

5th Sunday after Pentecost June 24, 2018

Fourth Sunday after the Trinity Propers 7 (12)

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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- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
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<http://www.reform-magazine.co.uk/2015/05/chapter-verse-mark-435-41/>

Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 726 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed
“Evening and Morning”**

"...Paul Gerhardt ranks, next to Luther, as the most gifted and popular hymnwriter of the Lutheran Church... "He went back to Luther's most genuine type of hymn in such manner as no one else had done, only so far modified as the requirements of his time demanded. In Luther's time the belief in Free Grace and the work of the Atonement, in Redemption and the bursting of the gates of Hell was the inspiration of his joyful confidence; with Gerhardt it is the belief in the Love of God. With Luther the old wrathful God of the Romanists assumed the heavenly aspect of grace and mercy; with Gerhardt the merciful Righteous One is a gentle loving Man. Like the old poets of the people he is sincerely and unconstrainedly pious, naive, and hearty; the blissfulness of his faith makes him benign and amiable; in his way of writing he is as attractive, simple, and pleasing as in his way of thinking."

With a firm grasp of the objective realities of the Christian Faith, and a loyal adherence to the doctrinal standpoint of the Lutheran Church, Gerhardt is yet genuinely human; he takes a fresh, healthful view both of nature and of mankind. In his hymns we see the transition to the modern subjective tone of religious poetry. Sixteen of his hymns begin with, "I." Yet with Gerhardt it is not so much the individual soul that lays bare its sometimes morbid moods, as it is the representative member of the Church speaking out the thoughts and feelings he shares with his fellow members; while in style Gerhardt is simple and graceful, with a considerable variety of verse form at his command, and often of bell-like purity in tone..."

- https://hymnary.org/person/Gerhardt_Paul
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTr_6pBXLCO The popular hymn "Evening and Morning" with improvised introduction, interlude, and tag performed in worship at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Hopkins, MN
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwZcmovAhdQ> "Heirs of the Reformation: Treasures of the Singing Church" Concordia Publishing House
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijw2iw95N8E> Pastor on the guitar. (Did I make you look?)

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.](#)

"Critics have proposed that numerous authors wrote the Book of Isaiah, typically dividing the Book between three proposed authors: First Isaiah (chs 1-39), Second Isaiah (chs 40-55), and Third Isaiah chs 56-66). The latter two proposed authors are regarded as disciples or students of either the original Isaiah or of his school of thought. Although Isaiah certainly had students or disciples (8:16), the critical divisions and attributions are entirely speculative. Thematic arguments can be proposed for these divisions (as Luther points out above), but no early traditions or manuscript evidence supports the critical proposals. As a result, the critics' division of the Book has become increasingly suspect. The traditional view – attributing the whole work

to Isaiah – is again receiving favor. The only historically attested division of the Book is the great Isaiah scroll of Qumran (1QIsa), which has a tree-line break after 33:24.”

The Lutheran Study Bible, Concordia Publishing House, pages 1085-6

Isaiah 40:1-5; Revised Common Lectionary, (RCL) Job 38:1-11 or 1 Samuel 17:1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49 or 1 Samuel 17:57-18:5, 18:10-16 (Next week: Lamentations 3:22-33 ; RCL, Lamentations 3:22-33 or Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15, 2:23-24 or 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27)

“What an interesting array of metaphors in this pivotal text.(including verses 6-11)

It combines images of comfort with declarations of sin, the fragility of grass on the steppe with the enduring power of the divine, and, my favorite juxtaposition, a warrior God who holds lambs tenderly against the divine chest. It is no wonder that biblical scholars would like to decouple these images and attribute different verses to different authors. That dissection, however, misses the point.

This poem opens the second part of the book of Isaiah, which contains poems reflecting the impact of Persian expansion under Cyrus the Great on the peoples living in exile after the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. Cyrus, who is explicitly named three times in Isaiah 44-45, ruled more than 150 years after the historical Isaiah advised king Hezekiah during the Assyrian defeat of the northern kingdom of Israel. The oracles of condemnation in Isaiah 1-39 reflect this period of destruction, while the poems in chapter 40-55 are filled with hope and joy because Cyrus allowed the exiles to return home...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3491 **Corrine Carvalho** Professor, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN

Comfort for God's People

40 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that her warfare^[a] is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned,

that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries:^[b]

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

“Right up there with Psalm 23 and the first verse of Genesis, Isaiah 40 may be the most-heard piece of the Hebrew Bible. After all, it rolls around each and every Advent, either week one or two, and G. F. Handel made it immortal in western ears with the wonderful recitative and aria for tenor at the beginning of his ubiquitous "Messiah." And just like that psalm, which everyone appears to know whether they go to church or not, I wonder at its popularity. Here is an example, quite unlike the psalm's notoriety, where ancient context is all. A careful look at that context offers a clue to why these words sound so striking, so magnificent to our aching souls...

Here is as clear a statement of the grace of God as one is ever likely to hear. The Hebrew *chesed* is nearly defined by Isaiah 40:1-2. The unbreakable love of YHWH can best be found when it shows up in our exiles, when we have beaten ourselves up for our unwillingness again and again to be the children of God, when we have imagined that the jig is finally up for all of us. This is the message that we preachers are called to proclaim over and over...

And yet we do not. Why? Because most of us, especially we progressive types, are afraid that if we do announce the free and absolute word of grace, we will be letting our people off the hook, that they will be glad of their freedom, and so happy that they are loved by God that they will not do anything in response. Jump in the pool; have another martini; God loves me just as I am, and ain't that just the berries! No! It is of course true that that old gospel hymn is known as "Just as I am," but the entire first line adds the clause "without one plea." We are in exile, and that exile is to a great extent of our own making. *We have not loved our neighbors; we have not heard the cry of the needy.* Yet, we are still comforted by God/YHWH *in order that we may do those things.*"

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dDjva1ecYo> Listen to Handel's Messiah as Jerry Hadley (June 16, 1952 July 18, 2007) sings the tenor solo. "Wonderful to hear a real TENOR sing this -- not some of the emasculated pseudo-tenors they get for those "authentic" versions. My opinion. So sad that Jerry Hadley took his own life. I wish those closest to him could have seen that he needed help. Such a great loss."

Psalm 124; RCL, Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32 or Psalm 9:9-20 or Psalm 133 (Psalm 30; RCL, Psalm 30 or Psalm 130)

"A Song of degrees of David. Of course the superfine critics have pounced upon this title as inaccurate, but we are at liberty to believe as much or as little of their assertions as we may please. They declare that there are certain ornaments of language in this little ode which were unknown in the Davidic period. It may be so; but in their superlative wisdom they have ventured upon so many other questionable statements that we are not bound to receive this dictum. Assuredly the manner of the song is very like to David's, and we are unable to see why he should be excluded from the authorship. Whether it be his composition or no, it breathes the same spirit as that which animates the unchallenged songs of the royal composer..."

- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/treasury-of-david/psalms-124-1.html> Charles Spurgeon

"In the year 1582, this Psalm was sung on a remarkable occasion in Edinburgh. An imprisoned minister, John Durie, had been set free, and was met and welcomed on entering the town by two

hundred of his friends. The number increased till he found himself in the midst of a company of two thousand, who began to sing, as they moved up the long High Street, 'Now Israel may say,' etc. They sang in four parts with deep solemnity, all joining in the well-known tune and Psalm. They were much moved themselves, and so were all who heard; and one of the chief persecutors is said to have been more alarmed at this sight and song than at anything he had seen in Scotland." (Bonar, cited in Spurgeon)

Our Help Is in the Name of the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

124 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—

let Israel now say—

² if it had not been the LORD who was on our side

when people rose up against us,

³ then they would have swallowed us up alive,

when their anger was kindled against us;

⁴ then the flood would have swept us away,

the torrent would have gone over us;

⁵ then over us would have gone

the raging waters.

⁶ Blessed be the LORD,

who has not given us

as prey to their teeth!

⁷ We have escaped like a bird

from the snare of the fowlers;

the snare is broken,

and we have escaped!

⁸ Our help is in the name of the LORD,

who made heaven and earth.

"Thanking God for the Help Only He Can Bring

A. Gratitude for God's help.

1. (1-2) The help of God when under the threat of men...

2. (3-5) The disaster that could have happened had not God helped...

B. Praise to the Lord who helps.

1. (6-7) Praise for the help received...

2. (8) Confidence in the continuing help of God..."

Read the complete details of this outline at: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-124/> ©2016 David Guzik

2 Corinthians 6:1-13; RCL, the same reading (2 Corinthians 12:1-10; RCL, 2 Corinthians 12:2-10)

“We are being dropped into the middle of a complex and intense piece of communication. While some elements can stand alone, it makes sense to appreciate the context. For that we need to go back to when we last visited 2 Corinthians in [Transfiguration](#). There are serious problems in Paul's relations with the Christians at Corinth. That is very apparent in the way our passage ends: Paul is urging them to change their attitude towards him and his associates (it finds an echo in 7:2). At an earlier stage in the relationship Paul went away very hurt and angry and then wrote a stinging (or at least, confronting) letter instead of making a promised visit which he was not prepared to face (re-read his comments in 2 Corinthians 2 and then in 7:5-13). He writes this letter in a slightly more relaxed mode, having heard from Titus that things had apparently settled down in Corinth. But the underlying issues are still close to the surface...”

- <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/BEpPentecost4.html> Rev. William (Bill) Ronald George Loader, Perth, Australia

6 Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

¹¹We have spoken freely to you, ^[a]Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹²You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.

- a. [2 Corinthians 6:11](#) Greek *Our mouth is open to you*

“Ouch! We have been noticing recently that 2 Corinthians can be a hard letter to read. There is so much personal, professional, and pastoral pain in the background for Paul. But at the end of this Lectionary selection Paul brings the hammer down pretty hard: he is being perfectly loving toward the Corinthians—as he always has—but they have closed off their hearts toward him.

“Look, we have opened wide our hearts to you but you toward us . . . not so much. So fair is fair and it is high time you reciprocate back to us by opening your hearts.”

Hard hitting stuff. But you need to loop back to the opening two verses to see the real punch behind all this. Because Paul framed up this entire section of the letter by saying that “Now is the time of God’s favor” as his gracious salvation has been announced. But it was in verse 1 that Paul really set things up for where he wanted to go: “See to it you do not receive God’s grace in vain.” In other words, if God’s grace has really taken root in your hearts and you really understand how his salvation works, then this had better show up in your lives. And, oh by the way, a really good indication that this has taken place would be if you open your hearts toward us and stop believing the people who have trash-talked me and the gospel I preach...

So Paul is sincere, truthful, loving, genuine. He is patient, kind, and good. He rejoices when others would weep and lament over tough times. He has no worldly goods but feels rich in Christ and so gives away to all that Gospel Good News he has to share. In return the world does nothing but heap abuse and scorn and false accusations on his head. And all of that is bad enough when it comes from pagans, Romans, and unbelievers of all stripes.

But Paul knows that the Corinthians know that he is including them in this litany of woe as co-conspirators with all the other opponents Paul is talking about...

When people close off their hearts toward one another—or toward a pastor—for whatever the reason, the likelihood of anyone’s being able to see Jesus clearly in that church starts to lessen. If we are supposed to be living temples of God’s own Holy Spirit and filled with love and grace—the same love and grace we all have already freely received from God—then conflicts and disputes and unloving actions calculated to make someone else unhappy are never neutral affairs...

We need the message and the truth of what Paul says at the outset: do not receive God’s grace in vain. Too much is at stake for the church to look no different from the rest of the world these days... “

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-7b-2/?type=lectionary_epistle Scott Hoezee

THE MARK CHALLENGE

Did you take the challenge to least read the book of Mark?

Mark 4:35-41; RCL, the same reading (Mark 5:21-43;; RCL, the same reading)

“Be still, my soul.” Oh, really? You don’t know what I’m going through! My life is a wreck! My finances are in free-fall. My health—oh, don’t get me started! It’s just one thing after another. First it’s this, then it’s that—I get one thing fixed, and then something else goes wrong. Relationships gone wrong, too. Loneliness, despair, depression. Well, and then there’s what’s going on in the news. A shooting in South Carolina, nine innocent people killed—in a church yet! Where was God in this? Asleep at the switch? Doesn’t he watch over his people? Doesn’t he watch over me? And you’re telling me to sing, “Be still, my soul”? Come on, get real!...”

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2015/06/keep-calm-jesus-is-in-the-boat-sermon-on-mark-435-41-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Pastor Charles Henrickson



The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 4th Chapter”

Jesus Calms a Storm

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, *“Let us go across to the other side.”* ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, *“Peace! Be still!”* And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, *“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”* ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

“The hardest thing is getting into the boat. You just have to get into the darn boat...”

“Sometimes it’s just a boat.

You know what I mean. There is no end to sermons on this story that allegorize the boat, and, for that matter, everything else in this sea passage tale.

You know how these sermons tend to go -- “Jesus is in the boat with you.” “How many times does it feel like you are in a storm and Jesus is asleep?” “What boats are you in at this point in your life?” “What are the storms that are tossing your life around?” None of this is necessarily bad. It’s just that the boat becomes a metaphor for all kinds of things rather than simply what it is -- a traveling vessel. A means by which to get from one place to another. Maybe the boat is simply a boat. Maybe the point is that Jesus is just trying to get us to the other side.

Because left to our own devices, we’d rather stay where we are. That’s human nature. But it also seems to be the nature of faith. We can’t seem to hear Jesus’ invitation -- “Let us go across to the other side.” How easy it is to stay in our comfort zones; to default to our pet theologies; to remain in what is known, even though that which is known has become unbearable. We would rather ignore the desperate need for change than make the change happen. So we sit. And we wait. For what? The right time? For someone else to make the first move? Maybe this is why Jesus doesn’t give the disciples any time to think about the trip -- “On that day ... ” We would think about it forever. “Thinking about it” is always one of our best excuses.

Here’s the problem, as if there is only one, with Jesus. He seems rather dissatisfied with letting us live on one side of the lake for too long. So he takes the disciples to the other side. And getting to the other side is no easy trip. Nor should we expect that to be the case. When we over-sentimentalize or spiritualize this story we end up overlooking the obvious -- that this boat trip was a means by which to get from one place to another. And, something equally as obvious -- that change, trading spaces, is rarely without its challenges. Getting to the other side means a boat ride for sure, a torrential downpour, and dead calm. That’s what happens when Jesus tries to move us from one place to another. But that’s also the nature of change.

If the disciples had said to Jesus, “Well, what if there is a storm?” they would have never gotten into the boat because there are always storms on the Sea of Galilee and when you least

expect it. If the disciples had said to Jesus, “Well, first tell us what’s on the other side?” they would have never gotten into the boat because what ended up happening in the country of the Gerasenes? You just can’t make this stuff up. “Wait, what? We are going to encounter a demon-possessed guy who lives in the cemetery. And you are going to send his demons into a herd of two thousand pigs. And then the pigs are going to go jump in the lake?” Who would believe that?

Because the necessity of the healing of the Gerasene demoniac necessitates a relocation. Not only a change of place but a change of space that puts us in the rather uncomfortable presence of the possessed...

The promise of this text is not just that Jesus is with you. Notice that Jesus does not say “You go over to the other side,” but “Let *us* go over to the other side.” Jesus was there all along, no matter what Jesus was doing, whether that be preaching about parables or sleeping on a pillow. The promise of this text is also that there is something on the other side that Jesus knows about -- and needs to get us to. Of course, the reality for the disciples, and for us, is that the other side is not all that rosy. It has its own set of challenges -- the disciples have to see Jesus differently, themselves differently. It means living into a new reality. And that takes some getting used to. Because when your location changes so does your perspective and others’ perspective of you. When your location changes, so do you. That’s pretty much how change works.

“Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck somewhere you don’t belong.” (Mandy Hale)

Perhaps the act of faith is not just the trust that Jesus will still the storm. The act of faith is taking Jesus’ invitation to heart. The act of faith is getting into the boat. The act of faith is believing that another side is not only possible, it is essential.”

<http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=3645> [Karoline Lewis](#)

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



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Competing Contemporary Lutheran Study Bibles

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Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

“...In 2009 the two largest Lutheran denominations in the United States published study Bibles from a Lutheran perspective, with nearly identical titles. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America published *Lutheran Study Bible*, as part of its Book of Faith Initiative, aimed to promote better knowledge of and a deeper interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.¹ The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod published *The Lutheran Study Bible*, with six goals or working principles in mind: justification by grace alone, Law and Gospel, means of grace, Scripture interprets Scripture, equipping the laity for works of service, presenting a uniquely Lutheran study Bible.² Because of the similar titles I will refer to them subsequently as ELCA and LCMS rather than as LSB and TLSB...

Study Bibles are to be commended and recommended since they invite use of the Bible, especially in our age of growing biblical illiteracy. They also are by definition limited because space is at a premium, and readers are bound to hunger quickly for deeper resources such as are offered by one volume commentaries on the entire Bible, or individual full length commentaries on each book of the Bible.⁴

These study Bibles under review, at first glance, have much in common. They are very large books: LCMS runs to 2,482 pages and ELCA to 2,112. These sizes compare favorably with the popular Harper Collins Study Bible, produced in cooperation with the Society of Biblical Literature,⁵ which has 2,270 pages, but it includes the Apocrypha. Neither ELCA nor LCMS includes the Apocrypha although Luther of course did in his complete Bible of 1534.⁶ Both contemporary volumes quote Luther a lot, with LCMS containing more citations of the Reformer,⁷ but it also quotes a number of church fathers (Irenaeus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, Jerome, etc.) and the second generation Lutheran reformer Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586)....

Among the authors of the study notes in the ELCA volume are twelve women. An additional five women contributed essays on Martin Luther and exegetical Lutheran perspectives. All the study notes in LCMS are by men. Two women are credited with arts, charts, and maps. The authors of the notes for individual books in LCMS are not identified; in ELCA they are...

The greatest difference between the volumes is theological and methodological. The ELCA uses historical criticism and other critical methods and offers an insightful article on faithful reading through cross-cultural and inter-religious lenses. The LCMS maintains the anticritical posture it turned to (or returned to) in the late 60s and early 70s of the last century. The position is often so extreme that anyone wishing help with difficult passages, wanting to know how to deal with modern scientific or cultural questions, or hopeful of finding the fruits of biblical research will go away sorrowing. ...

The anti-critical attitude in the LCMS is retained throughout the canon...The critical division of the book of Isaiah has become increasingly suspect. Attributing the whole book to Isaiah is again receiving favor;¹⁰ ELCA: Isaiah is a complex book, written and compiled by several prophets and editors, from 742 B.C.E. to the post exilic period, after 538 B.C.E...

- <http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein/Doc12/elcalcms.pdf>

Read a detailed response to questions raised by the historical critical method at:

- <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/PreusJAOReportoftheSynodicalPresident1971.pdf>