

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany January 29, 2017

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.*

Available on line at:

www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies

or

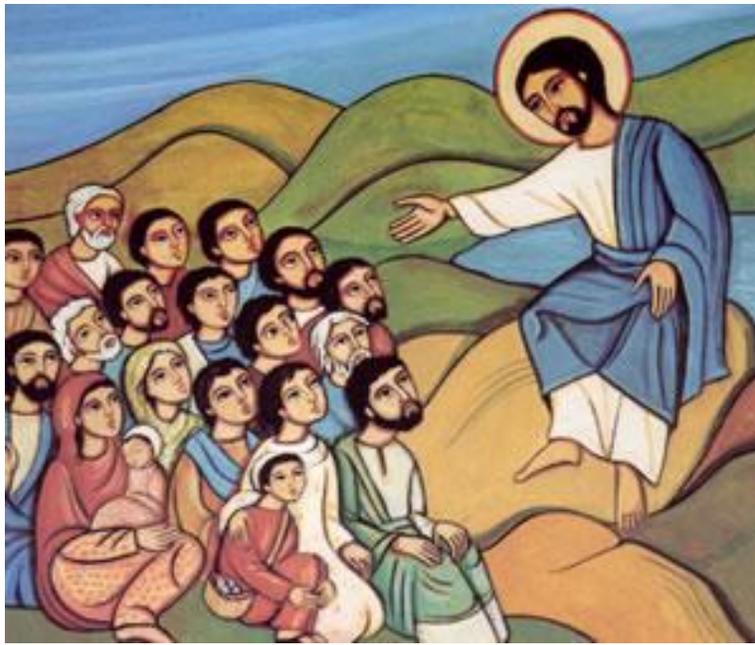
**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

January 26, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.

E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<http://saintcbible.blogspot.com/2011/01/looking-ahead-to-fourth-sunday-in.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 842 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed

“Son of God, eternal Savior”

[Robert Morehead](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3POvtRh-Xgc) will introduce the hymn this week:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3POvtRh-Xgc> He has a series “Hymn of the Week”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7M9yLOJdy0> An alternate melody.

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

Micah 6:1-8; RCL, (Revised Common Lectionary), the same reading (Next Week: Isaiah 58:3-9a; RCL, the same reading plus optional addition of verse 9b-12)

“The historical situation of this text is not entirely clear.

A setting during the reign of King Hezekiah in the late eighth century is likely. At the same time, hints of exilic and postexilic periods (e.g., rebuilding city walls; restoring national boundaries, 7:11) may reflect expansions of the text over the years in view of new community situations.

The language of “(covenant) lawsuit” is sometimes used for this text, but that is an unlikely designation, for such language tends to reduce these verses to matters of legal import. The fundamental issue at stake between God and Israel has to do with a relationship that needs close attention. The repeated use of the word “what” (6:3, 5, 6, 8) serves to raise questions and issues that are to be addressed by both people and God...This text is similar to Jesus’ combination of two other Old Testament texts (Mark 12:28-31): Love your God and your neighbor as yourself (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18).”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1859 [Terence E. Fretheim](#)
Elva B. Lovell Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

The Indictment of the LORD

6 Hear **what** the LORD says:

Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the LORD has an indictment against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³ “O my people, **what have I done to you?**

How have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised,
and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,

and **what happened** from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.”

What Does the LORD Require?

⁶“**With what shall I come before the LORD,**
 and bow myself before God on high?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
 with calves a year old?
⁷Will the LORD be pleased with^[a] thousands of rams,
 with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
 Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
 the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
⁸He has told you, O man, what is good;
 and **what does the LORD require of you**
 but to do justice, and to love kindness,^[b]
 and to walk humbly with your God?

- a. [Micah 6:7](#) Or *Will the Lord accept*
- b. [Micah 6:8](#) Or *steadfast love*

“...You know Micah 6:8 by now. You can say it with me.

“What does the Lord require of you?

Do justice.

Love kindness.

And walk humbly with your God.”

See, you got it. You know it. Take those words home. Stuff them in your pant pockets with your keys. Slip those words into your shirt pocket along with all pens and pencils and carry those words with you. Put those words into your billfold along with the other credit cards and have them available any time. Put those words into your heart and mind and easily carry them within. To do justice. Love kindness. And walk humbly with your God...”

http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_a_micah.htm

This extensive Bible study site by Pastor Edward Marquart is worth visiting.

Psalm 15; RCL, the same Psalm (Psalm 112:1-9; RCL adds verse 10 as an option)

Who Shall Dwell on Your Holy Hill? A Psalm of David.

15 O LORD, **who** shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

²He **who** walks blamelessly and does what is right
 and speaks truth in his heart;
³**who** does not slander with his tongue
 and does no evil to his neighbor,
 nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

⁴ in **whose** eyes a vile person is despised,
 but **who** honors those who fear the LORD;
who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
⁵ **who** does not put out his money at interest
 and does not take a bribe against the innocent.
 He **who** does these things shall never be moved.

“...Psalm 15 was most likely spoken by priests who confronted worshipers entering the Temple Mount to join in the worship of God in the temple.¹ As such, Psalm 15 links worship and discipleship...

Deep reflection on the reality of being in God's presence inevitably leads us to ask, "How ought we to behave?" Psalm 15 offers eleven answers. "To walk 'blamelessly' is no claim of absolute sinless perfection, but describes a life that is 'whole' and 'complete' in its consistent devotion to Yahweh's way."² Those who "do what is right" endeavor to fulfill God's expectations and regularly avail themselves of God's gift of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration as they seek to maintain their relationship with God and neighbor...In sum, those who dwell with God abandon trusting their ability to shape and control their lives and the world and instead put their trust in God...Psalm 115 concludes with the promise, "Those who do these things shall never be moved" (15:5)...the psalmist nevertheless intends to convey that those who dwell with God have God's help and security here and now..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=619 **Craig A. Satterlee**
Bishop, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Lansing, Mich.

I Corinthians 1:18-31; RCL, the same reading (I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16); RCL, the same reading and options) The Corinthian readings began January 15 and will continue through the rest of Epiphany, February 19.

“That's the stupidest thing I ever heard!” Anyone ever said that to you, or about something you happen to believe? Is there anything more insulting or disquieting than to have someone question one of the major tenets of your faith – or to suggest that the whole thing is rubbish?

And don't think it doesn't happen. For many of the doctrines of the Christian faith are disturbing to those who don't believe them. Sure there are the live-and-let-live types. But to those who take the time to understand what Christianity actually teaches – they are often angered or offended. And they'll sometimes tell you how foolish they think you are to believe it.

But this isn't a sermon about them. This is a sermon for us. What does it do to us when someone tells us our faith is stupid? That we are fools? Does even a part of us believe it?...”

<http://preachrblog.blogspot.com/2011/01/sermon-1-corinthians-118-31-epiphany-4.html> Tom Chryst

“Associate Pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church, Keller, Texas. Former Missionary to Singapore. Sinner and Saint, in the Lutheran tradition. Graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1999. Husband of one, father of three. I also play a lot of chess.”

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach^[a] to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,^[b] not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being^[c] might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him^[d] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

- a. [1 Corinthians 1:21](#) Or the folly of preaching
- b. [1 Corinthians 1:26](#) Greek according to the flesh
- c. [1 Corinthians 1:29](#) Greek no flesh
- d. [1 Corinthians 1:30](#) Greek And from him

“We usually think of the gospel as something that non-Christians need to hear, but the New Testament makes very clear that it is also Christians who need to understand the gospel. Believing the gospel is not only the means by which you become a Christian; it is also the means by which you are delivered in your Christian life from all the causes of disagreements, factions, dissensions, pressures of lust, and so forth. The heart of the gospel, Paul says, is the cross of Jesus Christ, and he brings us to that in verse 17 of chapter 1:

***For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel,
and not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.***

The theme of this next section is the power of the cross, and Paul is going to show us clearly, in a very profound passage, what the cross does in human thinking and in human affairs. The cross, of course, has become the symbol of Christianity today. People wear it on chains around their necks; we use it as decorations in various places. We have become so familiar with the cross that we have forgotten much of the impact it had in the first century. For these early Christians, and for those among whom they lived, it was a horrible symbol. We would get much closer to its impact today if we substituted an electric chair for the cross. Wouldn't it seem strange, driving across this country, to see church steeples with electric chairs on top?

The cross is not the whole of the gospel. Some people have misunderstood that from this letter, because Paul said that when he came to Corinth he came determined not to preach anything among them "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Before this letter is over, however, the apostle is going to

write a great section on the resurrection of Christ. That is part of the gospel, too. But the cross was particularly needed in Corinth, as it is needed in our American churches, because the word of the cross is the cure for all human division...”

<http://server.firefighters.org/stedman/stedmandvd/1corinthians/1corinthians.html> Ray C Stedman

<http://www.newhopelutheran.net/Glory.php> has an interesting opening description of the congregation at Corinth. This congregation in Florida looks to be a witness in its community.

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 5th Chapter” “Glory to You, O Lord”

Matthew 5:1-12; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 5:13-20, RCL, the same reading)

“When Jesus ascends a mountain and begins to address the crowds (verses 1-2), the reader is expected to make the connection to another teacher (Moses), and another mountain (Sinai).

And soon enough, Jesus will complete that picture by offering instruction in righteousness -- the Sermon on the Mount will have plenty to say about what we, as kingdom people, should and should not do.

But that’s not how his famous sermon begins. It begins with a list, but not with a list of “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” Too often, the preacher tries to make the Beatitudes into law. “Be merciful,” the preacher exhorts, “and you will receive mercy.” That may be true at times, but it is not what Jesus is saying here...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2203 **Lance Pape**
Granville and Erlene Walker Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas

5 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

The Beatitudes

² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons^[a] of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

a. [Matthew 5:9](#) Greek *huiioi*; see Preface (of the Lutheran Study Bible)

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

“HERE the evangelist with a formal stately preface declares how Christ disposed himself for the sermon he was about to deliver; that he went upon a mountain, and sat down, and opened his mouth; so that we see he was in earnest. ***These are the three things, it is commonly said, that mark a good preacher; first, that he take his place; secondly, that he open his mouth and say something; thirdly, that he know when to stop.***

To take his place, that means that he assume a position as a master or preacher, who can and ought to do it, as one called for this purpose and not coming of his own accord, but to whom it is a matter of duty and obedience; so that he may say: “I come, not hurried hither by my own purpose and preference, but I must do it, by virtue of my office...”

The next thing is that he opens his mouth. That belongs (as above said) also to a preacher, that he do not keep his mouth shut, and not only publicly perform his official duty so that every one must keep silence and let him take his proper place as one who is divinely authorized and commanded, but also that he briskly and confidently open his mouth, that is, to preach the truth and what has been committed to him; that he be not silent or merely mumble, but bear witness, fearless and unterrified, and speak the truth out frankly, without regarding or sparing any one, no matter who or what is struck by it...

For the word of God is not here for the purpose of teaching how a maid or man servant is to work in the house and earn his or her bread, or how a burgomaster is to rule a farmer to plough or make hay. In short, it neither gives nor shows temporal good things by which one maintains *this* life, for reason has already taught all this to every one; but its purpose is to teach how we are to attain to *thai (this)* life, and it teaches thee to use the present life, and to nourish the belly here as long as it lasts; yet, so that thou mayest know where thou art to abide and live when this must come to an end.

If now the time comes for preaching of another life that we are to be concerned about, and for the sake of which we are not to regard this one as if we wanted to remain here forever, then contention and strife begin, so that the world will not endure it. ***If then a preacher cares more for his belly and worldly living, he does not do his duty***; he stands up indeed and babbles in the pulpit, but he does not preach the truth, does not really open his mouth; if there seems to be trouble ahead he keeps quiet and avoids hitting anybody. Observe, this is why Matthew prefaces his account with the statement that Christ, as a true preacher, ascends the mountain and cheerfully opens his mouth, teaches the truth, and rebukes both false teaching and living, as we shall hear in what follows...” <http://www.godrules.net/library/luther/37luther1.htm>

“The familiarity of the beatitudes presents the preacher with a challenge.

Our hearers may have pre-conceived ideas of what they are about, or skepticism of our ability to say anything fresh about them...If we look carefully at Jesus' words, however, we find that they are much more than moral platitudes or mottos to live by...

Context

The beatitudes introduce the Sermon on the Mount, a collection of Jesus' teachings. Matthew places the Sermon at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, emphasizing that Jesus is

the authoritative teacher of God's people. ..Then, Jesus climbs a mountain with the crowd he has so excited and sits down in the posture of a teacher encircled by his newly-called disciples. They are the primary targets of his instruction in the principles of life in the kingdom of heaven...

Content

A key principle of embracing this life is "blessedness." This is a refrain that runs throughout verses 5-10: those are blessed who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who are meek, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, who are persecuted. The word "blessed" does not mean "holy," and neither does it mean "happy" in the sense of being in a good mood. Rather, the word, "blessed" refers to a fortunate state of life. Jesus is saying that those who are poor in spirit are fortunate! It may surprise us that he speaks these words about those whose present circumstances seem so unfortunate.

Jesus can speak such words because he is revealing a kingdom perspective. The first and the last of the nine beatitudes extend his proclamation of the good news by applying the presence of the kingdom of heaven to the poor and persecuted (verses 3, 10). These beatitudes act like bookends for the rest of them, indicating that the kingdom of heaven is the controlling concept of the section. It is so because those who possess the kingdom are "blessed."... After listing the beatitudes, Jesus says, "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely *on my account*" (verse 12). The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who suffer because of their faithfulness to Jesus. But Jesus is also calling them to follow his own way, since he himself will suffer for his faithfulness to God, trusting that God will vindicate him.

While Jesus affirms the present experience of the kingdom of heaven in verses 3 and 10, he promises future vindication for the unfortunate in verses 4-9. While the verbs in the second half of the beatitudes in verses 3 and 10 are in the present tense, the verbs in the second half of the beatitudes verses 4-9 are in the future tense.

The promise of future vindication does not mean, however, that the focus is entirely future. Jesus insists that God has the final word, bringing assurance into the present. This is why he can say, "Blessed *are* those who mourn...blessed *are* the meek...blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...blessed *are* the merciful...blessed *are* the pure in heart...blessed *are* the peacemakers." Jesus gives his followers eyes to see that the future is certain and this transforms the present..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=863 **Elizabeth Shively**
Lecturer in New Testament Studies, University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews, Scotland, UK



Agnus Day appears with the permission of <http://www.agnusday.org/>