

Last Sunday of the Church Year, November 26, 2017

Proper 29(34) Also known as Christ the King or Reign of Christ

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
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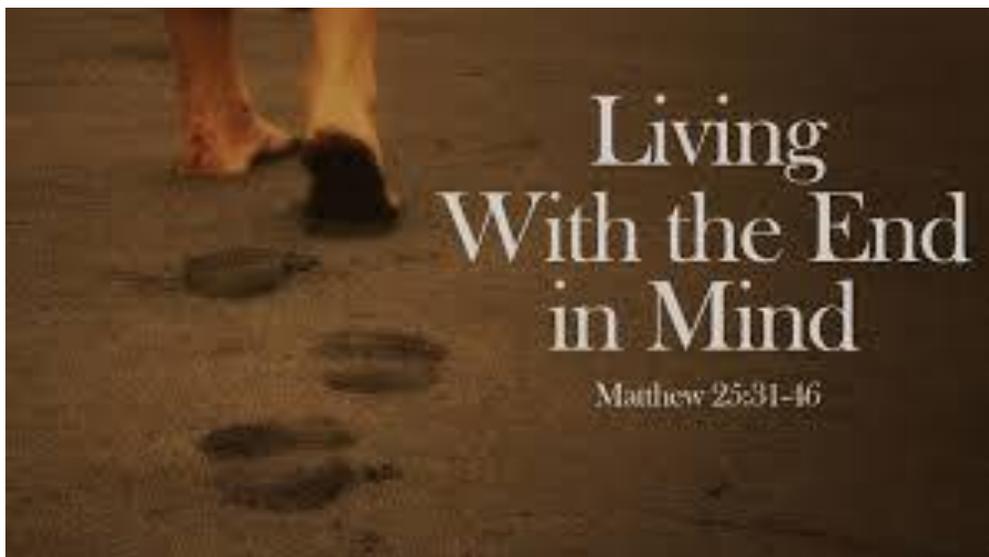
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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

November 23, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

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

Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (First Sunday of the month at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa.



<http://www.summitchurch.org/living-with-the-end-in-mind/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 532 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 219

“The Head that once was crowned with thorns”

Kelly, Thomas, B.A., son of Thomas Kelly, a Judge of the Irish Court of Common Pleas, was born in Dublin, July 13, 1769, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He was designed for the Bar, and entered the Temple, London, with that intention; but having undergone a very marked spiritual change he took Holy Orders in 1792. His earnest evangelical preaching in Dublin led Archbishop Fowler to inhibit him and his companion preacher, Rowland Hill, from preaching in the city. For some time he preached in two unconsecrated buildings in Dublin, Plunket Street, and the Bethesda, and then, having seceded from the Established Church, he erected places of worship at Athy, Portarlinton, Wexford, &c, in which he conducted divine worship and preached. He died May 14, 1854. Miller, in his *Singers & Songs of the Church*, 1869, p. 338 (from which some of the foregoing details are taken), says:—

"Mr. Kelly was a man of great and varied learning, skilled in the Oriental tongues, and an excellent Bible critic. He was possessed also of musical talent, and composed and published a work that was received with favour, consisting of music adapted to every form of metre in his hymn-book. Naturally of an amiable disposition and thorough in his Christian piety, Mr. Kelly became the friend of good men, and the advocate of every worthy, benevolent, and religious cause. He was admired alike for his zeal and his humility; and his liberality found ample scope in Ireland, especially during the year of famine."

Kelly's hymns, 765 in all, were composed and published over a period of 51 years..."

https://hymnary.org/person/Kelly_Thomas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QINpl6sukFU> Full lyrics accompanied by piano.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90uJwWUITWg> A different melody

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPhg6tOz78E> Would you be willing to do this?

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

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

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Revised Common Lectionary, RCL, Judges 4:1-7 or Zephaniah 1:7-16 (*Next Week: Isaiah 64:1-9, Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading*)

"The Times They Are A-Changin'

These days at the end of November are a season of changing times.

The elections are over and newly elected officials prepare to take their positions. The Pentecost season comes to an end and Advent begins next Sunday. The festival called "Christ the King" is eclipsed for both church and world by the Thanksgiving holiday which marks the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

In this atmosphere of changing times and seasons, the words of Ezekiel 34 have an important message for all who identify themselves as the "sheep of his pasture" or the people of God (Psalm 95:7).

Ezekiel 34 is addressed to those people of God who have been living in exile in Babylon. I am expanding the lectionary text to include verses 1-10 which is essential for understanding what follows. Following will be brief comments on Psalm 95 and Matthew 25, other texts for the day...(continued after the reading and before the Psalm and the Gospel)

The Lord GOD Will Seek Them Out

¹¹“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹²As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. ^[a]I will feed them in justice.

¹⁷“*As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. ¹⁸Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet?*

¹⁹*And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?*

²⁰“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, ²²I will rescue ^[b]my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

- a. [Ezekiel 34:16](#) Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate *I will watch over*
- b. [Ezekiel 34:22](#) **Or save**

“...The Failure of the Politicians (Ezekiel 34:1-10)

The first saying in this chapter begins with "Thus says the Lord God" and then continues with a harsh word directed at the "shepherds" which is a common metaphor for kings, or political leaders. The saying begins with "hoy" usually translated as "woe" in prophetic writings; the sense

of the word is to announce doom, even the funeral of the ones being addressed (cf. the NIV "woe").

These "shepherds" have totally failed in their responsibilities. Instead of feeding their sheep they have been fattening themselves. They have neglected the sick, the injured, the lost. Their rule has not been kind but harsh. The "scattered" sheep is a clear reference to the exile. The saying consists of a sharp criticism of the failure of the shepherds, but with a glimmer of hope of rescue for the sheep, i.e. the people Israel. Put succinctly, Ezekiel the pastor to those in exile says to the political leaders of his time, "You shepherds have fed yourselves and have not fed my sheep." These leaders ought to be caring for the sheep, not exploiting them and fattening their own lives. In these times that are a-changing, both world and church need politicians and pastors who will care for their people responsibly.

A Search and Rescue Operation (Ezekiel 34:11-16)

And now for the good news. The people's leaders have failed but there is a search and rescue operation going on. Everyone knows the story Jesus told about the good shepherd who went in search of the one sheep that was lost (Luke 15:3-7). Now, says Ezekiel, just such an operation is going on.

The Lord, the Good Shepherd, has not forsaken those who are scattered in the gloom and darkness of exile, but is searching them out. That God will rescue them and bring them home (13-14). That God will make them to lie down in green pastures and will be their caring Shepherd (15-16). And they will be fed with *justice* (Hebrew, *mishpat*) which is the final, climatic word in this saying in both the Hebrew and English.

At this point the preacher may wish to digress briefly and say something about the prophetic notion of justice. Justice (*mishpat*) is the expected response of God's people to what God has done for them (Isaiah 5:1-7). It is a response which is not static but dynamic (Amos 5:21-14; Micah 6:6-8) and which involves taking up the cause of the powerless -- represented by the widow, the orphan and the poor (Isaiah 1:17; 21-26; 10:1-4). In our time, as in Isaiah's, the special responsibility for those in positions of public responsibility is care for the powerless (Isaiah 10:1-4; Bob Dylan's song)..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1043 **James Limburg**
Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Psalm 95:1-7a; RCL, Psalm 123 or Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12 (*Psalm 80:1-7; RCL, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19*)

"..the Psalm for this Sunday can serve to remind us who we are. The refrain tells us who God is and who we are:

*For he is our God,
And we are the people of his pasture,
And the sheep of his hand (Psalm 95:7).*

We are sheep and the Lord is our shepherd! Psalm 23 tells us about that. Jesus spoke about that in Luke 15. It makes a great deal of difference, when you are lost (in the night of despair and depression, or in the reality of a coal mine or the collapse of a building) to know that there is a search operation going on! The Gospel of John tells us that we do have a Good Shepherd who is

roaming the world searching for the lost -- none other than Jesus Christ (John 10)..." [James Limburg](#)

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*

"Psalm 95 appears in a grouping of psalms that focus on the reign of God (Psalms 93, 95-99)...

Psalm 95 contains two calls to praise and worship God that provide structure to the work (verses 1, 6). Verses 1 and 6 both begin with imperatives that connote movement, perhaps movement of the human spirit to a posture of praise. These imperatives are followed by verbs that invite praise and singing...

Verse 2 suggests worship is to be offered specifically with thanksgiving and songs of praise... Whatever the meaning of "thanksgiving," verse 2 clearly calls for worship that is comprehensive and inclusive of all expressions of reverence.

Verses 3-5 give reasons for the praise called for in verses 1-2. The most basic reason for praising God is that God is "a great King above all gods" (verse 3)... Verses 4-5 give the primary evidence that God is "a great King above all gods." Namely, God is the creator, the one who ordered and sustains the world. The elements under God's control are listed so as to make a comprehensive statement: the depths of the earth, the heights of the mountains, the sea, and the dry land all are in God's hands...

The second major portion of the psalm begins also with an imperative "O come" (though with a different word than in verse 1). The invitation that follows, however, concerns not the elements of worship but the right posture for praise: "let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!" Just as verse 3 gives reasons to sing praise, verse 7 states why one should bow and kneel: "we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (verse 7a-b)...Verse 7c really concludes verse 7 with an exclamation that expresses the proper response to

God the shepherd: "O that today you would listen to his voice." But this conclusion to verse 7 also leads directly into verses 8-11 which recall Israel's disobedience during the period of wilderness wandering (see references to Meribah and Massah in Exodus 17:1-7)...

The central theological message of Psalm 95 is that "the Lord is a great King" (verse 3). To recognize God's kingship is to recognize that God created us and sustains us. For that reason God is worthy of our praise. The psalm also suggests that our praise is more than words lifted heavenward. It is an expression of faith and it should be lived out in faithfulness and trust. This is precisely what the Israelites in the wilderness did not do. To learn from their mistakes and to connect praise and obedience is our calling."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1114 **Jerome Creach**
Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn.

I Corinthians 15:20-28; RCL, Ephesians 1:15-23 (1 Corinthians 15:20-28; RCL, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9)

"Corinth was an important and wealthy city on the isthmus (narrow strip of land) separating Northern and Southern Greece. The Apostle Paul spent eighteen months there on his Second Missionary Journey and established a church there. Acts 18 gives us considerable detail about Paul's work in Corinth during that time.

At the conclusion of his visit to Corinth, Paul left to visit Ephesus, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Galatia (Acts 18:18-23). After leaving Corinth, Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Corinth warning them "to have no company with sexual sinners" (5:9), but that letter has been lost to us. Paul is writing this letter in response to a report from Chloe's people about problems in the Corinthian church (1:11). In this letter, he provides apostolic guidance for dealing with those problems....

now in chapter 15, Paul begins to deal with a doctrinal issue—and issue related to what these Corinthian Christians believe. The doctrinal issue is the resurrection of Christ—and how that belief undergirds the belief in the resurrection of deceased believers.

In chapter 2, Paul dealt with Christ's crucifixion. Now, in chapter 15, he deals with the resurrection, both Christ's resurrection (15:1-11) and our own (15:12-58). Chapters 2 and 15, then, serve as bookends around the parts of this letter that deal with ethical issues..."

<https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/1-corinthians-1520-28>

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God^[a] has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted

who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

a. [1 Corinthians 15:27](#) Greek *he*

“..In this section of his letter, Paul is dealing with problems that arose because some promoted the terrible false teaching that Jesus did not rise from the dead. Paul spends all of chapter 15 of his letter refuting that false doctrine, and showing that Christ has risen and that Christ now reigns...

In verse 20, Paul laid out the first major premise that he wants us to consider in this reading. Now, in the next two verses, Paul explains why this premise is true. Verse 21 says, “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.” Paul used two different Greek words that both mean “death,” so let me paraphrase this verse to make it clear. Paul says that just as, through a man, the process of dying came into the world, so also, through another man, Jesus, the resurrection from the lifeless and useless state of death comes to us.

Verse 22 advances the point further. “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” There are some more nuances in the original language that need explanation. Paul literally said, “For as in Adam, all are dying.” Paul reminds us that we are all born into a deadly spiritual condition. Sin is not just what we do, it is who we are, and that sinful status with which we are born means that we are dying every day. There’s not one of us in this room who isn’t terminal. But Paul also tells us the solution: “In Christ all will be made alive.” Jesus has conquered death, and that fact guarantees that he will also raise us from death to life when he returns at the end of time.

Let’s review the train of thought for a moment so that we understand where we are in Paul’s argument. He stated his premise in verse 20. He supported or explained his premise twice in verses 21 and 22. Now, in verse 23, he goes back to the original premise and restates it in a different way. He says, “Each [person will be raised] in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.” Jesus was the firstfruits, the guarantee, that the rest of God’s people will rise again one day. We haven’t experienced it yet, but when the time comes, when Jesus returns at the end of time, that amazing victory over death will be given all who trusted in Jesus’ victory over death...

Paul followed a certain pattern in the first four verses of our reading: He laid out his premise, he supported it, and then he restated it. Paul is going to use the same pattern in the second half of this reading. Now he shows us that Christ reigns because he will complete his work. Conquering death was a major step, but the next important element is stated in verse 24. “Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” Paul’s second premise is that King Jesus will return at the end of time to complete the work that his heavenly Father commissioned him to do...

In the last verse of our reading, Paul makes a statement that sounds a bit strange. “When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.” That almost sounds as if Jesus, God the Son, is inferior to God the Father. We’ll be able to understand Paul’s point more clearly if we remember the pattern he

is using to present these points. Paul is restating what he said in verse 24. That verse said, “The end will come, when [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” In a sense, Jesus is “handing in” the completed assignment that his Father gave him to accomplish...The final statement in verse 28 simply means that God will be shown to be superior and supreme in all things. Christ will complete this work; he will show himself to be an impressive King who reigns eternally...”

<https://pastorstrey.wordpress.com/2008/11/24/sermon-on-1-corinthians-15/> Pastor Strey serves as the pastor of worship and education at [Crown of Life Lutheran Church](#) in Hubertus, Wisconsin. Pastor Strey and Crown of Life are affiliated with the [Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod](#) (WELS).

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 25th Chapter”

Matthew 25:31-46; RCL, the same reading (*Mark 11:1-10 or Mark 13:24-37; RCL, the same reading*)

“...Finally, the Matthew 25 text tells us something of how we ought to live. Once we've been found we are asked to become a part of God's search operation. Note the two groups described in this text. Neither group knew what they had been doing (verses 37, 44). Their acts of kindness or of neglect turn out to have been acts directed toward the Lord himself.” [James Limburg](#)

“In this series, the texts for Pentecost XIX-Pentecost Last (six texts) occurred on Tuesday of holy week, a very busy day in Jesus' life. The text for Pentecost XXIII was Jesus' final word to His adversaries. Then (still on Tuesday) followed Jesus' scathing (and well-deserved) denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, spoken to the multitudes and His disciples, recorded at Mark 12:38-40; Matthew 23:1-39 and Luke 20:45-47. Then follows the account of the so-called widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). In the afternoon of that Tuesday Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives where Jesus delivered His great eschatological discourse found at Mark 13:1-37; Matthew 24 and 25; Luke 21:5-36. Our text is the third of three parables: Of the Ten Virgins, Of the Talents, Of the Final Judgment, all three found only in Matthew...” (continued after the reading)

The Final Judgment

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘**Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**’ ³⁵ **For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,** ³⁶ **I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’** ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’ ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and

clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,^[a] you did it to me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- a. [Matthew 25:40](#) Or *brothers and sisters*

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

“...The only element unknown to us is the time. The last sentence in the Apostles' Creed is the only item yet to be completed: "He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead." The "Son of man" stresses Jesus' humanity. "In His glory" stresses His divinity, fully used by His humanity...

Three times in verses 37-39 they (*the righteous*) say "when?" All the questions are questions of surprise and astonishment. Christians don't dwell on their deeds of love. The Christian's whole life is summed up in "faith which works through love," Galatians 5:6. Through the Gospel he lives in constant freedom in his conscience. At the same time, the Law obligates him to be servant to his neighbor. Galatians 5:13-14. He constantly tests his own life, without comparing himself with others, and yet has his boast toward himself because, by God's grace, he lives in freedom of conscience toward self and in love toward neighbor. Galatians 6:4. But Christians ought not dwell on their deeds of love. If they do they need to listen to Galatians 6:3. Note that verses 37-39 are almost a verbatim rehearsal of verses 35-36, in question form...

This verse (46) readily explains itself. The condemned are merely called "these" but the faithful are again called "the righteous." They are righteous not because of their works but because they believed what God, in Christ, did for them. The good works are plain evidence of this believing relationship. The punishment of the wicked is justice because they rejected God. The blessedness of the righteous is just because by faith they are that...

After Luther's death, Lutheran theologians got into a controversy about the good works of a Christian. The question was: "Are good works necessary to salvation?" To make a long story short, they are not necessary in a meritorious sense nor are they detrimental to salvation. But they are necessary as evidence and fruit of faith.

Remember Luther's adage: "Faith alone saves but faith is never alone."

This text ought make a pastor aware of his great responsibility of properly applying and distinguishing Law and Gospel.”

http://pericope.org/buls-notes/matthew/matthew_25_31_46.htm Adapted from Exegetical Notes, Series A Matthew-John Sundays After Pentecost Gospel Texts, by Harold H. Buls
[This link is worth reading in its entirety.](#)



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ARE YOU READY FOR THE CHALLENGE? THE MARK CHALLENGE – LECTIONARY YEAR B 2017-18



Challenge yourself to produce a handwritten copy of the book of Mark by Christ the King Sunday, November 25, 2018.

It's only 16 chapters long (678 verses or 11,304 words, subject to the translation and how you treat the 'extra verses' in the last chapter). Break that down to a schedule that works for you; a specific time or day each week, 3.25 weeks per chapter, or about two verses a day. Use a spiral notebook or a journal. Decide if you want a "Red Letter" edition for the words of Christ. Invent your own illustrated manuscript style. Consider reading the book over the next year.