

2nd Sunday of Easter April 19, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran 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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- ✦ **Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
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<http://livingthelectionary.blogspot.com/2016/04/easter-2-c-john-2019-31.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 470/471 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 208

“O sons and daughters of the King”

“Although this hymn is attributed to Jean Tisserand (d. 1494), a popular French Franciscan preacher of the 17th century, it is doubtful that he was the author. The roots of the hymn text stretch back to the early 1500s, when a Latin poem was published under the title “A Joyous Chant for the Time of Easter.” That poem was translated into French sometime in the 17th century and used in liturgical settings in France. It was used there on Easter evening in the Roman Catholic Mass.

The English text is from the pen of John Mason Neale (1818–66), a hymn writer and translator whose work is reflected in 22 of the hymns in Lutheran Service Book. Neale was an Anglican priest in England who wrote and translated many hymns. There are many English translations of this hymn, but his has become the standard English text...

Stanza 1 introduces the hymn by addressing the worshipping congregation directly as “sons and daughters of the King.” The concluding stanza returns to this address by inviting the congregation to raise hearts and voices to God. In between these first and last stanzas, the stories from Mark and John are told...

Stanzas 2 and 3 of the hymn focus on Mark 16:5–7. The two stanzas condense and tell the story of the women going to the tomb to look for Jesus. They encounter an angel who announces that Jesus has risen and that He will go and meet the disciples in Galilee. There is in this short story surprise and promise. ■ How are the women surprised by the angel’s announcement? What had they expected to find? ■ What promise does the angel make?

Stanzas 4–8 recount the appearance of Jesus in the Upper Room as told in John 20. It is a literal and close telling of the story in poetic form...”

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD-N73y5uDs> Thank you again to [Andrew Remillard](#). Here is another of his recordings on piano to the THL page and all ten verses.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGZo-hEsAtA> O Sons and Daughters of the King/I Know That My Redeemer Lives/Jesus Christ is Risen Today Each melody is played once. All Verses are included in the link. Magnificent Christian Hymns (Vol.1) Recorded in St. Peter & Paul Church in Kirchdorf, Switzerland. Trumpet: Timothy Moke, Arizona Pipe Organ: Georg Masanz, Switzerland

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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During the season of Easter the Old Testament reading is replaced with a reading from The Book of Acts. The Old Testament/Epistle titles are changed to 1st and 2nd reading.

“All three Scripture readings today reveal that Satan is on the attack against the people of God. His aim is always to rob the believer of their faith. He attempts to prevent the Gospel from

moving forward. His aim is always to rob the believer of their relationship with God. He has various techniques..."

- https://www.zionclyman.org/files/2014-04-27%20sermon%20Acts%205_29-42.pdf Pastor Michael Schempf Zion Lutheran, Clyman, WI

1st Reading – “We must obey God rather than men.”

Psalm – “Praise ... (thirteen times)”

2nd Reading – “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope”

Gospel – “*“Peace be with you.”... “Peace be with you.”... “Peace be with you.”*”

Acts 5:29-42; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Acts 2:14a, 22-32 (Next week: Acts 2:14a, 36-

“The apostles were doing what they believed they were commissioned to do. Unfortunately, this conflicted with what others believed and how others lived. In this particular instance the apostles’ witness conflicted with the ideas of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. Later in Acts 19 Paul’s witness will conflict with the town of Ephesus and the economy that revolved around worship of the goddess Artemis.

The earlier stage of the current episode finds the apostles in prison because of their witness (Acts 5:12-19). But why? They just wanted everyone to know Jesus loved them, didn’t they? After all, isn’t that the essence of the gospel message? If this is the case, something doesn’t quite compute. Nowhere in Acts does anyone proclaim Jesus’ “love.” Such a benign message would not land the apostles in prison, either. While we’re not given clear reasons why the leadership did not agree with the disciples’ proclamation of Jesus, it is clear that they were doing something disagreeable that brought persecution...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1616
[Kyle Fever](#) Director of Beyond Ministries, Ingham-Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camps, Lake Okoboji, Iowa

Ananias and Sapphira Verses 1-11

Many Signs and Wonders Done Verses 12-16

The Apostles Arrested and Freed Verses 17-42

... ²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

³³ When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

³⁴ But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law

held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵ And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶ For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷ After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸ So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice, ⁴⁰ and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

"Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed! The lessons from Acts for the Sundays of Easter provide the preacher with a great opportunity to reflect with Luke on the present and living power of the resurrected Lord for new life in community. It will be helpful to keep at the ready the themes that inspire these Acts texts with the particular imaginative stamp of Luke's grand two-volume conception of the story of Jesus.

Luke opens his gospel by describing its first characters, Zechariah and Elizabeth, as "righteous" (Luke 1:6). When at the end of the gospel at the foot of the cross the centurion praises God and announces that this man was indeed "righteous" (24:47), the story of Jesus has come full circle. Throughout Luke's gospel, righteousness (or justice) is constantly re-imagined in terms of the necessary "today" of God's salvation, announced by the angels to the shepherds, "To you has been born today a Savior who is Christ the Lord" (2:11). "The scriptures had to be fulfilled" the resurrected Jesus announces to his disciples (24:44), and then commissions them as witnesses to this salvation--constituted in the message of repentance and forgiveness--which now is to be proclaimed to all nations under the authorizing promise and power of God's Spirit (24:47-49).

These central themes, even if not always explicit, continue to energize each episode of the narrative of Acts. They are:

1. *The presence and power of God's Spirit* ("You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." 1:8).
2. *The commissioning for witness and mission* ("you will be my witnesses..." 1:8).
3. *The Message: God raised Jesus from the dead* ("it was impossible for him to be held by its power..." 2:24).
4. *A promise that is for all peoples* ("for everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 2:39).
5. *A promise that shapes a new community* ("All who believed were together and had all things in common." 2:44).

"God raised Jesus from the dead" echoes in the numerous speeches in Acts. Resurrection life is here and now. Faith is seeking to born. "Why are you standing here looking up into heaven?" the heavenly messengers ask the disciples (2:11), as if to say, "Get busy." The angel's promise to Mary was that with God every word of promise is possible (Luke 1:37). Acts will teach us along with this early disciple community that in the midst of the "today" of the resurrection promise, each hearer needs to be ready for the surprising ways of God's salvation as the Spirit shapes new identities and configurations of God's people..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=560 James Boyce Emeritus
Professor of New Testament and Greek, **Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN**

Psalm 148; RCL, Psalm 16 (Psalm 116:1-14; RCL, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19)

This Psalm is used for Years A, B, and C for the Second Sunday of Easter (Year C only for RCL). The Lutheran Lectionary also uses it for the Fifth Sunday of Easter in Years B and C. It is also used for the First Sunday after Christmas in the RCL lectionary for year B. The Historic One-Year lectionary does not use it at all.

"Psalm 148 calls for universal praise in some of the loveliest poetry in the entire Psalter, indeed, in all of the world's literature. Composed of two equal stanzas (verses 1-6 calling everything in the heavens to praise the Lord and verses 7-12 issuing the same summons to everything on the earth) and a two verse conclusion addressed to everything and everyone, especially Israel, Psalm 148 is a masterpiece of balance. It uses the parallelism typical of Hebrew poetry, and it augments that parallelism with the use of pairings that are designed to include everything bordered by the pairs: angels/heavenly hosts, sun and moon/shining stars, highest heavens/waters above the skies, sea monsters/ocean depths, lightning/hail, small creatures/flying birds, old men and children, etc..."

- https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-5c/?type=the_lectionary_psalms
Stan Mast Stan spent 41 years in parish ministry ...In 2012, Stan retired and then promptly un-retired to return to Calvin as Adjunct Professor of Preaching.

Praise the Name of the LORD

148 **Praise** the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

² **Praise** him, all his angels;

praise him, all his hosts!

³ **Praise** him, sun and moon,

praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ **Praise** him, you highest heavens,

and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them **praise** the name of the LORD!

For he commanded and they were created.

⁶ And he established them forever and ever;

he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away. ^[a]

⁷ **Praise** the LORD from the earth,
 you great sea creatures and all deeps,
⁸ fire and hail, snow and mist,
 stormy wind fulfilling his word!
⁹ Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars!
¹⁰ Beasts and all livestock,
 creeping things and flying birds!
¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the earth!
¹² Young men and maidens together,
 old men and children!
¹³ Let them **praise** the name of the LORD,
 for his name alone is exalted;
 his majesty is above earth and heaven.
¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
 for the people of Israel who are near to him.
Praise the LORD!

“Hallelujah” means “praise the LORD.” It’s the first and last Hebrew word in this Psalm. As the book of Psalms comes to a close, these last Psalms call on us to shout “Hallelujah” and praise the LORD. Notice this is not the regular word for “lord” but the special Hebrew word that’s translated into English with capital letters. Sometimes it’s transliterated as “Yahweh” or “Jehovah.” You see it in the letter “j,” “a,” “h” at the end of “Hallelujah.” This is the special name that the one true God has chosen to use to reveal himself. It means that he is the “HE-IS” God, the eternal “I-AM” who does not change.

That name alone gives us every reason to praise him and shout “Hallelujah” --and not only us. The Psalm calls on everything and everyone to praise the Lord. It starts in the heavens calling on the angels and heavenly hosts to praise the Lord. It calls out not only to the heavenly sentient creatures of God but also to his inanimate creations in the skies above: the sun, moon, stars... And finally reaches us humans from the most powerful kings and rulers to the youngest and least. Let all praise the Lord.

But this Psalm does more than simply urge us to praise the Lord and shout “Hallelujah.” It also reminds us of the reason why. And that’s the key. For you see, all the words of praise and shouts of jubilee mean nothing if we don’t know why we’re doing it. What’s more, the reason why we praise the Lord gives us not only the right motivation but also the content. It gives us /what/ to be praising him for. So, dear friends, take to heart the reason we praise the Lord and shout “Hallelujah,” for it gives us both the why and the what of our praise...”

➤ [http://hancocklutheran.org/sermons/Hallelujah -Praise-the-Lord -Psalm148 1-14.html](http://hancocklutheran.org/sermons/Hallelujah-Praise-the-Lord-Psalm148-1-14.html)

Pastor Gregg Bitter St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hancock, MN

1 Peter 1:3-9; RCL, the same reading (1 Peter 1:17-25; RCL, 1 Peter 1:17-23)

“This Epistle text is assigned by the Lectionary for the Sunday after Easter. “Low Sunday” it’s called in some places. After the flush of excitement brought about by Palm Sunday and Easter, now it’s back to reality... That’s life. And in some places it’s a whole lot worse than just hum-drum... Horribly so now and then. No one needs to convince us that we do NOT yet experience the fullness of God’s new reality in Christ.

But don’t forget our living hope, Peter sings! Don’t forget the Gospel of beauty that transforms everything! Remember the resurrection! Remember your baptism into Christ! Remember such things and be thankful! Oh yes and remember too: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Somehow, some day, he really will make all things new...”

➤ https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-2a/?type=lectionary_epistle
Scott Hoezee Director of the Center for Excellence in Preaching

Greeting Verses 1-2

Born Again to a Living Hope Verses 3-12

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls...

“The First Letter of Peter is addressed to the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. One commentator suggests that geographically speaking this would be 300,000 square miles!

Peter has been the accepted author of these letters from the earliest days of the church. If Peter is indeed the author then the letter must be dated prior to 64 A.D., the date of Peter's death in Rome. There are voices that contend that Peter is not the author of this epistle and that the date of the letter needs to be set somewhat later.

The major purpose of the letter appears to be an appeal to Christian believers not to turn away from the gospel they have heard proclaimed. A very interesting theory of the usage of the letter is that it was a letter intended to be read at a baptismal service with the purpose of strengthening the faith of the baptized as they find themselves living as exiles in an alien culture. We note, e.g., that 1 Peter 1.3 refers to new birth. Cf. the reference to being "born anew" in 1.23.

Others assert that the letter itself is structured after a baptismal liturgy... This theory divides the book of I Peter as follows:

- Opening Prayer [1.3-12]
- Charge to a baptismal candidate [1.13-21]
followed by a baptism.
- Welcome to the newly baptized. [1.22-25]
- Homily on the sacraments. [2.1-10]
followed by the eucharist.
- Homily on duties of the Christian disciple. [2.11-4.6]...

We mentioned (in the) above theories that 1 Peter is structured after a baptismal liturgy or meant to be read at services of Holy Baptism. Baptism speaks of God's relationship to us in the indicative mode. God has given us a new birth. [See also 1 Peter 1.23-25. This is next week's text]. The word of salvation is announced to us! According to Luther's writings we are invited to speak of three tenses of time in our understanding of baptism. Luther could have gained this understanding from these verses in I Peter.

- Past tense: God has given [indicative] us new birth, v.3.
- Future tense: In the last time all will be revealed, vv.4-5.
- Present tense: suffering various trials, v. 6. In vv. 13ff we hear the imperatives of the new life..."

➤ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=57 Richard Jensen
Carlson Professor Emeritus of Homiletics, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, Ill.

John 20:19-31; RCL, the same reading (Luke 24:13-35; RCL, the same reading)

"Poor Thomas. He is the classic example of the old saying, "Make just ONE little mistake and you're labeled for life!" Or in Thomas's case, labeled for something more like FOREVER! But honestly, would any of us be so different were we faced with what Thomas confronted? Probably not. We'd be skeptical too. After all, his fellow disciples were not asking Thomas to embrace some commonplace. We're talking about the history-shattering truth of the resurrection here! It is SUPPOSED to be an amazing, unique, and (just so) a HARD thing to believe.

So let's stop pigeon-holing poor Thomas with the adjective "Doubting" for saying exactly what we'd all say if someone came up to us three days after a loved one's funeral to say they'd run into the once-dead person. Not one of us would say, "That's wonderful! Thanks for telling me!" No, we'd say "Right! I'll believe that one when I see it!"..."

"The Holy Gospel according to the 20th Chapter of St. John"

The Resurrection Verses 1-10

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene Verses 11-18

Jesus Appears to the Disciples Verses 19-23

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ***“Peace be with you.”***

²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, ***“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*** ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”***

Jesus and Thomas Verses 24-29

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin,^[b] was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ***“Peace be with you.”*** ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, ***“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”*** ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, ***“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”***

The Purpose of This Book Verses 30-31

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- a. [John 20:19](#) Greek *Ioudaioi* probably refers here to Jewish religious leaders, and others under their influence, in that time
- b. [John 20:24](#) Greek *Didymus*

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

The season of Easter is above all a season of life: resurrection life, eternal life, or, as the end of this passage says, just plain "life" -- "that through believing you may have life in his name" (verse 31).¹

Of course, the "life" spoken of here is not actually "just plain" life, but is a distinctive kind of life, a distinction that is obscured in English but apparent in Greek. In John, and throughout the

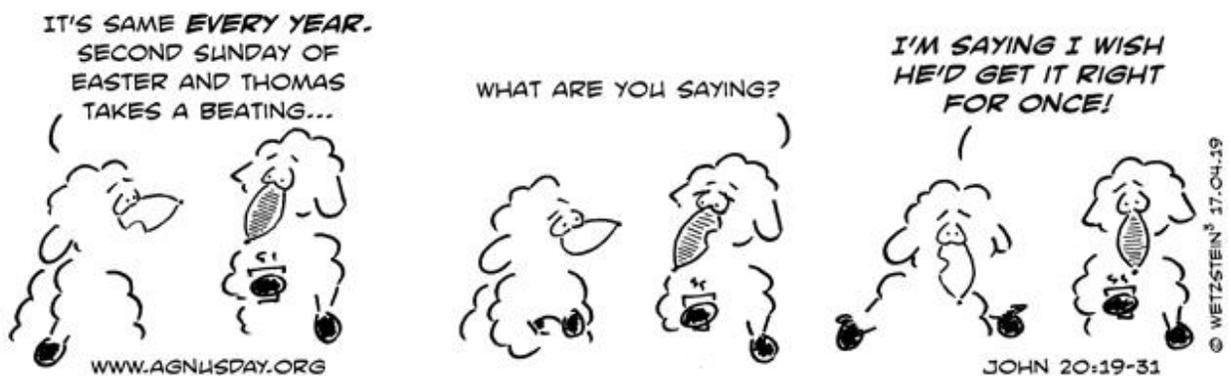
New Testament, the English word "life" translates three different Greek words: *psyche*, *bios*, and *zoe*. When John (and the rest of the New Testament) speaks, on the one hand, of *psyche* or *bios*, these words refer to what one possesses simply by virtue of being a living creature. This is the life possessed from birth to death by animals and by humans, whether they be good or bad, righteous or wicked, founders of charities or perpetrators of genocide.

On the other hand, "life" as used at the end of this passage, is spoken of with the word *zoe*. This is eternal life (literally "life of the age"), life given to those who believe; life given to those who are born of God; life that, in John, transforms us from merely existing to living in the abundance and eternity of God. This life was present from the beginning and lies at the core of creation ("in him was life (*zoe*), and the life (*zoe*) was the light of all people" (1:4)). This life connects the deepest purposes of God with the ultimate purpose of John's gospel: "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah ... and that believing you may have life (*zoe*) in his name." This *zoe* does not replace *psyche*; we are still the same creatures we were before. It does, however, bring us into the fullness of grace; so that we are, also, *not* still, the same creatures we were before--at least potentially not the same...

Thomas' response stands as the highest affirmation of Christ by any person in the gospel, "My Lord and my God!" (verse 28). What the narrator proclaimed in the prologue ("and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (1:1)), this non-doubting Thomas speaks from his own lips. His words exceed even the stated purpose of the gospel, which the narrator provides immediately following, that these things are written to lead us to believe "merely" that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Whether we have the faith of Thomas or the faith described at the end of this passage, the goal is that we find our life, our *zoe*, within the life of the crucified and risen Christ, who sends us out as his Father also sent him."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4053

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How are you doing with **The Matthew Challenge**, a handwritten copy of the book of Matthew by the Last Sunday of the Church Year (Christ the King Sunday),
November 22, 2020.