

Sixth Sunday of Easter May 6, 2018

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

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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JESUS LOVES* YOU

***Conditions do not apply**

➤ <https://whomshallisend.blogspot.com/2013/05/acts-115-17-20-26-psalm-1131-8-john-159.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 556 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 387

“Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice”

This hymn can be found in 39 hymnals, most of them Lutheran. What would you expect of a hymn written by Martin Luther and written/translated by Richard Massie? Luther is credited with 447 hymns and Richard Massie wrote or translated 89.

- https://hymnary.org/text/dear_christians_one_and_all_rejoice_with#Author
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJF3xuytmFw> A stirring opening on organ. “Martin Luther: Hymns, Ballads, Chants , Truth”, Concordia Publishing House
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXG6QQBgsfi> An introduction about each of the verses. [Immanuel Lutheran Church of Klinger](#) Readlyn, Iowa
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ULPc1QpUCw> An organ prelude by Kevin Hildebrand. “Salvation unto Us: Twelve Easy Organ Preludes for Reformation”, CPH

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.](#)

Acts 10:34-48; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) Acts 10:44-48; (Next week: Acts 1:12-26; RCL, Acts 1:15-17, 21-26)

“What in the world got into Acts 4’s Peter? Or to put it more theologically, who in the world got into the apostle? I sometimes wonder if even his companion John didn’t blink his eyes or try to clear his ears to make sure it was Peter who was speaking.

Of course, Peter’s talking was never the problem per se. You could always count on him to speak up, even when Jesus’ other disciples didn’t know what to say. It’s just that maybe even the former fisherman was never quite sure what would come out of his mouth when he opened it to speak.

Yet it’s hard to believe Acts 4’s Peter is the same as, for example, Luke 22’s Peter. There, after all, it was a “servant girl” (56) and her friends who confronted Peter. In Acts 4 the “rulers, elders and teachers of the law” confront him. In Luke 22 Peter risks only ridicule for acknowledging Jesus. In Acts 4 he risks his freedom if not life for talking about Jesus.

Given his track record (at least before Pentecost), we’d have expected Peter to wilt in the face of Acts 4’s religious leaders. They’d, after all, flexed their religious muscles by first jailing and then basically trying John and him in religious court. Peter, however, turns the defense table into a pulpit from which he boldly proclaims the gospel message of salvation that’s received only with faith in the crucified but risen Jesus...”

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4b-2/?type=old_testament_lectionary Doug Bratt

Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

“...On the surface nothing too controversial leaps out of the text to assault the contemporary hearer’s theological sensibility. When one considers the context of this speech within the flow of Acts, however, Peter’s speech is monumental. It reflects Peter’s gigantic “aha!” moment when he has come to realize that, within God’s missional program of salvation, all really, truly means all.

At the beginning of Acts 10, those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Messiah and who are now members of God’s reconstituted Israel have been Jews and Samaritans. Both groups have had the word preached to them by God’s commissioned agents. Both groups have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit (especially see Acts 2:37-42; 8:14-17). By Acts 10:33, however, everything is now being changed forever as God has forced Peter to come to the astonishing realization that God has decided to include Gentiles as part of God’s people.

The physical setting of Peter’s speech is exclusively Gentile in two ways. First, Peter is in the city of Caesarea Maritima. This was the coastal city that King Herod had built for his Roman patrons (ca. 22-9 BCE). Not only was this the capital of the Roman province of Judaea, it was also thoroughly Roman in its character and structures. The city’s crowning building was a grand temple dedicated to Caesar Augustus and the goddess Roma perched on a hill overlooking its newly engineered harbor.

Up to this point in Luke and Acts (recalling that they are two-volumes in a single narrative), neither Jesus nor his followers have set foot in such a pagan location. Second, Peter is in the house of an Italian officer in the Roman army named Cornelius (10:1). Jews do not visit the homes of Gentiles as Peter initially reminds Cornelius (10:28). Previously in Luke 7:6-7 a centurion living in Capernaum had messengers tell an approaching Jesus that it was inappropriate for Jesus to come to his house. So Peter is in a city and a house where God's people should not be. Indeed the only reason that Peter is in such a Gentile location speaking to a house full of Gentiles is that God has arranged this encounter (see 10:3-8,17-24,29-33).

The emphatic first words out of Peter's mouth in the Greek of 10:34b are "by truth." Here Peter has now perceived the truth of what God's impartiality entails. That God shows no partiality is not a new theological claim (see Deuteronomy 10:17...)..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1966
Richard Carlson Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, Pa.

Psalm 98; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 1; RCL, the same reading)

"The Christmas season always seems like a time to sing the good old songs.

Each year I have sung the carols and even played them on a trombone alongside a Salvation Army bell ringer in order to help raise money for the poor. Most popular of all these carols is "Joy to the World," which Isaac Watts based on the psalm for today, Psalm 98.

Psalm 98 calls for a new psalm! Since that call for something new is often sounded (Psalm 96:1, 33:3, 40:3; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10) the point appears to be an important one. We could imagine that a good number of Old Testament people must have wanted to hang onto the "good old songs." But there was also a group who must have said, "We need to hear something fresh, new, and contemporary, so that we can hold on to the young people."..."
(continued after the reading)

Make a Joyful Noise to the LORD

A Psalm.

98 Oh sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.

²The LORD has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
 break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
⁵ Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
 with the lyre and the sound of melody!
⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn
 make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!

⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
 the world and those who dwell in it!

⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands;
 let the hills sing for joy together

⁹ before the LORD, for he comes
 to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,
 and the peoples with equity.

“...Some Background: The Enthronement Psalms

Psalm 98 is one of seven psalms in the Bible that were used at a festival to celebrate God as King: 47; 93; 95; 96; 97; 98; 99. Many of these psalms contain the cry, “The Lord is king” (see 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1). These *enthronement psalms*, as they are called, are not to be confused with *royal psalms*, which are associated with events in the life of the king (Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; 144). To put it another way, in the *enthronement psalms* God is the king. In the *royal psalms*, the king is the king.

The heading “A Psalm” designates this as a musical piece suitable for use in worship. The psalm itself calls for instrumental accompaniment, with both stringed (verse 5) and brass instruments (verse 6). The psalm divides into three parts: Praise to the Lord because of mighty deeds in the past (verses 1-3), praise to the Lord the ruling King in the present (verses 4-6), and a call to nature also to praise the Lord who will come in the future to set things right in the world (verses 7-9)...

Aggiornamento

The Italians have a fine word indicating what Psalm 98 is all about. It was Pope John XXIII who called the church to the task of *aggiornamento* -- new songs, a continued updating of old traditions to meet the needs and tastes of a new generation.

We are called to do no less. Christmas Day is a time to sing the old beloved carols -- but also to throw in a few newer songs, maybe even a Christmas message from a 500 piece marching band! Who knows what *aggiornamento* could look like? We are promised that a great day is coming, when the Lord will come to straighten everything out in our tired, war-torn, and warming world. And all creatures, humans, hills, mountains and marching bands are invited to join in a mighty hallelujah!”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1535
James Limburg Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

“Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying”: That’s the hymn ... (LSB 597). Listen ... to the words of the first stanza:

Water, blood, and Spirit crying,
By their witness testifying
To the One whose death-defying
Life has come, with life for all.

The One to whom the Spirit, the water, and the blood are testifying is, of course, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has defied and defeated death for us, who comes with life for all, and whose Easter victory we are celebrating during this season.

But now where did the hymn writer get the idea for this hymn and the very words that he uses? He got them from our Epistle for today, from 1 John chapter 5. And in particular, from verses 6-8, reading again as follows: “This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.” This is our text...

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2015/05/water-blood-and-spirit-crying-sermon-on-1-john-51-8-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Pastor Charles Henrickson

Overcoming the World

⁵ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Testimony Concerning the Son of God

⁶ This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

“Verse 1 once again unites what this author has repeatedly refused to separate: belief in Jesus and love for one's brothers and sisters in the church (loving "the child" at the end of verse 1 is a reference to any other believer, not to Jesus).

Elsewhere in 1 John, the sign of being born from God has been love; here, the mark of being born from God is proper Christological belief. This does not indicate a contradiction within 1 John, since anyone who believes in Jesus as the Christ will love the Father who sent him, and anyone who loves the Father of Jesus will also love all God's other children...

Although the mention of "commandments" in verse 2 could be taken to mean the moral code of the Torah or more narrowly the 10 Commandments, there is no focus on the Law in 1 John; in fact, the word "Law" never appears in the Johannine letters. The "commandments," which the author does mention frequently, have already been identified as two united concerns: belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and love for one another (3:23)...

Obedience to these commandments is not a burden (verse 3) because those who have been born from God through faith have conquered the world (verse 4). Language about "conquering" or "victory" (the verb and noun share the same root in Greek) has appeared earlier in this book, where the author wrote about victory over the evil one (2:13-14) who is "in the world" (4:4)...

Verse 6 contains the most problematic section of this pericope. Jesus is described as the one who came not just "with" water, but "by" or "with" (there is probably no distinction to be made between the two prepositions here) water and blood. The puzzle about what this means has occupied interpreters from the earliest times of the church...

More likely is that the mention of water is meant to recall Jesus' baptism. Perhaps those who have left the community claimed that Jesus' ministry, begun with his baptism, was saving but that his death was not. Perhaps they even espoused the heresy for which there is later evidence, that Jesus became God's Son only at his baptism and that the divine incarnation abandoned the human Jesus at the crucifixion. Despite these uncertain possibilities of interpretation, what is certain is that the author insists that the "blood" is a crucial part of the Son's "coming," i.e. of his saving mission. Of this the Spirit is witness (verse 6b), a claim that may recall how Jesus gave the Spirit from the cross in John 19:30, but surely also points to how the Spirit bears witness to the saving importance of Jesus' death through the faithful confession of the church...

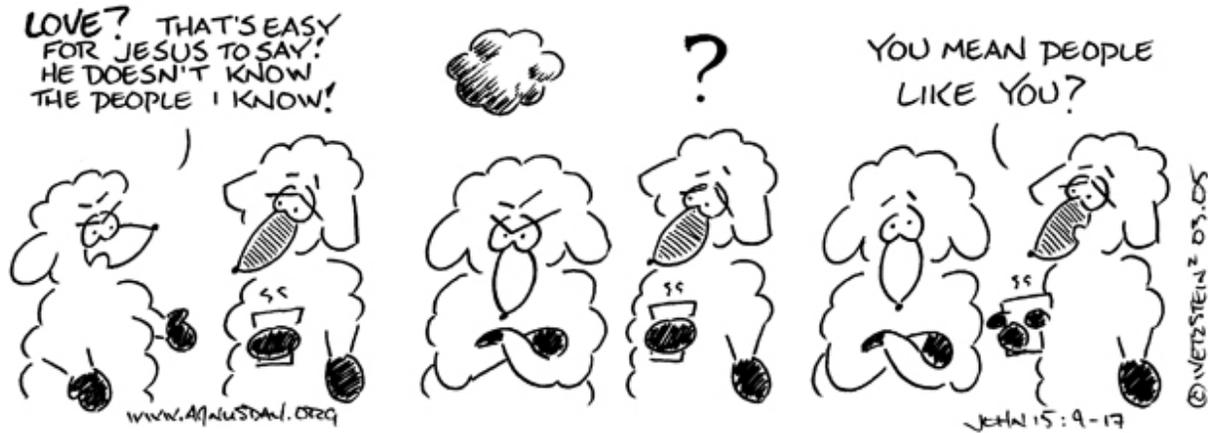
This overcoming of the world is not a profound fable or inspiring mythology, but is reality made concrete in the community of the church, as God's love overcomes the divisions, animosities, and death that the world would promote, maintain, and exploit. Those who believe have overcome the world because their life, love, and identity are not determined by the deceptions of the world, but by the object of their faith, Jesus as the Son who was crucified and raised."

➤ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1289

Brian Peterson Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC

THE MARK CHALLENGE

Time for a fresh start? Get busy with chapter 7.



John 15:9-17; RCL, the same reading (John 17:11b-19; RCL, John 17: 6-19)

If last Sunday's lesson ended on the note of disciples glorifying God the Father through the bearing of "much fruit," then in this Sunday's continuation that fruit fairly bursts open as a veritable flood in the exercise of love.

Though reference to love has been completely absent in verses 1 through 8, the repeated reference to it now (5 times as verb or noun in verse 9 alone; 11 times in the lesson as a whole) clearly gives love the center stage. The effect is now to interpret the whole of the passage on vine and branches in terms of love.

As background it will be helpful at the outset to review the remarks from last Sunday on Jesus' words in John 14-17 as part of the address of the resurrected Lord to a post-resurrection disciple community. The lesson for today might be divided into two major sections, the first (9-12) focusing on the abiding relationship of love that binds Father, Son and disciples into one, the second (13-17) focusing on the empowering love of the Son by which he laid down his life for his "friends."...

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1291 **James Boyce** Emeritus Professor of New Testament and Greek, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 15th Chapter”

⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants,^[a] for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever

you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

- a. [John 15:15](#) Or *bondservants*, or *slaves* (for the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface); likewise for *servant* later in this verse and in verse [20](#)

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

“It really is that simple... or is it? Is it that simple at all? For the last couple of weeks, the gospel lectionary reading has taken us into Jesus’ Farewell discourse in John, and this week is 15:9-17. The whole discourse is a mix of conversation and prayer between Jesus and the disciples, and goes from chapters 14 through 17. So we have here just a snippet, and I find preaching from these passages especially challenging. It’s not really a narrative, but a mix of instruction, symbol, and theology...

One verse that has been drawing my attention this week is verse 12: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” As one person pointed out in a Bible study I led, the text offers a neat formula: the Father loves the Son, the Son loves the disciples, and the disciples are to love one another. The task of the disciples is actually framed as a “commandment,” a word that can be confusing to those who are steeped in a gospel of grace...

If, after our sermons this Sunday, our congregations set out to “try and love one another,” then we’ve misled them and they’ve set off in the wrong direction. If we have “try and do it,” then we’re just adding an impossible burden... The key to this “commandment” is in the last phrase, “as I have loved you.”

The love of the Son for his disciples is the *source* of the disciples’ love for one another. Often we interpret this phrase to mean that Jesus’ love is the example or model for our love; he calls us to the kind of radical love he shows. That’s true, but not nearly enough. Jesus’ love is also the *fount* of our love, the ever-flowing spring of the love that flows through the disciples. Loving one another is not meant to be a task, but a way of life. Loving one another is a natural outworking of being loved.

It might help us and our congregations this week to put our emphasis first on Jesus’ love for us. How has Jesus loved you? As the text says, he laid down his life for you. But what has that meant to *you*? What grace has Christ offered you? What mercy have you received? What help has God provided at a point of need? What renewal? We might even dare to change John’s verb. What if we read this line in the present tense, “Love one another as I am loving you.” When we are in touch with — when we *abide*— in the love of the living Christ for us and for all people, then love for one another flows as naturally as water from a fountain. It’s like a tree that bears fruit. The tree doesn’t try to bear fruit; it just does, because that is what a healthy tree does!”

- <https://missionalpreaching.com/2015/05/06/as-i-have-loved-you-john-159-17/>
“I’m Patrick Johnson, and I’m a preacher, pastor, teacher, and scholar.”



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Ascension Day Thursday, May 10, 2018

Acts 1:1-11 The Ascension

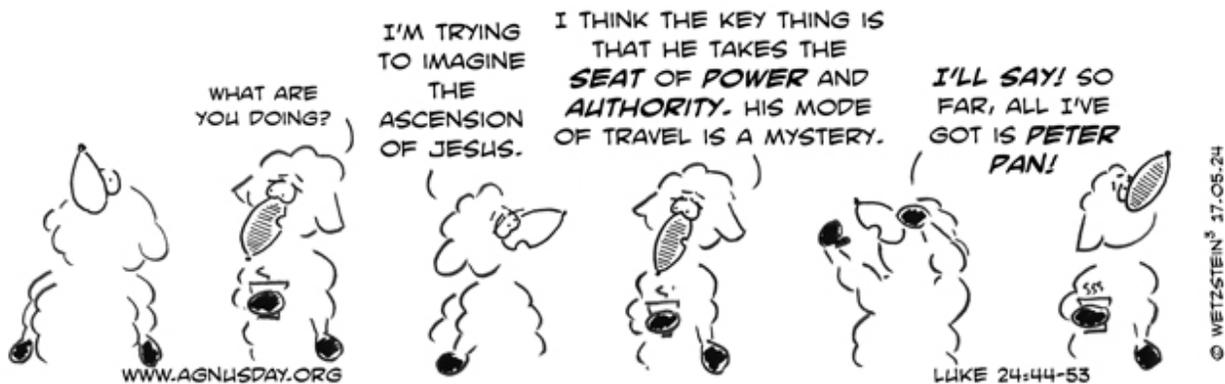
⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Psalm 47

Ephesians 1:15-23

Luke 24:44-53 The Ascension

⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.



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