teaching emphasis coupled with the opening beatitudes ("Happy are those...", verses 1-2) and the lumping together of what were once quite distinct terms for "sin" ("transgression," "sin," "iniquity") causes many to call Psalm 32 a "wisdom psalm," one of those psalms that reflect theologically, and practically on the breadth of human experience.

In fact, the psalm's message can be seen as an extended version of Proverbs 28:13, "No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy." It is well to remember that an appropriate faith response to such observations is always, "Yes, but..." True, things often

work this way, but they may not. Christian people should properly reflect on the truth of proverbial generalizations in the Bible and learn from them, but the value of the Psalter is the ability of the authors both to recognize those truths (as here in Psalm 32) and also to scream against them (as in Psalm 44:17-19).

Especially for the pastoral counselor and preacher, generalities will not work. Prior to Psalm 32's generalizations was a particular story of terror and healing. Today's proclaimers of the psalm will want to ask what is particular about *this* day, *this* experience, *this* person or *these* people I am called to address."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1824 [Fred Gaiser](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Professor James Limburg has a different take on this Psalm – "Psalm 32 makes its own contribution to this theme of happiness. The theme is important for the psalm; the word "happy" (again as here in Hebrew) appears twice, in verses 1 and 2. And the Psalm ends on a positive note with a call to be glad, to rejoice and even to shout for joy (verse 11)." He includes the "left out verses". Read his commentary at

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=736 [James Limburg](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn

Romans 5:12-19; RCL, 1 Peter 3:18-22 (Romans 4:1-8, 13-17; RCL, Romans 4:13-25)

"...In Romans 1:18—3:20, Paul addressed the issue of sin. Then, in 3:21—5:11, he taught us of God's grace. Now, in 5:12-19, he relates sin and grace in the stories of two men—Adam and Christ. Beginning with chapter 6, he will help us to understand the practical implications of Christ's work—will outline what it means to be united with Christ in baptism—will tell us how that affects our lives..."

<https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/romans-512-19>

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

¹²Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men^[a] because all sinned—¹³for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

¹⁸Therefore, as one trespass^[b] led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness^[c] leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

- a. [Romans 5:12](#) The Greek word *anthropoi* refers here to both men and women; also twice in verse [18](#)
- b. [Romans 5:18](#) Or *the trespass of one*

c. [Romans 5:18](#) *Or the act of righteousness of one*

“The Lenten readings of Paul's letter to the Romans begin with a summary.

While it may seem a bit strange to jump into this complex letter halfway through chapter 5, the text itself begins with a little phrase that is a major bridge between all that has gone before and the rest of the letter. Paul, preacher that he is, gives his hearers a cue. He essentially says, "Listen up now. I'm going to give you the basic picture of everything I've said so far."... For contemporary preachers to open up the main points of Paul's joyful summary of good news is a worthy task and more than enough for a sermon.

In the first line of the passage, verse 12, Paul states what would have been clear to his hearers, all humans sin and all of them die. These points are so obvious that one might wonder, "why bother saying it, Paul?" Paul seems to have had a couple of important reasons.

First, Paul here groups a number of terms that describe the present grim realities and experiences of human life

Second, Paul connects the sin and death of all people to one man, Adam, in order to connect the justification and gift of grace to all through one man, Jesus the Messiah...

Third, death is given a rich meaning... Death then is about more than the end of physical life, but about life apart from God and God's purpose. This becomes important when we get to the final triumphant claim that grace (we might simply say "God") is for eternal life, most fully understood. After picking up some side issues, important but not vital to the basics of what he wants to say, Paul comes back to his main summary again in verse 18. Here he begins with a phrase akin to "so then" or "so, now." He is taking up where he had left off and moving on with slightly different vocabulary to make his full point...In fact, the statement of this amazing reconciliation (cf. 5:10-11) or setting right is so unsystematic that it lacks verbs and subjects! Paul doesn't carve his statement in stone, but sketches it quickly, provocatively.

He continues this main thought in verse 19 where he uses language of obedience as parallel to the righteous deed of v. 18. It is the obedience of one man that counters the disobedience of the first...

Noting that the gift of Jesus' faithfulness and the grace of God is inexpressibly greater than Adam's original trespass, Paul finishes this unit with verse 21. It is clear that for Paul, verse 12 flows into 21 and is completed by it. Perhaps lectionary developers wanted to avoid the difficulties of verse 20 with its reference to the law... Unfortunately for us, verse 20 precedes the powerful conclusion to the passage. In verse 21 Paul again takes up the use of sin and death, here personified as rulers... But Paul corrects our impression based on experience with his assertion that it is grace that rules through that righteousness/justice for eternal life (the opposite of death as broadly understand from verse 12), because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The whole passage ends with the full invocation of the name, title, and relationship of Jesus to us. It is the flipping over of the apparent truth of verse 12 by God's mercy and God's fidelity to God's own promises and plan, enacted by Jesus. Each word reminds us of the powerful claim of this unit, that there is a Lord who is for life..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=29 [Sarah Henrich](#) *Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN*



“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 17th Chapter”
“Glory to You, O Lord”

Matthew 4:1-11; RCL Mark 1:9-15 (John 3:1-17; RCL, Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9)

“It is no accident that Jesus winds up in the wilderness after his baptism.

He is not lost, and he is not being punished for something he has done wrong (assumptions that people today sometimes make about their own "wilderness experiences"). He has been led by the Holy Spirit for a purpose: to be tempted or tested (the underlying Greek means both; Matt 4:1) by the devil. His scriptural debate with Diabolos functions as an assessment (or, perhaps, a proof) of his readiness as God's beloved Son (Matt 3:17) for the mission entrusted to him. He has the credentials and the authority for this mission, amply demonstrated in Matthew's Gospel by the genealogy and birth narrative. Now, through this wilderness test, Jesus stands squarely in the long history of the people of God even as his encounter with the devil points ahead to a future as yet unfolding before him...”

*https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=37 **Audrey West Adjunct**
*Professor of New Testament, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, IL**

The Temptation of Jesus (Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness – NIV)

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he answered, “***It is written,***

**“Man shall not live by bread alone,
 but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”**

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for **it is written,**

“He will command his angels concerning you,”

and

“On their hands they will bear you up,
 lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

7 Jesus said to him, “**Again it is written,** ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the

kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “**Be gone, Satan! *For it is written,***

**“You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.”**

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

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

Temptation, seduction, betrayal...

Taglines of a new Hollywood blockbuster? No, just an overview of the biblical readings appointed for the first Sunday in Lent! From the Genesis story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, through Paul's exploration of how Jesus functions as a "second Adam," to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, these readings cut to the chase of what it is to be human.

Matthew's Portrayal

Although four of the five Sundays in Lent in the year of Matthew are inexplicably made up of passages from John's gospel, Lent 1 draws us to Matthew's vivid portrayal of Jesus' temptation that sets the stage for much of what is to come in this gospel as well as the season of Lent.

While the temptation of Jesus is referenced in Mark briefly, the scene is considerably fleshed out in Luke and Matthew, suggesting a common source that each redacted to suit larger narrative purposes. Matthew, for instance, portrays Jesus as fasting as a righteous Jew should. He also has a different ordering of the Tempter's trials, placing the temptation to worship Satan as the culminating episode in the scene, one that calls for Jesus not just to reject the specific temptation, but the Tempter himself.

Taken together, the three rejected temptations not only demonstrate that Jesus is righteous according to the law but also prove his identity as God's divine and beloved son. Indeed, Satan's temptations get immediately to the core question of Jesus' identity, calling into question his relationship with God by beginning with the provocative, "*If* you are the Son of God...." This relationship, announced just verses early at his baptism, is now confirmed through Jesus' unswerving trust in God...

Individually, each temptation invites Jesus to turn away from trust in God in a different way. In the first, the devil invites Jesus to prove his sonship through a display of power; that is, by establishing his validity and worth through his own abilities. In the second, the temptation is to test God's fidelity. In the third -- more an out-and-out bribe than temptation -- Jesus is promised all the power and glory the earth can offer if he will give his allegiance and devotion to the Tempter. In each case, Jesus rejects the temptation and lodges his identity, future, and fortunes on God's character and trustworthiness.

Narrative Echoes

There is little question that the source Matthew and Luke depend upon has in mind the story of Israel's wandering in the wilderness. Jesus is in the wilderness for forty days, just as the Israelites were for forty years. When tested, Jesus replies with Scriptural affirmations taken from Old Testament passages referencing the time in the wilderness. In this sense, Jesus repeats the trials set

before Israel as he is about to commence his public ministry. Just as Israel emerged from their wanderings chastened, purified, and ready to inherit God's blessings and promises, so also Jesus emerges from his trials confirmed in his identity and purified and strengthened for his awaiting mission.

Where Israel wandered as punishment for mistrust, however, Jesus fasts and is tempted in order to prove his trust in God and thereby his trustworthiness for the journey ahead. In this way, this scene not only links Jesus to the past of his ancestors, it marks him as superior to them and ready to inaugurate a new era in the ongoing history of God and the people of God.

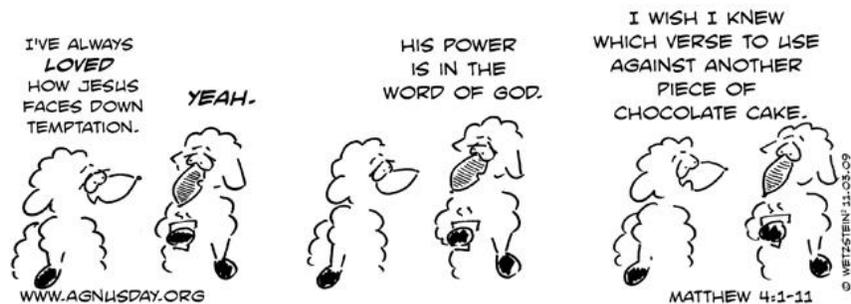
While this allusion to Israel's history provides an important launch pad for Matthew's story of Jesus, the lectionary suggests another Scriptural echo: the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve. In some ways, this may prove the more interesting connection as it gets to the core of what it means to be human.

Adam and Eve -- and it is crucial to note that while Eve is the one who speaks, both are present throughout the scene (Genesis 3:6) -- are similarly invited to mistrust God. Interestingly, the serpent doesn't actually lie to Adam and Eve -- they do not die; they do become more like God as God acknowledges. Rather, the serpent calls into question God's trustworthiness by suggesting that there is more to the story than God let on. In this way the serpent sows the seeds of mistrust, inviting Adam and Eve to fulfill the deep want and need that is at the core of being human not through their relationship with God but by seizing the fruit that is in front of them. It is the temptation to be self-sufficient, to establish their identity on their own, that seduces the first humans.

Identity is again the focus of the Tempter in the scene of Jesus' temptation. "If you are the Son of God," Satan begins. In other words, "How do you know you are God's Son?" Hence the core of the temptation: "Wouldn't it be better to know for certain? Turn stone to bread, jump from the Temple, worship me...and you will never know doubt again. You will know. You will be sufficient on your own." The temptation is the same, but Jesus responds by refusing to establish his own worth and identity on his own terms but instead remains dependent on God. Jesus knows *who* he is, that is, by remembering *whose* he is...

Perhaps faith, that is, doesn't do away with the hardships that are part and parcel of this life, but rather gives us the courage to stand amid them, not simply surviving but actually flourishing in and through Jesus, the one who was tempted as we are and thereby knows our struggles first hand. This same Jesus now invites us to find both hope and courage in the God who named not only him, but all of us, beloved children so that we, also, might discover *who* we are by recalling *whose* we are.

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=902 **David Lose** *President, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Penn.*



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