

Second Sunday in Lent (Reminiscere*) March 8, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

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<https://sermonquotes.com/authors/8016-the-gospel-2.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 708 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 429

“Lord, Thee I love with all my heart”

Martin Schalling... was born at Strassburg, April 21, 1532. He matriculated, in 1550, at the University of Wittenberg, where he became a favourite pupil of Melanchthon...When, in 1568, after the Elector Friedrich III., of the Palatinate, had adopted Calvinistic opinions as to order of service, &c, all the Lutheran clergy who would not conform were expelled, Schalling had to leave Amberg. But as Duke Ludwig, the son of the Elector, continued a Lutheran, he allowed Schalling to minister to the Lutherans at Vilseck... But when the clergy of the Oberpfalz were pressed to sign the Formula of Concord, Schalling hesitated to subscribe, holding that it dealt too harshly with the followers of Melanchthon. For this action he was banished from the court at Heidelberg; and after being confined to his house at Amberg, from 1580 to March 1583, he was finally deprived of his offices... He died at Nürnberg, Dec. 19 (29), 1608 (*Koch*, ii. 282, &c.). Though the above notice might seem to indicate that Schalling was an ardent polemic, yet this was not so. He was naturally a moderate man, and a man of peace; but during the period of 1550 to 1600, Protestant Germany was rent asunder by all manner of controversies, in which hardly any one with a conscience or an opinion could avoid being involved.

--Excerpts from John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907)

- https://hymnary.org/person/Schaling_MM
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S41YhH58eXM> "From the choir collection Reformation Hymns for Men's Voices", [Concordia Publishing House Music](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pNKX89LveE> "arranged for two-part choir and organ or piano by John A. Behnke. Voices begin in canon and then come together in harmony... designed for children's choir. [Concordia Publishing House Music](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ7sf2C75IA> "From the organ book Reformation Mosaics", [Concordia Publishing House Music](#)

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® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001
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O.T.– “I will show...make...bless...curse...give...”

Psalm – “he who keeps...he who keeps...is your keeper...Lord will keep...Lord will keep”

Epistle – “counted to him as righteousness... counted as righteousness... counts righteousness... through the righteousness of faith”

Gospel – “**Truly, truly, I say to you ...Truly, truly, I say to you ...Truly, truly, I say to you ... For God so loved the world**”

Genesis 12:1-9; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Genesis 12:1-4a (Next week: Exodus 17: 1-7; RCL, the same reading)

“In Lent, a season usually marked by repentance and humility, we are reminded this week of God's unconditional promises that are directed to us not through our own merit. God blesses us with the remarkable gift of life, even when our present circumstances point to states of barrenness. God's blessing is specific enough to address our particular conditions and universal enough to extend to all peoples of the earth. Like Abraham, all that is required of us is to “go” (Genesis 1:4a) as the Lord asks...” (continued after the reading)

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said^[a] to Abram, “Go from your country^[b] and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”^[c]

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, **6** Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^[d] of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. **8** From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. **9** And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

- a. [Genesis 12:1](#) Or *had said*
- b. [Genesis 12:1](#) Or *land*
- c. [Genesis 12:3](#) Or *by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves*
- d. [Genesis 12:6](#) Or *terebinth*

“The calling of Abram/Abraham is a fulcrum text, serving as a transitional point between what comes before it with what follows. Genesis 1--11, also known as the Primeval History, recounts the beginnings of the world. Two dominant themes emerge in these stories: 1) the tendency for human beings to rebel against their Creator and the consequences of judgment that follow; and 2) the continued blessing of God that seeks to address humanity in spite of divine judgment. The first theme finds expression in stories such as the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge (Genesis 3), Cain's killing of his brother Abel (Genesis 4), violence filling the earth prior to the flood (Genesis 6:1--7), and the erecting of a tower to the heavens in the story of Babel (Genesis 11). In each of these texts, God's judgment follows. Divine punishment, however, does not have the final word. The Lord continually finds a way to bless humanity, addressing them in their cursed condition through the covering of their nakedness (Genesis 3:21), the marking of Cain to protect him from further retribution (Genesis 4:15), and the establishing of a covenant with Noah after the flood (9:1--17). The conclusion to the Tower of Babel story, however, does not have an immediate blessing that balances the divine judgment. The people are left scattered over the face of the earth at the end of Genesis 11. The calling of Abram seeks to bring blessing to all the people of the earth, and hence addresses the effects of judgment after Babel. The Lord accomplishes this through the promises made to Abram and his descendents, through whom "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3b).

In Genesis 12:1--4, the narrator's focus moves from the broad landscape of world history in Genesis 1--11 to the particularities of one family's story. Genesis 12--50 recounts the stories of Israel's mothers and fathers: Abraham/Sarah, Isaac/Rebekah, and Jacob/Leah and Rachel. The divine blessing given to Abram is comprised of at least three features: 1) land (v. 1b); 2) making Abram a great nation and making his name great (v. 2); and 3) through Abram all the families of the earth shall be blessed (v. 3)..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=36 Frank M. Yamada Director of the Center for Asian American Ministries, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL

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“Abraham is presented to us as one who is constantly on the move and stopping at significant places. It is from that movement that the theological dimension of a "faith journey" is built in the narratives...

Abraham's family originated in Ur in ancient Babylonia (11:28-31), but the family had migrated to Haran on the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It was from this ancient and prosperous city that Abraham began his journey (v. 5)...

When Abraham and his clan reached Canaan they made two key stops at Shechem and at Bethel. They were both places that later became significant in the northern tribes' worship of God (Josh 24, Gen 35:6-7, 1 Sam 7:16). They were originally centers of Ba'al worship among the Canaanites that the Israelites took over and later adapted to Yahweh worship before they built the temple in Jerusalem...

On one level, the narrative here functions to tie these holy places back to Abraham. He made stops and camped near these holy sites. It was a way to outline Abraham's physical journey, but also a way to mark his faith journey. He came into contact with sacred places, and he encountered God and worshiped at these sacred sites that would have significance later. In

the literary and theological context of Genesis, this is a way to say that Abraham was establishing spiritual markers for the faith journey of Israel...

On another level, there is an even deeper theological significance to these two stops at Shechem and Bethel. The first stop was at Shechem (vv. 6-7). This is interesting historically as well as theologically. Centuries later under the leadership of Joshua Shechem would become the Israelites' main base of operations for all the northern territory they would attempt to conquer. It was also the place where Joshua would later call the people to assemble to renew their covenant with God (Josh 24)...

At Shechem, the Lord appeared to Abraham for the first time in the narrative. Before, God had only spoken to Abraham (v.1), so this is a significantly different encounter between Abraham and God. Here God in simple terms reaffirmed two dimensions of the promise, that Abraham would have a future through offspring and that he would have the security of the land. To that reaffirmation of the promise, Abraham responded by building an altar. In the cultural context of that time, an altar was basically an organized pile of stones that marked sacred sites or places of encounter with God... While the pile of stones as a memorial and as an altar are two different things, the significant aspect here is that these altars or memorials marked times of encounter with God. They were markers of the faith journey (cf. the significance of the memorial stones in Joshua 4).

Abraham then moved into the hill country to the east of Bethel, camping between Bethel and Ai (v. 8). The word Bethel means "house of God" and would later become an important religious center during the Israelite monarchy. The connection here with Ai also anticipates the later Israelite entry into the land under Joshua. These connections clearly ground Israel's history and journey of faith in Abraham's own journey...

For Abraham to call on the name of God here is to acknowledge God as the Promise Maker, and to submit himself to that God and that promise. At this point Abraham responded faithfully...

This reading closes with Abraham journeying "by stages" toward the Negeb (v. 9). There is an openness to this journey that reflects the unknown of the future into which Abraham is going. It is that uncertainty, and yet the willingness to continue the journey, that will unfold as one of the primary biblical definitions of faith in the Abraham story..."

➤ <http://www.criovoice.org/lectionary/YearA/Aproper5ot.html>

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Psalm 121; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 95:1-9; RCL, Psalm 95)

"Many readers of Psalm 121 have connected it with life's journey -- or at least with life's journeys.

A friend of mine always leads his family in reciting Psalm 121 when they depart on a journey. Another friend loves this psalm because it speaks words of promise about God's providence and protection on life's journey. Another friend who has written quite a bit about the psalms calls this one, "A Psalm for Sojourners."¹

One reason interpreters have connected this poem with the idea of journey is that it is part of the "psalms of ascent." These psalms, 120-134, all bear the superscription shir-hamma'alot or shir-lammal'alot translated in the NRSV as "a song of ascents" or "a song of ascent."

The best guess is that these psalms were collected to be used in conjunction with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For that reason, Psalm 121 is most commonly understood as a liturgy of blessing for one about to leave on a journey..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2002
[Rolf Jacobson](#) Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

My Help Comes from the LORD A Song of Ascents.

- 121** I lift up my eyes to the hills.
 From where does my help come?
- 2** My help comes from the LORD,
 who made heaven and earth.
- 3** He will not let your foot be moved;
 he who keeps you will not slumber.
- 4** Behold, he who keeps Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5** The LORD is your keeper;
 the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
- 6** The sun shall not strike you by day,
 nor the moon by night.
- 7** The LORD will keep you from all evil;
 he will keep your life.
- 8** The LORD will keep
 your going out and your coming in
 from this time forth and forevermore.

"The passages for the second Sunday of Lent all consider issues of human faith and God's faithfulness.

Genesis 12:1-4a and Romans 4:1-5, 13-17* focus on Abraham and his faithful response to God's call to leave his country, kindred, and father's house (Genesis 12:1) and travel to the land God would show him. Thus, the subject of these passages is a journey that requires trust in God.

Psalm 121 also pertains to the journey of faith that requires reliance on God. The setting of the psalm is travel to or from Jerusalem as part of a religious pilgrimage. The psalm's title, "A Song of Ascents" perhaps indicates the psalm was intended for use during pilgrimage to Jerusalem for one of Israel's festivals. Though the significance of the term "ascents" is not absolutely certain, the same root appears in Psalm 122:4 to refer to a ritual journey to the holy

city (see also Ezra 7:9; Psalm 24:3). Psalm 121 is part of a group of psalms (Psalms 120-134) placed together for that purpose.

Statements of confidence in God's protection and declarations of God's faithful character dominate Psalm 121. These statements and declarations appear together as a liturgy, as indicated by the shift in voices throughout the psalm. Verses 1-2, and possibly verse 4, seem to be voiced by a pilgrim, who perhaps represents the whole company of travelers. The remainder of the psalm may be the response of a priest if the setting is departure from the temple. Or the response may be the words of a travel leader, or one who is remaining at home, if the setting is the initial departure for Jerusalem. Regardless of the exact orientation of the travelers, the main issue in the psalm is the safety God provides through constant attention to the faithful pilgrims..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3187 [Jerome Creach](#) Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn

**These are the reading from the Revised Common Lectionary which varies slightly from the LC-MS.*

Romans 4:1-8, 13-17; RCL, Romans 1-5, 13-17 (Romans 5:1-8; RCL, Romans 5:1-11)

(Romans) "puts before us a major understanding of what God was up to in Jesus and long before that, in Abraham. This chapter speaks to the very character of God. Granted, the vocabulary and speech patterns are not easy soundbites for contemporary audiences. Granted gospel narratives offer a more direct way into preaching. But this chapter, too, relies on a story that is part of a much bigger one.

The question wrestled with in this text is simply, "how big is Abraham's family?" The answer Paul offers, derived from his reading of Genesis 15:5, is that Abraham's family is as big as the numbers of persons who have faith in God. Jews are part of the family to be sure. So are Gentiles who believe that God has rescued them through the obedience (crucifixion and resurrection) of Jesus..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=31 [Sarah Henrich](#) Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in^a him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;
⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

- a. [Romans 4:5](#) Or *but trusts*; compare verse [24](#)

The Promise Realized Through Faith

¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

“When we step into Romans 4 we have to remember that we are coming to the final stages of an argument that has been unfolding since at least the middle of Romans 1.

Paul has been articulating reasons for his strong conviction that Jews and Gentiles stand on equal ground before God.

In Romans, Paul is not contrasting faith in general with works in general. This is not an argument about believing versus doing. On the contrary, Paul can describe the entire goal of his ministry as bringing about the right kind of doing, the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5). Instead, he is contrasting entrusting ourselves to the specific, saving narrative of Jesus, with defining ourselves by the Law that God gave to Israel. The question that looms over Romans 4, then, is this: Do Gentiles have to become Jews, by adopting the Jewish Law, in order to be part of the people of God, the promised children of Abraham?...

The identity of God is never far from Paul’s claims about the breadth of the Gospel. The God behind this story promised Christ beforehand in scripture (Romans 1:2). The God who sent Jesus is the God not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles (Romans 3:29). And he is the God who can promise a cosmic inheritance and a multinational paternity to Abraham because he is the God who “gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Romans 4:17).

Resurrection might seem to come out of the blue here. But Paul is going to use life out of death to describe both the birth of Isaac and the Christ event. Isaac is born to Abraham as to one who “had already died” and to Sarah whose womb was “dead” (Romans 4:19, literal

translation). Even as Abraham believed God about the birth of Isaac, so those who respond to the Gospel believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 4:23).

In the end, what connects Abraham to his descendants is not simply a human disposition of faith. It is the common object of our faith in the God who gives life to the dead, the God who, through the resurrection of Jesus, is making all things new.”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3194 J.R. Daniel Kirk
Pastoral Director, Newbegin House of Studies Fellows Program, San Francisco, California

John 3:1-17, RCL, the same reading or Matthew 17:1-9 (John 4:5-26 (27-30, 39-42): RCL, John 4:5-42)

The obvious challenge in preaching this reading may seem to be how to say anything fresh, meaningful, and new about the world's most famous Bible verse (verse 16 – “For God...”)

The less obvious, but I would argue more important, challenge is not allowing the world's most famous Bible verse to cloud the significant and even scandalous message of Jesus that a close reading of the larger passage yields... (continued after the reading)

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 3rd Chapter”

You Must Be Born Again

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³ Jesus answered him, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again^[b] he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.^[c] ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You^[d] must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind^[e] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**

⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, **“Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you^[f] do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended**

into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[a] ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[b]

For God So Loved the World

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world,^[c] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John the Baptist Exalts Christ Verses 22-36

- a. [John 3:2](#) Greek *him*
- b. [John 3:3](#) Or *from above*; the Greek is purposely ambiguous and can mean both *again* and *from above*; also verse [7](#)
- c. [John 3:6](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
- d. [John 3:7](#) The Greek for *you* is plural here
- e. [John 3:8](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
- f. [John 3:11](#) The Greek for *you* is plural here; also four times in verse [12](#)
- g. [John 3:13](#) Some manuscripts add *who is in heaven*
- h. [John 3:15](#) Some interpreters hold that the quotation ends at verse [15](#)
- i. [John 3:16](#) Or *For this is how God loved the world*

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

Setting the Scene

John is a master of dramatic settings, symbolism and imagery and so it is valuable to note that Nicodemus, a Pharisee and Jewish leader, arrives at night, a time of unbelief, ignorance, and temptation in the Fourth Gospel. He comes ostensibly to learn more about this young rabbi, but perhaps does not want his colleagues to know of his interest. He has, if not faith, at least faithful curiosity.

In typical Johannine fashion, Jesus engages Nicodemus in what seems like a non sequitur: Nicodemus praises Jesus as one who comes from God and Jesus, in return, asserts that no one can see the kingdom without being born from *anaothen*, which can be translated as again, anew, or from above. Nicodemus clearly takes Jesus to mean the first of these three possibilities, and his confusion invites a discourse from Jesus about the difference between Spirit and flesh...

While the appointed lectionary ends at verse 17, the dramatic unit continues to verse 21 and it would be well worth extending the pericope. In these last verses, the Evangelist -- it is difficult to tell if Jesus is still speaking or John is narrating -- introduces a major theme of the

Fourth Gospel: Jesus always creates a crisis (literally, *krisis* in Greek, which we normally translate as "judgment") for those he encounters by calling forth from them one of two responses: either belief or unbelief...

Signs and Wonders

There are several fruitful preaching possibilities in this dense passage, though each will require some careful teaching so that the kerygmatic impulse of the sermon can be understood and heard. The **first** deals with the matter of "signs." A potent and persistent theme in John, Jesus' actions are understood not as miracles but as signs, pointers to God's mysterious and redemptive work. In this passage, Nicodemus comes praising Jesus' signs (3:2), yet misunderstands them. Jesus isn't simply a great teacher, but the one who reveals God's essential character of love for the whole world (3:16)...

A **second** possibility will be to focus on Nicodemus. At this point in the narrative, he is not portrayed with great sympathy. He comes at night, perhaps fearful of the opinions of his peers. He misunderstands Jesus because he takes his words literally and is therefore regularly confused about what Jesus says. And he disappears from sight having shown no signs of greater comprehension or faith. Yet he will reappear at two later points in the narrative. In chapter 7 (45-52), he offers a somewhat hesitant defense of Jesus, and in chapter 19 (38-42) he accompanies Joseph of Arimathea, named a secret believer, with an exorbitant amount of spices for Jesus' burial...

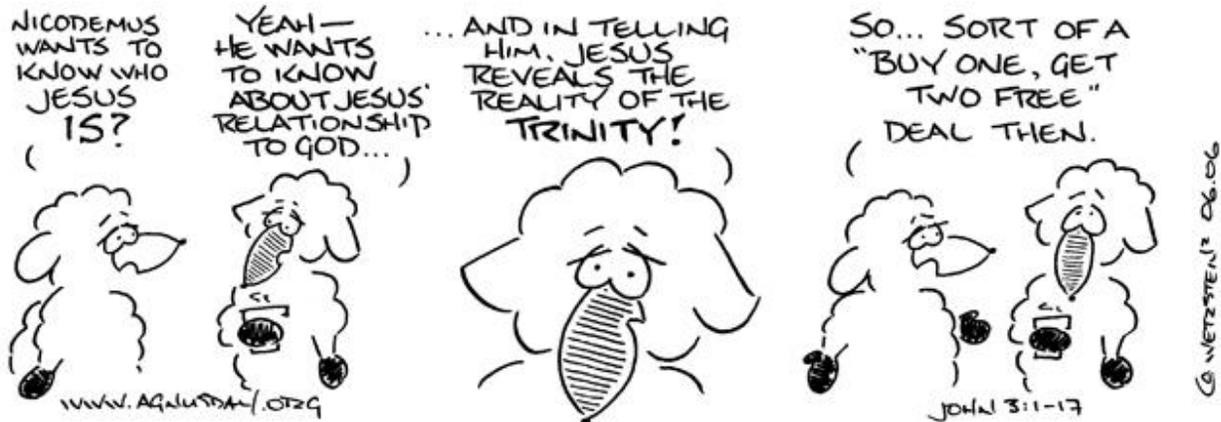
Faith, in John's gospel, is always a verb, and believing may take some longer than others.

A **third** possibility is to focus on the matter of being born "from above." Because of the "born again" movement, this can be somewhat challenging. The preacher's task is neither to critique Evangelical experience nor endorse a less-than-helpful reading of a conversion episode as necessary to justifying faith. Faith, as we just saw, is not a once-and-done action of the believer but rather is an ongoing work of the Spirit who, as Jesus says, blows where it chooses (3:8). For some the coming of the Spirit and faith will be a dramatic event; for others it will move more slowly. Whichever the case, John would shift attention away from our specific actions - the crisis that Jesus creates makes plain the disposition of the heart more than calls for a particular decision -- and instead invites us to witness the powerful and unpredictable activity of the Spirit. Believers therefore should pray and give thanks for God's Spirit, eager and ready to testify to God's ongoing activity in their lives.

A **fourth** possibility involves in a careful unpacking of verse 16. It holds a special place in the hearts of countless Christians for good reason, as it lays bare God's love for the whole world. Interestingly, because world (*kosmos* in Greek) normally signifies that entity that is hostile to God's will (see 16:33, 17:9-19), one might capture the force and scope of God's unfathomable love by translating the verse, "For God so loved the *God-hating* world...!" Indeed, God's love is not only unfathomable but also somewhat offensive.

Notice that God does not ask the world if it wishes to be the recipient of God's love. God just goes ahead and loves, and not only loves but gives the world God's only beloved Son over to death... "

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=903
[David Lose](#) Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.



“When you stop and really think about it, the Holy Trinity is such a deal. One God, but then THREE persons just thrown in as part of the package.”

- *Agnus Day appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>*

This reading is also used as the Gospel for Trinity Sunday in Year B:

“This well-known passage from John is a rarity in the Gospels because it shows Jesus discussing in some detail all three persons of the Trinity. Jesus’ words here should not be mistaken for a theological treatise on the one God in three persons, however. Instead, in this encounter Jesus challenges Nicodemus to move from theory to practice, from knowledge to faith, from curiosity to commitment...

In his conversation with Nicodemus Jesus refers to all three persons of the Trinity. God is the One who loves the cosmos and who, unwilling to let it perish, gives the Son. God sends the Son not to condemn the world and its inhabitants, but to rescue and restore them (the Greek word translated as “save” or “saved” in John 3:17 is *sozo*, which means save in the sense of rescue, heal, and make whole). Jesus is both the only Son of God and the human one, the Son of Man. He descended from heaven and has ascended to heaven, thus connecting heaven and earth. He remains in constant contact with God the Sender, revealing God by bearing witness to what he has seen and known. Like the serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness (see Numbers 21:4–9), Jesus will be lifted up both to expose human sinfulness and to save people from its deadly effects. Here as elsewhere in John, “lifted up” refers to the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus as a single whole (see John 8:28; 12:32, 34)...

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3673
[Judith Jones](#) St. Stephen & St. Luke by the Sea Episcopal Churches, Waldport, Ore.

How are you doing with *The Matthew Challenge?*

*Reminiscere (to remember) is the Latin name for the 2nd Sunday in Lent. It is the first word of the Introit for that Sunday, “Reminiscere miserationum tuarum, Domine, et misericordiarum tuarum quae a saeculo sunt.” “Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old,...” from Psalm 25:6 (Numbered as Psalm 24 in the Latin Vulgate)