

Third Sunday in Lent March 19, 2017

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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March 16, 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.spiritualhealthsource.com/the-woman-at-the-well/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 823/824 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 500

“May God bestow on us His grace”

(Translator) "Massie, Richard, eldest son of the Rev. R. Massie, of Goddington, Cheshire, and Rector of Eccleston, was born at Chester, June 18, 1800, and resides at Pulford Hall, Coddington. Mr. Massie published a translation of *Martin Luther's Spiritual Songs*, London, 1854... John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907)" http://www.hymnary.org/person/Massie_R

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnhQJ8m3B3o> "Martin Luther: Hymns, Ballads, Chants, Truths" – Concordia Publishing House.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_3AM3nDF1A Solo by Rev. Freeman Lee, of <http://www.hopelutheranfremont.org/> in Chinese.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4cC9-bbAQk> Sing along with the piano.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

Exodus 17:1-7; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), Exodus 20:1-17 (Next Week: Isaiah 42:14-21; RCL, Numbers 21:4-9)

"Exodus 17:1-7 is a narrative that shares much in common with the complaint narratives that have preceded it.

Its structure is the same as the other stories: (1) the people encounter a potentially devastating threat to their well-being; (2) they then complain to their leadership; (3) their human leaders bring the complaint before God; and (4) God saves them by various means, in this case, by providing water. Even the content of their complaint is unremarkable. They ask for water to drink and then deliver a version of the now familiar refrain: "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" (v. 3) While they do not explicitly compare their circumstances in Egypt to their situation in the wilderness as they do elsewhere (16:3; cf. 14:11), the mere mention of Egypt in this context suggests that the people continue to regard their present state as much worse than their state as slaves in Egypt. With all of these similarities between these complaint narratives, it bears considering why it is that Moses later names the site of this narrative Massah, "Test," and Meribah, "Quarrel" (v. 7)..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2229 [Callie Plunket-Brewton](#) Instructor, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL

Water from the Rock

17 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" ³But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" ⁴So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in

your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah^[a] and Meribah,^[b] because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

- a. [Exodus 17:7](#) *Massah* means *testing*
- b. [Exodus 17:7](#) *Meribah* means *quarreling*

“Each of us comes to this place of worship with a “thirst” which we, ourselves, cannot quench; something deep-down, inside which needs to be satisfied. Can you remember a time when you were thirsty – I mean, REALLY thirsty? Parched! ...Perhaps on a hot, 100+ degree, summer day with the Kansas wind and dust blowing? If you can remember such a feeling of thirst, perhaps you have an idea of what the Old Testament Israelites might have been experiencing, as recorded in our text from Exodus 17.

They had not long been freed from their brutalizing captivity in Egypt when they were led by God to camp at Rephidim, toward the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula, near Mt Sinai. As it turns out, this was a place without water and “So, they quarreled with Moses and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’ Moses replied, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?’” (Exodus 17: 2)

This was certainly NOT the first time that they quarreled with Moses about what they needed and wanted. Exodus 16 reminds us that, only a little over a month after God had miraculously rescued them out of their Egyptian bondage, “the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron (and God). The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.’” (Exodus 16: 2-3) God graciously provided meat (quail), bread (manna) and, in our text, water. God commanded Moses to take some of the Elders of Israel, go out ahead of the people to “the rock at Horeb (meaning “dry place”) [and] strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” (Exodus 17: 6)

Through their self-centered and sinful words and actions, the people continually quarreled, grumbled and tested both their own leaders and God, Himself! They thought that “the grass seemed greener on the other side.” And, often, so do we! We see what others have and covet it. We want what we want, when we want it, because we want it! We find ourselves so worried about our finances, family and the future.

God DID provide for His people, the Israelites, and He provides for us... not because we fuss and grumble and quarrel and test; but because it is His nature to care, forgive, provide and save! He cares for you, too, no matter what your situation, concern and thirst. He knows how to quench your ***real*** thirst...

As Luther said it so well, so long ago, “I believe that God has made me and all creatures... given me clothing, shoes, food and drink... [and] He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.” (Luther’s Explanation to the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed). How thankfully, confidently and joyfully we can now live to His glory! May we do exactly

that! Amen!" And as Pastor Snow always ends See you in church this next weekend!
<http://holycrosslutheran.net/blog/2014/03/22/quenching-real-thirst-exodus-171-7/>

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1067

is another good commentary on this reading by Amy Erickson Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, Illiff School of Theology, Denver, Colo.

Psalm 95:1-9; RCL, Psalm 19 (Psalm 142; RCL, Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22)

"Six-year-old Angela and her four-year-old brother Jonathan were sitting together in Church. Jonathan giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in Church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Jonathan asked. Angela pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're the hushers."

In spite of Angela's warning there are times when it is good to make a lot of noise in the church. In fact, the text that I just read from Psalm 95 can also be translated, O come, ... let us make a joyful noise..." http://www.st-ansgars-montreal.ca/Sermons/Sermon_030928.html St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church - Montreal Rev. Samuel King-Kabu Read more of his thoughts at the end of the lesson.

Let Us Sing Songs of Praise

95 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the LORD is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,

and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,

as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹ when your fathers put me to the test

and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

¹⁰ *For forty years I loathed that generation*

and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways."

¹¹ *Therefore I swore in my wrath,
“They shall not enter my rest.”*

“How odd it is to be hearing and singing Psalm 95 in the middle of Lent!

The “preacher” who composed the book of Ecclesiastes wrote famously wrote that “for everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). And just to be sure we understood, he added, “a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance” (3:4).

And this is Lent. The time when we literally silence the “alleluias” and suppress the calls to make a joyful noise.¹...

In ancient Israel, the festival worship included moments that were both celebratory or joyous and castigating or penitential. In the modern, Christian liturgical year, we have separated these two moods into different seasons...

Be that as it may, and given the Lenten season, a sermon on Psalm 95 should focus on the latter half of the psalm...

The message here, in the Lenten season, is that God’s law in its first use remains in effect. Even as God re-commits to the covenantal relationship, even as God remains committed to God’s people, God nevertheless calls the people to obedience. God is holy and God calls the chosen people to holiness in response to God’s grace.

For everything there is a season. Lent is the time for this message of joy and reproof.

Notes:

¹ For the Lutherans in the audience, it is fun to point out that Luther was against the custom of silencing the alleluias: “In church we do not want to quench the spirit of the faithful with tedium. Nor is it proper to distinguish Lent, Holy Week, or Good Friday from other days, lest we seem to mock and ridicule Christ with half of a mass and the one part of the sacrament. For the Alleluia is the perpetual voice of the church, just as the memorial of His passion and victory is perpetual” (LW 53:24).” http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2003 **Rolf Jacobson** Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Romans 5:1-8; RCL, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (*Ephesians 5:8-14; RCL, Ephesians 2:1-10*)

“My friend, are these words true concerning you? Can you put your finger on this verse, and say, “this is true of me, ‘Therefore being justified by faith, we have-I have-peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’”? We who have believed in Jesus enjoy that peace, a deep, profound calm is upon our spirit whenever we think of God. We are not afraid of him; we are not afraid to meet him even on his judgment-seat: “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Have you peace with God? Are you sure that you have it? If not, mayhap you are not justified by faith, for that is the root of it: “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”...

This is a golden staircase, justification brings peace, and peace brings access into this grace wherein we are established; and then comes the joy of hope, and that hope fixes its eye

on nothing less than the glory of God. Grace is the stepping-stone to glory; and they who are justified by faith shall in due time be glorified by love..."

<https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/spe/romans-5.html> Charles Spurgeon

Peace with God Through Faith

⁵ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith^[b] into this grace in which we stand, and we^[c] rejoice^[d] in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- a. [Romans 5:1](#) Some manuscripts *let us*
- b. [Romans 5:2](#) Some manuscripts omit *by faith*
- c. [Romans 5:2](#) Or *let us*; also verse [3](#)
- d. [Romans 5:2](#) Or *boast*; also verses [3](#), [11](#)

"Access" has become a key phrase in our technological age.

At the door of the seminary where I work we try to remember the "access" code. At the computer we turn the noun into a verb: "I need to access that file." When I am at home trying to retrieve messages from my workplace e-mail account and my finger or my memory slips as I try to type in my password, the screen goes blank except for the sad judgment: "Access denied." Many of us have different passwords for our e-mail accounts, our banking, our travel service and the on-line vendors from whom we order books, CDs and fresh fruit. I write a carefully coded list in the back of my date book of all the passwords I am apt to need and only hope that I do not lose the date book.

Paul wrote for a world in which people were desperately trying to find the passwords that would give them access to God. Some thought that careful obedience to the law of Moses was the key. Others thought that civic virtue was the key. Still others tried to placate God by the breadth of their philosophical knowledge.

Paul's astonishing claim is that there is only one password we need to remember: Jesus Christ and that in Jesus Christ everyone has access to *grace*. And suddenly the entire picture is reversed. It is not that we are striving to reach God, it is that God is striving to reach us—grace. ..

We struggle to come up with a doctrine of the atonement, and all the classical solutions seem fall short. Paul was blessed by a richly unsystematic mind. His language about what Jesus does shifts from verb to verb: Christ saves; Christ justifies; Christ reconciles. His description of what Christ does shifts from metaphor to metaphor: an obedient second Adam undoes the disobedience of the first. A sinless man is made to be sin. A godly Messiah dies for ungodly people.

The claim outreaches all our metaphors. The name embraces all our weaknesses: Jesus Christ, access to God's grace; where we stand.”

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=65 **David Bartlett**
Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 4th Chapter” “Glory to You, O Lord”

“Chapter 3 records the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus (3:1-17). There are a number of parallels between that story and this one (see below). Then we have an account of people flocking to Jesus for baptism (3:22—although 4:2 says that it was Jesus’ disciples doing the baptizing) and John the Baptist saying to his disciples, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (3:30).

The Pharisees saw that Jesus was becoming more popular than John (4:1)—a subtle hint that Pharisees and other Jewish leaders will soon turn hostile toward Jesus (see 5:18; 7:32-36, 45-52; 8:1-11, 39-59; 9:13-41, etc.). Jesus left Judea, which is the center of Jewish religious life and will become the center of opposition to Jesus, and began his journey to Galilee, where he will carry out most of his ministry (4:3).

*John says that Jesus “**needed** (Greek: *edei*) **to go through Samaria**” (v. 4). The direct route from Judea to Galilee passes through Samaria, but Jews (who despise Samaritans) often bypass Samaria by traveling east of the Jordan. If Jesus “needed to go through Samaria,” the reason is most likely theological instead of geographic. The Greek words *dei* or *edei* suggest a divine imperative—a Godly mission...” <https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/john-45-42>*

John 4:5-26 (27-30, 39-42); RCL, John 2:13-22 (John 9:1-41 or John 9 1-7, 13-17, 34-39; RCL, John 3:14-21)

⁵ So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.^[a]

⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “**Give me a drink.**” ⁸ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus

answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”¹¹ The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?”¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.^[b] The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”¹⁷ The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”¹⁹ The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.”²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.”²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”²⁵ The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?”²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”³³ So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?”³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.³⁵ Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.³⁷ For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word.⁴² They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

- a. [John 4:6](#) That is, about noon
- b. [John 4:14](#) Greek *forever*

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

“The second and third Sundays in Lent juxtapose two characters unique to the Gospel of John.

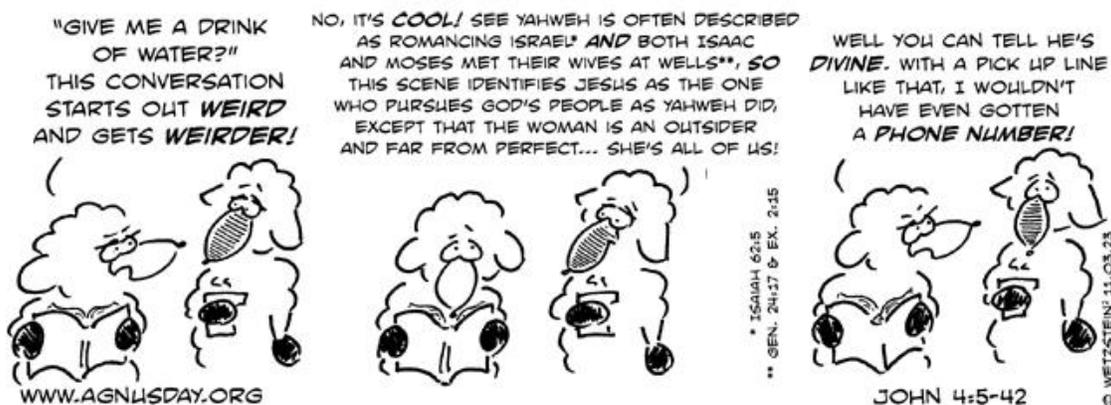
Last week, we were introduced to Nicodemus who comes to Jesus by night and lasts all of nine verses in his conversation with Jesus before fading into the night from whence he came. This week narrates another character's encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan woman at the well. The contrast between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman is striking. Given the fact that they appear one right after the other in the Gospel, we are meant to notice this contrast in all of its detail. Nicodemus is a Pharisee, an insider, a leader of the Jews. He is a man, he has a name, but he comes to Jesus by night. The character to whom we are introduced in this week's text is a Samaritan, a religious and political outsider. She is a woman, she has no name, but she meets Jesus at noon, in full daylight. And the contrast between their conversations with Jesus is even more extraordinary. Whereas Nicodemus is unable to move beyond the confines of his religious system, the Samaritan moves outside of her religious expectations and engages Jesus in theological debate (4:20). Whereas Nicodemus cannot hear that Jesus is sent by God (3:17), the woman at the well hears the actual name of God, "I AM" (4:26--"he" in the NRSV is not in the Greek text). While Nicodemus's last questioning words to Jesus expose his disbelief, "How can this be?" the last words of the woman at the well, also posed as a question, "He cannot be the Christ, can he?" lead her to witness to her whole town.

The more salient disparity between Nicodemus and the woman at the well frequently directs our preaching of John 4:5-42 toward reducing Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman to that which exemplifies Jesus for the outsiders. "See, Jesus did not come for the important people of the world, like Nicodemus, but for the no-names, the down-trodden," and, as some older commentaries misinterpreted the Samaritan woman, "the five-time losers." But then we have to wonder, could this meeting at the well really be about us, for us? If we are honest, do we truly think of ourselves as outsiders? Are we really the marginalized of society, those who are easily cast aside, those about whom others might say, "why is he talking to her?" (4:27) Perhaps the extraordinary aspect of this text is not simply that Jesus is for her, but that she becomes a witness for him.

The Samaritan woman at the well is not a passive recipient of Jesus' offer. She immediately recognizes the societal barriers and boundaries that keep her in her place (4:9) but at the same time challenges Jesus' authority over and against the ancestors of the faith (4:12). Like Nicodemus, she first interprets Jesus' words on a literal level, but she is able to ask for what Jesus has to offer rather than question the possibility (4:15). She is not certain that Jesus is the Christ (4:29--the syntax of the Greek expects a negative answer), but she does not let that stop her from leaving behind her water jar, going into the city, and inviting the people to their own encounter with Jesus. She demonstrates what can happen when we actually engage in conversation and questions about our faith. The woman at the well shows us that faith is about dialogue, about growth and change. It is not about having all the answers. If we think we have all the answers, if we are content with our doctrinal constructs, if we believe more in our own convictions that the possibility of revelation, we will be left to ponder whether or not God will

choose to be made known. We will have to wonder when and if we will finally feel confident enough, secure enough, and knowledgeable enough, to invite others to "come and see." We will be forced to admit how many times we have overlooked opportunities for giving testimony about the Savior of the world, satisfied that "Jesus is for me." The Samaritan woman at the well is an example for us, not as one who claims "Jesus is for me, too," but as one whose labor helps bring in the harvest (4:34-38). She responds to Jesus in such a way that leads Jesus to reveal his true identity to her, and in doing so, her own identity evolves. We learn from the Samaritan woman that in our own encounter with Jesus, not only are we changed, but that which God will reveal to us will change as well."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=44 [Karoline Lewis](#) Associate Professor of Preaching and the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.



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"We might have said or perhaps you've heard someone else say at the end of a worship service – "Well, I didn't get very much out of that!" That may be a true feeling but I wonder why someone would feel like that. The Word of God was spoken, the Sacrament was received. There are probably a number of reasons why a person would feel as if he/she didn't get anything out of worship. It might have something to do with the way the message was presented...

A wise mechanic-friend once said to me, "**It doesn't matter how poorly a sermon is preached, or how dry it might be, it is still the Word of God and it is up to us to look past the preacher and hear God speaking.**" On the other hand, the preacher may be another Billy Graham and still we say that "we don't get anything out of it". It might be that we, the hearers, have something wrong with us and we block out what God is trying to say to us.

God speaks in our ears that he is ready and willing to help us find our way through trouble and sickness. I might say that sometimes we just don't hear what is being said because we are too absorbed in our own difficulties. God declares his forgiveness in a clear and unmistakable fashion but we don't hear it because we are so absorbed in guilt and self-pity...

If we don't appreciate what God is doing for us then we find it harder to see any purpose in coming into the presence of God and being enthusiastic and joyful as we sing songs of praise in our worship. "

[St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church - Montreal](#) Rev. Samuel King-Kabu