

Fifth Sunday in Lent April 7, 2019

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

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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<https://lutheran-church-regina.com/blogs/post/sermon-pr-ted-giese-sunday-march-13th-2016-luke-209-20-jars-of-glass-the-cornerstone>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 430 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed
“My song is love unknown”

“...Samuel Crossman (1624–83), an Anglican priest, composed this poem in the latter part of the 17th century. It was not originally intended to be a hymn. Instead, Crossman’s poem first appeared as one of a collection of nine that he attached to a conduct book he had written for young men. Here he told religious stories and offered encouragement for godly living that children might grow in the faith...” <https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/lcms-worship-hymn-of-the-day-studies-for-lent-three-year-one-year-lectionary>

This hymn was introduced into Lutheran hymnals in “With One Voice” published by Augsburg Fortress in 1995. If you would like to go deep into the background of this hymn by Samuel Crossman, a contemporary of King James, and the variations in the text visit:

- <http://etymologyofhymns.blogspot.com/2012/11/my-song-is-love-unknown.html> , otherwise enjoy this hymn as presented in [John Ireland](#)’s melody, *Love Unknown*.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOEjZb-rHc0> Still my favorite. “Sylvia Burnside, accompanied by the New Irish Orchestra.”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lv7OZSoA22w> Another well done presentation. Voice, instrument, and lyrics to follow. “Dom Kelly on Songs of Praise 8th Feb 09. Dom is joined by Emily Ogilvie as they accompany the St Martins Church Choir, who sing "My Song Is Love Unknown".”

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
by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

OT – “Behold, I am doing a new thing”

Psalm – “The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.”

Epistle – “I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own”

Gospel - *“What then is this that is written:....”*

Isaiah 43:16-21; RCL, the same reading (Next week: Palm Sunday, Deuteronomy 32:36-39; RCL, Isaiah 50:4-9a)

The book of Isaiah is a complex work that has generated discussion, controversy, opposing viewpoints on authorship and dissension in the church. It is also the Word of God, and as such needs to be read, discussed and understood as His inerrant message for us. The following perspectives and positions are only a surface level response to those issues. Spend more time in Isaiah then reading about Isaiah.

In response to Resolutions 3-16, 3-17, and 3-19 of the 1962 convention of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod at Cleveland, Ohio, 1 the Commission on Theology and Church Relations produced "A Study Document on Revelation, Inspiration, and Inerrancy."...

Subsequent conventions of the Synod continued to adopt resolutions which called for further study of the inspiration of the Scriptures and related subjects. The Commission, therefore, prepared the document herewith offered to the Synod with the prayer that it may be useful in resolving some of the questions which have been raised in recent years about the inspiration, inerrancy, authority, authorship, canonicity, and unity of the Sacred Writings. May this document encourage the kind of fraternal discussion that will with the aid of the Holy Spirit promote concord and reconciliation in the Synod...

Even though there are differences and variety in the Sacred Writings which sometimes perplex us because we can find no harmonization for them that satisfies human reason, faith confesses the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. Since the inerrancy of the Scriptures is a matter of faith, it is by definition a doctrine which is believed solely on the basis of the witness of the Scriptures concerning themselves and not on the basis of empirical verification..."

- [file:///C:/Users/wesel/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/LCMS-The-Inspiration-of-Scripture%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/wesel/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/LCMS-The-Inspiration-of-Scripture%20(1).pdf)

Commission on Church Theology and Relations, March 1975.

A more specific report "...about the nature of scriptural prophecy and about typological interpretations of messianic prophecy..." followed in 1996:

- [file:///C:/Users/wesel/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Prophecy%20and%20Typology%201996%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/wesel/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Prophecy%20and%20Typology%201996%20(1).pdf)

Luther on Isaiah specifically:

"If anyone would read the holy prophet Isaiah with profit and understand him better, let him not ignore this advice and instruction of mine, unless he has better advice or is himself better informed. In the first place let him not skip the title, or beginning of this book (Isaiah 1:1), but learn to understand it as thoroughly as possible, in order that he may not imagine he understands Isaiah very well, and then have someone charge him with never having understood the title and first line, let alone the whole prophet...I say to him who ignores or does not understand the title that he should let the prophet alone..."

When I speak of the title [1:1], I do not mean only that you should read or understand the words "Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah," etc., but that you should take in hand the last book of Kings and the last book of Chronicles and grasp them well, especially the events, the speeches, and the incidents that occurred under the kings named in the title [of Isaiah], clear to the end of those books. For if one would understand the prophecies, it is necessary that one know how things were in the land, how matters lay, what was the mind of the people – what plans they had with respect to their neighbors, friend and enemies – and especially what attitudes they took in their country towards God and toward the prophet, whether they held to his word and worship or to idolatry..."

- Luther's Works, American edition 35:273-77

The Lutheran Study Bible summarizes one of the main disagreements about authorship in this way:

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...), but no early traditions or manuscript evidence supports the critical proposal. As a result, the critic's divisions of the Book have 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 in the great Isaian scroll of Qumran ..., which has a three line break after 33:24..."

- The Lutheran Study Bible, ESV Concordia Publishing House, 2009, pages 1085-6

And finally, from the viewpoint of a Messianic Jewish source:

"Many modern scholars have rejected the unity of the book of Yesha'yahu (Isaiah). The basic argument for multiple authors is twofold: the contrast in contents between the sections of the books, and the supernatural element of predictive prophecy. However, predictive prophecy is so prevalent in the *Tanakh* that such treatment of the book of Isaiah invalidates neither its statements nor the multitude of other prophetic statements made. Internal evidence for the unity of the book includes the phrase "The Holy One of Isra'el" throughout. Several passages that are present in the first part of the book are similar to passages in the latter half of the book. Finally, it is understandable that sections in the book differ in language because the author emphasizes the theme of judgment in chapter 1-39 and the theme in chapters 40-66..."

- The complete Jewish Study Bible, Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, Peabody, MA 1998, 2016, page 482

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"Chapters 40-55, the portion of the book of Isaiah that deals with the end of the Babylonian exile...begins with the words, "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. "Speak comfortably to Jerusalem; and call out to her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of Yahweh's hand double for all her sins" (40:1-2).

The penalty mentioned in these verses was the exile. Now five decades have passed, and the exile is coming to an end. During these decades, the exiles have experienced a crisis of faith. Is Yahweh not powerful? Has Yahweh abandoned them? Chapters 1-39 dealt with these issues. Isaiah said, "The faithful city has become a prostitute!" (1:21). He warned, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down" (2:17). He counseled Ahaz to look for security, not to Assyria, but to Yahweh—counsel that Ahaz and the people of Jerusalem ignored. In short, Isaiah prophesied trouble ahead for Jerusalem because of the failure of its people to be faithful to Yahweh. The mood shifts in chapters 40-55... near the end of the exile, these chapters begin with words of comfort (40:1-2) and hold out the promise of return to Jerusalem.

The fulfillment of this promise came through Cyrus II of Persia, "the one from the east" (41:2), who defeated Babylonia in 539 B.C. Not only will Cyrus allow the exiles to return to their homeland, but he will also provide financial assistance to allow them to rebuild (Ezra 1:2-4)..."

- <https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/isaiah-4316-28-commentary/>

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD,
 who makes a way in the sea,
 a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷ who brings forth chariot and horse,
 army and warrior;
 they lie down, they cannot rise,
 they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
¹⁸ "Remember not the former things,
 nor consider the things of old.
¹⁹ Behold, I am doing a new thing;
 now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
 I will make a way in the wilderness
 and rivers in the desert.
²⁰ The wild beasts will honor me,
 the jackals and the ostriches,
 for I give water in the wilderness,
 rivers in the desert,
 to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
 that they might declare my praise.

"Yesterday's gospel is today's law. We need to hear it afresh, every day.

Today's reading is the first stanza of a long salvation oracle running from Isaiah 43:14 through 44:5 which, in turn, is part of ...Isaiah's amazing proclamation of deliverance to the Babylonian exiles (Isaiah 40-55). Whereas God had previously used Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian hordes to destroy Jerusalem and haul the fruit and flower of Judah into exile in Babylon in 587 and 582 BCE,... Isaiah now dramatically announces that God is about to use Cyrus and his Persian forces to defeat Babylon and release captive Israel, allowing them to return to their homeland.

The passage has been structured as a true chiasmus (*inverted parallelism*), that is, **ABB'A'**:

A Yahweh *delivered* Israel in the Exodus (16-17)
 B Remember not the former things; things of old
 consider not (18)
 B' I am about to do a new thing (19a)
A' Yahweh *will deliver* Israel in the Return (19b-21)

Such a structure serves to highlight the movement from God's past activity in the exodus from Egypt to God's promise of present deliverance...

A (verses 16-17)

The text opens with a description of what Yahweh had done for Israel in the past. The verbal markers used, however, are a key factor ... These introductory verses are constructed as a pair of participial statements (aptly introduced by "who . . ." in the NRSV) that serve to identify who God is by what God does. The force of the participles is that not only has God "*made* (so NIV) a way in the sea" in the hoary past, but that the creator's work is continuous, ongoing, or at least

chock full of ramifications for the present: God "*makes* (so NRSV) a way . . .," and "*brings* out chariot and horse . . ." Chariot and horse are then said to "lie down, they cannot rise" imperfects that move the description of God's activity from continuous action to incomplete action in the present or future. The verbal series ends with a description of their demise in perfect verbs indicative of completed action ("extinguished, quenched") that bring to a close the tale of the divine defeat of Pharaoh's forces. Such a progression of tenses, while describing God's activity in the past, at the same time places the reader squarely in their midst, and allows a narrative participation in the events of the exodus.

B (verse 18)

...But, what's up with "remember not"? Why would ...Isaiah so meticulously construct his introductory verses with that precise progression of tenses designed to draw Israel back to experiencing God's deliverance at the Sea if they are now to . . . well, "fuggeddaboutit" à la Tony Soprano? (*a quote from the movie, "The Godfather", that translates as "forget about it"*)

B' (verse 19a)

The answer comes with the surprising announcement that God is "about to do a new thing." Here, the force of yet one more participial construction, this time with *hinneh*, is on the immanent nature of what God is *about* to do. And what God is about to do will be another act of deliverance, just as it was at the Sea. The newness consists in the message that God is not limited to acting in the same old ways to accomplish new acts of salvation, and that Israel, and we, will be surprised at the contemporary relevance of God to our lives, here and now, if only we are attentive.

A' (verse 19b-21)

In fact, God will accomplish the same act of deliverance through a reversal of the means of deliverance. In the past, at the time of the exodus, God had met the needs of his people by turning the sea into dry land. Now, faced with an impossible nine hundred mile trek back to their homeland, through inhospitable terrain, not just wilderness (*midbar*) but waterless desert (*yeshimon*), God promises to meet their needs once again; but this time it will be accomplished by turning the dry land into rivers (19b, 20a)...

There is no need to limit God to past mercies. God is an ever present help, to quote the old hymn. The gospel needs to be heard every day. The life-giving word of forgiveness cannot be proclaimed in the past tense.... We need to hear the gospel afresh, every day.

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=546 *Mark Throntveit* Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn

Psalm 126; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 118:19-29 or Psalm 31:9-16; RCL, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 or Psalm 31:9-16)

"Song of Degrees. This is the seventh Step, and we may therefore expect to meet with some special perfection of joy in it; nor shall we look in vain. We see here not only that Zion abides, but that her joy returns after sorrow. Abiding is not enough, fruitfulness is added. The pilgrims went from blessing to blessing in their psalmody as they proceeded on their holy way. Happy people to whom ever ascent was a song, every halt a hymn. Here the trustor becomes a sower: faith works by love, obtains a present bliss, and secures a harvest of delight...

The Psalm divides itself into a narrative (Ps 126:1-2), a song (Ps 126:3), a prayer (Ps 126:4), and a promise (Ps 126:5-6)...

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=126> Charles Spurgeon

Restore Our Fortunes, O LORD

A Song of Ascents.

126 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

² Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy; [Job 8:21](#)
then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”

³ The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negeb!

⁵ Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!

⁶ He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him.

Verses 1-3 speak of a wondrous, joyful time “when Yahweh brought back those who returned to Zion.” This almost certainly refers to the miraculous return of Jewish exiles from Babylonia, which took place when Cyrus, king of Persia, defeated Babylonia and in 538 B.C. set the exiles free to return to Jerusalem.

But, while the return was cause for celebration, it introduced a new set of difficulties that are the reason for verses 4-6:

- Only a remnant had returned; others remained in Babylon.
- The returning Jews found Jerusalem in total ruins.
- They had to rebuild the city from scratch, beginning with the walls to protect them from hostile neighbors.
- While they eventually succeeded in rebuilding the temple, their temple was a pale substitute for the grand Solomon’s Temple.
- Their vineyards and farmlands had been left largely untended for fifty years, so it took massive effort and a long time to restore them.

➤ <https://www.sermonwriter.com/psalm-126-commentary/>

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“If you have studied Greek and Hebrew, you know that they differ in more than just the alphabet and which direction you read.

Greek requires you to learn a complex host of verbal moods and tenses. Hebrew is much simpler, lacking pluperfects, perfects, participles, all those “p” things that bring clarity to when and how something actually happened.

Hebrew is so simple we lose some clarity, and nowhere more so than in Psalm 126. Has the Lord already restored Zion’s fortunes? Were we like dreamers once upon a time? Or are we pleading with the Lord to restore those fortunes? Are we longing for the day when our mouths will be filled with laughter?

In a strange way, it is always both. The Hebrew outlook on time, and certainly on God’s involvement down here, is like that Greek character Janus, looking forward and backward. As the Psalm says “The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced” – but then is it better rendered “The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad?” Yes. Back then God did things, God saved us, God acted definitively. That brought great joy: Miriam danced and sang with the people after the miraculous parting of the sea. But it brings great joy now, in worship, or just in the heart.

And it is that past that anchors us solidly enough to know what to expect of God in the future. Hope isn’t a wishing for a better tomorrow, and it isn’t a nostalgic longing for the return of the good old days. But if we understand God’s habits, God’s heart as shown in years gone by, we know what to look for, what to ask for, what realistically will come to be...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2291
James Howell Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

Philippians 3[Ⓢ]4b-7) 8-14; RCL, Philippians 3:4b-14 (Philippians 2:5-11; RCL, the same reading)

“...But now Paul goes on to boast: “If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more” (verse 4b).

What follows are seven credentials, listed succinctly for rhetorical punch. Paul names many of these elsewhere (Romans 11:1; 1 Corinthians 15:9; 2 Corinthians 11:22; Galatians 1:13-14, 23; 1 Timothy 1:13). Most striking is the closing credential: “as to righteousness under the law, blameless” (Philippians 3:6). These words are situational, referring not to general “righteousness” before God (compare Romans 3:21-28; 7:7-25) but to Paul’s past Torah observance in line with Pharisaic interpretation. By this standard, Paul says his past record is spotless.

True credentials (Philippians 3:7-14)

Now Paul throws his past trophies out the window: “Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ” (Philippians 3:7). The words “gain” (kerde) and “loss” (zemia) conclude each respective Greek phrase, giving them emphasis. Paul then broadens the application: “I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (verse 8)...” Continued after the reading

⁴ *(though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also). If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law,^[a] blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and*

count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Straining Toward the Goal

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- a. [Philippians 3:6](#) Greek in the law

“...St. Paul the Arrogant?”

Many find Paul’s extensive focus on his credentials and autobiography in this passage off-putting, if not arrogant. Why does he devote so much space to talking about himself? A few considerations help contextualize this.

First, Paul writes within the context of an established relationship. The Philippian believers likely appreciated the personal nature of Paul’s reflections, since it reminded them of their community founder – now at a distance. Modern readers, who lack this connection, naturally react differently.

Second, Paul writes about himself neither to inform nor to promote himself, but to *instruct*. Among Greco-Roman writers of this time, it was extremely common to refer to their lived examples as models for paraenesis (exhortation, encouraging others to action). Doing so not only gave concrete examples, it held authors accountable to persevering (see Pliny, *Epistles* 7.1.7). And so, to the Philippians, Paul’s self-reflections were far more culturally expected than cocky...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3440
Troy Troftgruben Assistant Professor of New Testament, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

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“...In what follows (vs. 7-14), however, Paul states that he regards all attributes of ascribed and acquired honor as “loss” and even “rubbish” (NRSV, NIV; the Greek term *skybalon* can also mean “dung”). In the framework of the ancient Mediterranean world, the apostle was countercultural. He no longer strives for such “gain;” now his only gain could be Christ (Philippians 3:8).

In particular, Paul now rejects “righteousness of my own that comes from the law;” he hopes for the one “that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith” (verse 9). His new goal is the knowledge of Christ (verses 8, 10); knowing “the power of his resurrection” would help him achieve his own resurrection (10–11).

Paul concludes with another countercultural statement. According to his previous autobiographical data, he had clearly reached his goal, namely a respectable position of honor. Now, however, everything is different. “Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal ... ” (verse 12; see also verses 13–14) is what he admits. He finds himself on the

way, but that is no problem because the old order of honor and achievement no longer counts in the new eon of Christ...

Through his message of Jesus Christ and righteousness based on faith, Paul tried to challenge the traditional honor-based culture that dominated much of the ancient Mediterranean world...

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2147
Christian A. Eberhart Professor of Religious Studies, University of Houston, Houston, Texas

For a detailed discussion of the circumcision controversy that Paul is referring to in the optional opening verses and some detailed word study on the remaining sections visit this website:

- <https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/philippians-34b-14/>

Luke 20:9-20; RCL, John 12:1-8 (Luke 22:1-23:56 or Luke 23:1-56 or John 12:20-43; RCL, Luke 19:28-40 or Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49)

“In the Holy Gospel for today, from Luke 20, Jesus tells a parable. It’s the Parable of the Tenants, also called the Parable of the Vineyard. It goes like this: Some tenant farmers are supposed to take care of a vineyard for its owner, but instead they take over the vineyard for themselves. They beat and mistreat the servants whom the vineyard owner sends to them, and they even kill the owner’s son. Jesus then asks the question, “What then will the owner of the vineyard do?”...

this was not the first time someone used the image of a vineyard and its owner like this. It had been done before. In the Book of Isaiah, there was a very famous and familiar passage that uses the vineyard imagery. It’s Isaiah 5:1-7 and it goes like this:

“Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes...

So this is the imagery that Jesus is building on...”

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2013/03/what-will-the-owner-of-the-vineyard-do-sermon-on-luke-209-20-by-pr-charles-henrickson/>
Rev. Charles Henrickson currently serves at St Matthew Lutheran Church in Bonne Terre, Missouri

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 20th Chapter”

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

⁹ And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant^[a] to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’

¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” ¹⁷ But he looked directly at them and said, **“What then is this that is written:**

**“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone”?**^[b] Psalm 188:22

¹⁸ **Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”**

¹⁹ The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. ²⁰ So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

- a. [Luke 20:10](#) Or *bondservant*; also verse [11](#)
- b. [Luke 20:17](#) Greek *the head of the corner*

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

“...As I read this text over a number of times, there was one thing about it that jumped out at me as being truly interesting. It was the initial reaction to the telling of Jesus’ parable. Jesus tells this story about the owner of the vineyard whose servants were brutally treated and then sent away empty handed, whose son was beaten and killed and thrown out. He says the owner of the vineyard will surely come to punish those who have acted this way and the response is, “Surely not!”

What an amazing response! When Jesus tells this parable, he is picking up on an Old Testament theme. In Isaiah 5 the prophet depicts God as planting a vineyard, taking care of it in every way possible and then coming to look for fruit on the vines and instead of finding good sweet grapes, finding only wild grapes or as one translator puts it, rotten, stinking grapes. Jesus picks up on this illustration in His parable and depicts the owner of the vineyard, whom all understand to be God, sending servants to determine what kind of fruit his vineyard is producing. The servants in the story are obviously the Old Testament prophets who frequently confronted and condemned the people for their lack of fruit – for their faithlessness. The servants are not only sent away empty-handed, however, with no fruit whatsoever, but are beaten and treated shamefully. The owner then sends his Son. Surely they will respect the Son of their Lord! But instead the vine-growers determine to kill him, thinking the inheritance will then be theirs. And then they do kill him and throw him out. In the face of such unthinkable dishonesty, brutality, murder and treason the owner of the vineyard determines to destroy the evildoers, take the vineyard away from them and give it to others – and the response to this parable of Jesus? Surely not!

Surely not!?! The response seems so incredibly illogical, unreasonable and strange. And it is – but it’s not so unusual. Take a culture like the one you and I live in where increasing numbers of people forsake and show contempt for the commandments of God, where they dabble in the

Eastern religions or forsake the worship of the one true God entirely, where they insist that all gods are equal and all religions have equal access to the truth, where those who are actually faithful are treated with disdain or even persecuted. What is the reaction when God's law is applied, when people treat the owner of the vineyard as though he had no right to expect fruit and the one who made them and has so abundantly blessed them promises to punish them for their disobedience and unbelief? What is the reaction? An indignant "Surely not!" (continued on the last page)

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"...Have you ever wondered why in the parable it would be that the tenants upon seeing the owner of the vineyards son coming, would say, "to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' Why would they think this? Why would they think that if "they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him," that they would end up having the vineyard to themselves? In the context of the day such tenants would have thought that the owner of the vineyard had died and that the son was coming to collect his inheritance. They would have thought if the son died then they could, as long time tenants, plead squatters rights and perhaps have the vineyard for themselves.[10] The irony for the scribes and the chief priests is that Jesus in His death and resurrection was coming to give His inheritance to all who believed in Him, all who trust in Him. ..."

<https://lutheran-church-regina.com/blogs/post/sermon-pr-ted-giese-sunday-march-13th-2016-luke-209-20-jars-of-glass-the-cornerstone> Pastor Ted Giese, Mount Olive Lutheran Church – Regina, SK. A member congregation of Lutheran Church of Canada



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

"...And what about you and me? When the Lord comes to us and says, "I came looking for good, sweet fruit and I didn't find it. I came looking for those who would love me with all their heart and soul and mind, for those who always love their neighbors like themselves and I didn't find them. Your fruit stinks! You deserve to be punished; you deserve to be destroyed." What is our reaction? It is in our nature to think, "Surely not!" In the face of judgment, it is in our nature to justify ourselves and say, "Surely not!"

Thank God that, in the face of his Law, the Holy Spirit has led us to reject that self-justification that is always striving for domination in our lives and spirits and has led us to remorse for our sin. Thank God that in His mercy, He has led us to cry out for mercy and forgiveness and has provided a way to forgiveness that has removed His judgment from us..."

➤ <https://wmltblog.org/2013/03/sermon-on-luke-209-19/> was preached by LCMS Fourth Vice-President, The Rev. Dr. Daniel Preus at the International Center Chapel on Friday, March 22, 2013.