Working Preacher Lectionary Study

Lent – Easter 2016
Ash Wednesday through Easter 7
February 10 – May 8
Resources: Preaching in the Year of Luke

“Luke” in enterthebible.org (see “Passages”)

Working Preacher: workingpreacher.org

Text Week: textweek.com

Study Bibles: Oxford, Harpers, Lutheran Study Bible

Handouts:

This PowerPoint
Lent-Easter (C), List
Lent-Easter (C), Texts
Luke: Key Narrative Selections, in Two Parts
The Year of Luke. Lessons and Themes for Year C of the Lectionary
# Outline of Luke

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Material Unique to Luke (see list)

- **Righteousness / Justice** re-imagined
- **Salvation** as the keyword of promise
- **Today** is the day of salvation
- The **necessity** of God’s promises
- The presence and **power of the Spirit**
- For **Witness** and Mission
- **Message**: God raised Jesus from the dead
- The Promise of God is **for all peoples**
- A **new community** breaks down walls of division
  (the poor, the oppressed, the outcast, are the special objects of God’s mercy)
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A Lenten Series: A Lenten Journey of Discipleship
Luke’s Travel Narrative (9:51-19:10)

A Lenten Journey with Jesus

His Face set for Jerusalem
Following Jesus on the Way

**Week 1: Luke 10:25-37**
The double command of Love: Love God; Love neighbor
Parable: Good Samaritan

**Week 2: Luke 11:5-13**
Perseverence in Prayer: the gift of the Spirit
Parable: the friend at midnight

How will you have life?
Parable: the Rich Fool

**Week 4: Luke 18:9-14**
God’s mercy: justification for the sinner
Parable: Pharisee and tax collector

**Week 5: Luke 19:1-10**
Salvation has happened to this house
Jesus visits Zacchaeus at the gates of Jerusalem
Son of Man came to seek and save the lost
Ash Wednesday, February 10

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Day of the Lord: What is it Like?
When Lord Visits, What do you Expect?
Who is your God?
   Gracious
   Merciful
   Slow to Anger
   Overflowing in Steadfast Love
   Turns back from punishing

Repentence:
A Matter of the Heart
“Rend your Hearts, and Not your Garments”

Inward Turning, Not Outward Show
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

“Ambassadors” for Christ
God makes his appeal through us
Jesus became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God
Cf. The great “tradeoff/exchange” (Luther: *Freedom of Christian*)
Now is the day of salvation
Paying attention to “Righteousness” and how you “practice” it (cf. 5:48)
They are receiving their “Payback”
But Father will “Give” you (righteousness as gift, not reward)

It’s about Treasure in Heaven

Treasure & Heart Belong together
It is a Matter of the Heart and of the heart’s treasure
Deuteronomy 26:1-11: Coming into the land of Promise: the key word is “Gift”

1) When you come, not if: promise is sure
2) Response of first fruit of the land in response of thanks
3) Remembering the Lord’s gifts:
   From wanderers to a great nation
   In affliction, we cried to Lord
   Lord heard our cries
   Lord brought us out of Egypt
   Lord “gave” us this land, flowing with mild & honey
4) Response: “so now”
5) Offering of first fruits in thanks
6) Celebrate bounty the Lord has given
Romans 10:8-13: – The word in our heart: the center of confession and faith: God raised Jesus from the dead

1) Word of God: on our lips and in our hearts
2) Word of faith that is heart of proclamation: word & faith belong together
3) Confess with lips; believe in hearts: confession and faith are as one
4) Belief and Confession: being justified, being saved are as one
5) Witness of scripture: same Lord is Lord of all
6) Key summary confession: Everyone who calls on the name of Lord will be saved!
Luke 4:1-13 – The testing of Jesus in the Wilderness: the contest and the journey to the cross are set in motion

1) Key Lukan theme: “full of the Holy Spirit”
2) Setting for the test: Jesus led by the Spirit, in the wilderness, 40 days, tested by devil, ate nothing, hunger
3) Test 1: If you are Son, make bread
   Response: it is written (scripture): not by bread alone
4) Test 2: Who has power? I will give authority! Worship me
   Response: it is written: worship Lord your God, serve only him
5) Test 3: If you are Son of God, trust the power! (double scripture quotes!)
   Response: Do not put God to the test
6) “Every test” complete!
7) For now! There will come another time (kairos), signals where this contest will lead
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18: God’s Promise to Abram. You will have a Son. Abram believed the Lord and God deemed his faith as righteousness

1) Word of Lord in a vision
2) Do not be afraid (cf. Jesus in New Testament) promise is invitation to live without fear
3) What will you give? I have no Son and heir
4) A sign (stars) and a promise: so shall your descendants be
5) Abram believed, faith reckoned as righteousness:
6) I am Lord: I brought you here and gave you this land
7) Lord made a covenant: I will give you this land
Philippians 3:17-4:1: Living by faith in the Cross of Christ – a citizenship that is in heaven; a community of beloved brothers and sisters

1) Paul: imitate me and those who live like us
2) Two options:
3) Living as enemies of cross: belly is god, shame is glory, mind set on earthly things, end is destruction
4) Live as citizens of heaven: a body transformed for glory, a power that subjects all to Jesus himself
5) Paul’s dear brothers and sisters: frames the reading
6) Paul’s sees them as his joy and crown
7) Stand firm in Lord: as loved, longed for children of God
Luke 13:31-35 – Jesus points to his necessary journey to Jerusalem, the cross and to death. God’s work will be accomplished in spite of threats

Anticipation of the journey to Jerusalem and the cross
1) At that hour: a warning that time is almost up
2) Herod’s threats and death lurk close at hand for Jesus
3) Today and tomorrow: still I will finish my work: nothing will get in the way of Jesus’ destiny
4) It is necessary: I must be on the way (today, tomorrow, the next day: a sign? Three days)
5) Jerusalem: the end of the journey, and killer of prophets sent
6) God’s longing for his children who are not willing to receive him
7) Longing for a time to come and a welcome reception: Blessed is the One who comes in name of the Lord
Isaiah 55:1-9: God’s covenant promise compared to a gracious and rich feast filled with delights

1) God’s invitation to a feast; just look what the Lord has in store for you!
2) For all who are thirsty or hungry – free for the coming; without money or price!
3) Why would you not want to come? Is the question
4) God promises a covenant of everlasting love
5) All nations will come running to get in on the feast which you have already tasted
6) Return to the Lord: he’ just waiting to show mercy and pardon
7) Key thought: God’s ways are always a surprise: his ways are not our ways
   God’s thoughts are not our thoughts
8) And that’s the truth; and it is good news
1 Corinthians 10:1-13: God’s people in the wilderness are examples for our instruction: a call to respond to God’s faithfulness

Be alert to the examples of old as for our instruction

1) All of Israel experienced the same mercy and deliverance of God in the wilderness

2) But still some displeased God and were punished

3) It is the time to be sober, watchful, and ready to stand firm in the midst of testing

4) God is faithful and will provide a way to survive any test that my come our way.
Third Sunday in Lent - February 28

Luke 13:1-9: Parable of the fig tree; a call for repentance while there is still time

1) 2 current catastrophes occasion the big question: are some people punished because they are more terrible sinners?
2) Jesus: the more serious question is that of repentance: unless you repent you will perish along with them.
3) Call for repentance: twice for emphasis
4) And then a parable to seal the deal: the fig tree
5) For three years I have been patient, looking for fruit
6) The master’s grace: yet one more year’s chance
7) The waiting question: what then; how long will the master delay?
Joshua 5:9-12 – The promise made real: the people eat Passover in the new land of promise; the disgrace of slavery in Egypt is now a thing of the past

1) Passover in a new land: a sign that the disgrace of Egypt has been erased from memory
2) Manna of the wilderness has ceased; God’s gifts of yesterday are exchanged for the gifts of today.
3) God is always doing a new thing
4) The fruits of the new land are witness to fulfillment of God’s promises
2 Corinthians 5:16-21 – In Christ there is a new creation; the old has passed away, everything has become new!

1) In Christ, God is doing a new thing.
2) As for Israel, God is always about bringing a new future with his promises.
3) What is that new thing? It is about a ministry of reconciliation
4) God is reconciling the world to himself, not counting its trespasses.
5) Entrusting that message to us, as agent ambassadors to get the word out:
6) And we are God’s letter of announcement and appeal
7) So act like the new creation of reconciled that you are
8) Because God in Christ has reconciled you to himself; he has become sin, so that we might become God’s righteous people through God’s gift
9) How’s that for a great exchange!
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 – A parable and a moral: we have to celebrate because the lost is found, the dead have come to life again. The third of three stories of God’s seeking and finding the lost: the sheep, the coin, the son.

1) Setting and issue: leaders grumble because Jesus welcomes and eats with sinners.
2) Three parables of the lost: here: a man had two sons
3) Second son squanders his inheritance and his father’s gifts
4) Repents and returns asking for mercy
5) Father anticipates and is already ahead in showing mercy and calling for a feast of celebration
6) First son is angry and refuses to join the celebration
7) Father gives back, reconciles the two sons
8) We had to celebrate: celebration is a necessity
9) The dead is alive, the lost found
10) This brother of yours: God’s mercy invites us to the celebration and gives us back in love to one another as members of the family
Isaiah 43:16-21: – Isaiah speaks Lord’s promise of restoration from Exile – a new return through the wilderness

1) Thus says the Lord:
2) Credibility of one who promises: this is One who led Israel through the sea and the wilderness in the Exodus
3) But forget about the “then”
4) This is “now” – and a “new thing” is about to spring forth
5) Call for eyes to see new roads and new life in the desert: Israel will return from Exile – and that’s a promise
6) God is preparing a people who will be able to sing God’s praises
Philippians 3:4b-14 – Everything else is loss, compared to knowing Christ and power of his resurrection

1) Paul rehearses his pedigree: blameless regarding righteousness of keeping the law
2) But all this is surrendered compared to what it means to know Christ as Lord
3) Righteousness comes not from our own successes in keeping the law, but from faith in Christ
4) Faith is about knowing Christ and power of his resurrection, and sharing in his suffering and death
5) We press on, because Christ has made us his own
6) Running the race of faith: it’s about forgetting what is past and pressing on to the goal – the prize is God’s call to us in Christ Jesus
John 12:1-8 – The woman anoints Jesus before his Passion (one of few stories in all four gospels)

1) Key Setting: six days before Passover and Passion; Bethany, at the gates of Jerusalem; where he had raised Lazarus from dead

2) A different “Mary and Martha” story!

3) A dinner with table fellowship: Martha serves and Lazarus is “at the table”

4) Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with costly ointment and wipes his feet with her hair: extravagant display of affection and welcome

5) Judas, “one of disciples” and the “betrayer” – a sinister note of evil presence in their midst, a specter of what is to come

6) Why not use this wealth to give to poor? (insincere remark of one with evil thoughts and intent, the editor’s comment)

7) Jesus concludes: She did a good thing, it is preparation for my burial

8) A puzzling/ and tricky conclusion: you always have the poor, but you do not always have me.

9) Story begins and ends with anticipation of Jesus’ suffering and death
Isaiah 50:4-9a – In the face of suffering, the Lord stands ready to vindicate God’s servant

1) The Lord is first of all the one who gives
2) The Lord gives a tongue to speak and ears to hear the teaching regarding the Lord’s faithfulness to his servant
3) The servant’s suffering anticipates the suffering of God’s servant Messiah
4) In the midst of suffering, confidence in the Lord’s help
5) The One who vindicates stands near; no foe can stand against the Lord who is my helper!
6) Who can declare me guilty (the Lord’s servant is innocent)
7) The reading is filled with themes and anticipation of God’s suffering Messiah
Philippians 2:5-11 – Paul’s familiar Christ hymn regarding the passion, death, and exaltation of Jesus the Messiah

The gospel of salvation in a nutshell- a mini catechism of salvation story as it focuses in the passion and death of Jesus – the centrality of Jesus’ emptying himself to the point of death

1) Have this mind: call to Christian community to the model of mutual care for the neighbor
2) Model is Christ Jesus: who emptied and humbled himself
3) Became human, taking on human likeness, the form of a servant-slave
4) Even to the point of death on the cross
5) The Big therefore: God has exalted him and given him a name above every other name
6) At the name of Jesus: worship, and confession:
7) Jesus Christ is Lord!
8) All of this is for the sake of the glory of God
9) God’s glory has been shown to us in the passion and victory of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus, God’s Messiah

The story traces Luke’s telling of the Passion and death of Jesus and the events of Holy Week.
1) Begins with the plot to betray Jesus – Satan enters into the heart of Judas
2) Preparation to celebrate the Passover meal – Jesus at the table with disciples “before he suffers”
   Took the cup: not again until it is fulfilled in heaven
   A loaf of bread: do this in remembrance of me
   The meal is sign of a new covenant in Jesus’ blood
   Even one who betrays is at the table
   Who is greatest? The one who serves
   Peter’s denial foretold
3) Prayer at the Mount of Olives
   Pray that you not enter into a time of testing
   Not my will but thine be done
4) Betrayal and arrest
5) Trial before the high priest
   Peter’s denial, three times; cock crows, he wept bitterly
   Mockery and beating of Jesus
6) Trial before the council – he is guilty
7) Trial before Pilate – I find no guilt
8) Trial before Herod – and back to Pilate
9) Pilate: this man is innocent (three times)
10) Crucifixion at the place of the skull
   Father forgive them; Today you will be with me in paradise; Father into your hands I commit my Spirit; this man was innocent; women stand watching all these things
Maundy Thursday – March 24

**Exodus 12:1-4[5-10]11-14**

The story of the first Passover: The Lord’s promise that destruction will not touch the people

Command to celebrate Passover as a Day of Remembrance

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

Paul passes on the tradition of the Lord’s Supper
Do this in Remembrance of me
For as often as you eat and drink you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes

**John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

Hour has come: Passion is near; Jesus kneels as servant and washes disciples’ feet
I have given you an example: wash one another’s feet
A new commandment: love one another just as I have loved you
By this they will know my disciples: if you have love for one another
God’s suffering servant shall prosper and be exalted for revealing the Lord’s ways
Wounded for our transgressions, He poured out himself to death; bore the sin of many, made intercession for the transgressors

**Hebrews 10:16-25**
This is my covenant: my laws written in their hearts
We have Confidence in the blood of Jesus
Let us approach with full assurance of faith
Let us hold fast to our hope, for he who has promised is faithful

**John 18:1-19:42**
John’s story of the Passion
Betrayal in the garden: I am he!
Trial before Caiaphas and Peter’s Denial; Trial before Pilate: Are you king? What is truth?
Crown of Thorns; My kingdom not of this world; Crucifixion; Casting lots;
Jesus said, “Here is your mother;” “I am thirsty” “It is finished”
They will look on the one whom they have pierced; Joseph laid him in the tomb
See notes on Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday
In contrast to John which portrays Jesus in command, and orchestrating affairs from the cross, and concluding with a final benediction: “It is finished.”

In Luke Jesus prays the Lord’s prayer in the garden; suffers as the innocent victim according to God’s necessary plan and will; is pronounced innocent by high priest, Herod, Pilate (three times); and yet sentenced to death

On the cross mocked as “Savior” and “Messiah” he prays for his enemies: “Father forgive them...” ; announces salvation to the thief: “Today with me in paradise” and then commits himself to God “Father into you hands I commit my Spirit” And the centurion announces his “innocence”
The original context of promise of return from exile invites themes surrounding the image of God’s new creation. Paired in this reading with Easter as the day of God’s new creation in the raising of Jesus from the dead.

1) God is about to create new heavens and a new earth.
2) The past shall not even be a memory, things will be so new.
3) Introduces a litany of good things in this life here and now; life will be full and long.
4) Because the people will be blessed as God’s children.
5) God will be present to answer prayer even before the words are spoken.
6) The wildest dreams will come true.
7) And even the wolf and lamb shall eat together and the lion be as tame as the oxen.
8) They shall not hurt or destroy in God’s holy mountain (Jerusalem, the new city of God’s creation).
9) A final confirmation of the promise: says the Lord.
1 Corinthians 15:19-26 – Paul’s announcement of the Good News and Key Message of Christ’s Resurrection for People of Faith

1) Hope in Christ as the resurrected Lord extends beyond this life
2) A bold assertion: in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead!
3) And he is only the first fruits of all who have died (twice Paul uses the image of first fruits for Christ’s resurrection as promise of our own
4) As in Adam all have died, so in Christ shall all be made alive
5) Celebration of the power of the resurrection as Christ’s victory and handing over of the spoils to God
6) And the last enemy to be destroyed is death
7) The whole passage reflects similar language in Romans: death has been swallowed up in victory (cf. Rom 6:20-23; 7:21-25)
Acts 10:34-43: Peter preaches the Resurrection Message of the Forgiveness of Sins for all people to the Centurion’s household in Caesarea

1) Central message: God shows no favorites
2) Promise is for all people ("in every nation")
3) Key promise in Christ is the gift of Peace
4) Because Jesus is Lord
5) The story of Jesus from baptism on; preaching, healing, death
6) Final victory: But God raised him from the dead on third day
7) We are witnesses sent to preach this good news
8) Our common witness: everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sin in his name
9) Christ’s resurrection is made real in the promise forgiveness for all
Resurrection of our Lord/Easter Day - March 27


Luke’s great story of the resurrection told with surprise and irony that intends to invite joy and wonder of those who hear the story. It is clearly told against the foil and background of Mark’s narrative ends abruptly with the women fleeing from the tomb and saying nothing to anyone.

1) The women at the tomb
   No body, confusion, terror, why seek “One who is living among the dead?” Remember his word, they run and tell, disciples hear their words as nonsense.

2) Peter’s visit to the tomb: went home amazed

3) Two disciples on way to Emmaus
   Jesus walks with them, we had hoped!, the sad story of death; the women’s wild story; we too saw empty tomb; stupid ones, you should have known; it was necessary that Messiah suffer and be raised; the witness of all the scriptures; evening meal and breaking of bread; recognition; a run back to Jerusalem to tell; the Lord has risen!

4) Disciples gathered in upper room; Jesus is present
   Disbelief and wondered centered in joy; Jesus words: everything must be fulfilled: suffer and rise from dead; repentance and forgiveness must be preached in his name to all nations; you are witnesses; wait for the promise of the Spirit to clothe you with power.
Some key points of the story:

Appearance (cf. difference from Easter 2: Thomas)
Jesus in their midst
Peace
Disbelief / JOY / Wonder
Confirmation of Physical presence
Jesus WORDs

Necessary that Scriptures be fulfilled in Mission of Resurrected Lord:
  Inward mission: Opened their minds to comprehend
  Content & Power: Death & resurrection // forgiveness for all nations
  Outward mission: witnesses to all nations
  God’s mission: wait for power from above
John 20:1-18: Alternative Easter Gospel: Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene at the Tomb; Unfolding of beautiful story of her experience of Jesus’ as Resurrected Lord, ending in her going to announce to the disciples that Jesus is alive.

1) Mary comes to tomb and finds it empty; runs to tell Peter the bad news; they confirm the story and return home
2) Mary remains alone at the tomb; weeping
3) A stranger: “why are you weeping”
4) They have taken my Lord!
5) Jesus speaks her name: Mary
6) In the speaking of her name: recognition that it is Jesus
7) Jesus sends her to tell the disciples
8) Mary’s witness to the resurrection: I have seen the Lord!

Story of transformation by Jesus presence as resurrected Lord, the speaking of a name, and theme of seeing and believing as the beginning of witness
The Sundays of Easter

A note on the focus of the readings:

Readings from Acts: 8 Sundays
Stories of the power of the resurrection

Readings from Gospel of John: 7 Sundays
Traditional: Thomas, Good shepherd, the promise of the Spirit from Jesus Farewell address to disciples

Readings from Revelation: 6 Sundays
John’s vision of victory of resurrection; enduring hope in the promise of God in new creation
Acts 5:27-32 – Peter and Apostles witness to authorities to the truth of the Resurrection against threats to silence them

1) Peter and disciples on trial
2) Now Peter testifies against strict orders to silence (note contrast to the story of denial in the gospels)
3) Key quote: we must obey God rather than humans; a power here greater than human power
4) Summary of resurrection story:
   - Jesus put to death; God raised him from the dead
   - He is exalted as leader and Savior
   - Brings repentance and forgiveness of sins
   - We are witnesses
   - By the power of the Holy Spirit whom God has given to all who believe and obey him
Revelation 1:4-8 – John’s vision and testimony in letters to the seven churches: Power of Jesus resurrection as firstborn from the dead

1) Key invocation and blessing: from the One who is, was, and is to come: past, present, and future bound together in Christ
2) Jesus loved us and freed us from sin by power of his blood
3) Made us part of his kingdom; to serve as priests
4) Lo! Key testimony: he is coming and all will see him as living Lord, and as the one who suffered death (pierced)
5) Lord God is alpha and omega; who holds all of existence together:
6) Second time: One who was, who is, and is to come
John 20:19-31 – Two appearances of Jesus as Resurrected Lord, 1) to the disciples minus Thomas; 2) to disciples with Thomas present

3 scenes:

1) Scene One: Appearance: Evening, doors locked/ fear/ Jesus came and stood; Disciples rejoice
   Peace; Commission: As Father sent me I send you
   Breathes on disciples the gift of the Spirit; power of resurrected Lord (cf. Farewell address)
   Power of Spirit has to do with message and power of forgiveness of sins

2) Scene 2: With Thomas, not with them; they tell the story: we have seen the Lord
   Seeing & Believing? “I will never believe!”

3) Mirror Appearance: Evening, doors shut, (fear) / Jesus came and stood; Thomas with them
   Peace; Reach out and touch my wounds
   Thomas’ confession: My Lord and my God
   Transformation: from “unfaith” to “faith” (apistos // pistos)
   Marks of the word made flesh
   Presence & promise of the crucified one
   Seeing and Believing? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe (future community)
   the Spirit
Thomas continued:

Concluding interpretation: seeing and believing the testimony
Key summary to Gospel of John and its themes

Jesus did many other signs
These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God
And believing you may have life in his name

Thomas is a model of the transforming power of faith
When it meets the Word made Flesh in the presence of Jesus
Signs and faith belong together
Scriptures lead to faith, and faith leads to life
Acts 9:1-6 [7-20] – Saul’s (Paul) encounter with risen Lord on Road to Damascus

1) Setting: Saul still breathing threats and murder against disciples;
2) This is serious: letters of indictment and arrest
3) Signs: lights flashing, A voice speaks
4) Why are you persecuting me?
5) Who in the world are you?
6) Response: I AM Jesus
7) Instruction: Get up, go, and you will be told what to do (like mission impossible!)

Verses 7-20 continue the story, with Ananias, his call, response, announcement of Saul as God’s chosen instrument to Gentiles

Ananias goes, baptizes Saul, and he is introduced to disciples in Jerusalem and immediately began to preach about Jesus:
He is the Son of God

Story breathes the transforming power of Jesus and the power of the resurrection to change lives; and the call and response to that message in two different “disciples” – a non-believing persecutor, and a believing disciple
Revelation 5:11-14 – John’s vision continues: Angels around the throne and thousands singing: Worthy is the lamb of God

The scene is a resurrection victory concert of thousands:

1) Angels surround the throne: heavenly scene
2) Singing full voice: Worthy is the lamb who was slain
3) Resurrection victory: power, wisdom, might, glory, blessing belong to God’s victorious lamb
4) Singing: glory to God and to the lamb
5) A great chorus:
   “Blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever”
6) And a great “Amen.”
John 21:1-19 – Another Resurrection Appearance story: Jesus and his disciples, a breakfast fry on the beach at the Sea of Galilee (this is now the “third time” after he was raised from the dead)

A call and charge to discipleship, and witness to the special role of Peter among the disciples; commission here to “feed my sheep” picked up in next Sunday’s lesson of Jesus as the Good shepherd

Scene 1: A fishing party
1) Scene 1: A fishing party
2) Peter: I am going fishing; business as usual
3) They catch nothing
4) Jesus appears unrecognized on the beach; Cast nets again!
5) An amazing catch! Testimony: It is the Lord!

Scene 2
1) A breakfast fry on the beach and an invitation
2) No one asked: Who are you? Because now “they knew it was Jesus”
3) Jesus addresses Simon Peter
4) Three times the question: Do you love me?
5) Three times the response: Yes, you know!
6) And three times the commission: Feed my sheep!
7) Confirmation: prophesy of Peter’s ministry and martyrdom
8) Final charge to confirm the commission: Follow me (spoken directly to Peter alone)
Acts 9:36-43 – Story of faithful disciples Tabitha (Dorcas) who dies surrounded by grieving community; Peter prays over her and she is raised from the dead

1) The power of the resurrection appears in the raising of a faithful disciple from the dead
2) A vision of a faithful community of women disciples in Joppa
3) Widows testify to her faithful service within the community
4) Peter kneels and prays over Tabitha; repeats the words of Jesus in the gospels: Tabitha get up!
5) She sat up, and Peter “shows her alive” to the gathered community
6) This became known and many believed: response of faith to the power of the resurrection in their midst
The vision continues: a great multitude from every tribe and nation gathered around the throne in the presence of the Lamb of God

1) A great multitude without number
2) Gathered around the throne of God, all peoples
3) Their cry of victory
4) Salvation belongs to our God, and to the Lamb
5) Angels echo the song: Amen, Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! A great benediction and a great Amen!
6) The promise: no more hunger or thirst, or scorching heat, for the Lamb is their shepherd who guides them to the waters of life
7) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!
John 10: 22-30 – The call to faith in Jesus as God’s Messiah; the promise that Jesus’ Sheep Hear his Voice and they Follow Him

Theme: Jesus as the Good Shepherd (continues theme of John 10 and tradition of Good Shepherd Sunday

1) Setting is important: in the temple
2) Issue: the question of Jesus as Messiah; if you are Messiah, tells us plainly
3) My works done in father’s name are the clear sign and testimony
4) The issue is that of faith and belonging to the sheep
5) My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me
6) The gift is eternal life and they will never perish (cf. John 3:16)
7) Promise: No one can snatch them away from me, because father has given them to me
8) And no one can snatch them out of the father’s hand
9) Final affirmation and key identity: I am the Father are One!
Acts 11:1-18 – The early Christian community’s response to Peter’s successful preaching to Cornelius and his family in Caesarea: the pouring out of the Spirit, and baptism

1) Word of Peter’s mission gets back to Jerusalem: the Gentiles have accepted the word of God: how will they respond?
2) Criticism: why did you do this? Eating with uncircumcised! This is not done!
3) Peter tells the story “step by step” : vision, commission by the Spirit; Spirit fell on hearers, and “I remembered...” promise of baptism by the Spirit
4) Testimony: God gave them the same give he gave us: belief on the name of the Lord;
5) Who am I to stand in the way of God
6) Their critique is silenced: Conclusion: The God really has given even to the Gentiles repentance that leads to life.
When God acts to give God’s gifts of life and salvation through the Spirit, who are we to stand in way?
Revelation 21:1-6 – John’s vision once again: The promise of God’s Future Restoration of Creation in a New Heaven and new Earth: God is in control as Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End

Important perspectives on the promise of God amid the transitory nature of human life

1) John’s vision: a new heaven and new earth, new Jerusalem
2) God’s renewal of creation
3) God’s dwelling is with mortals: humans as crown of creation
4) God will be with his chosen people
5) See! I am making all things new; and that’s a true and trustworthy promise; all is in God’s hand
6) God is alpha and omega; beginning and end
John 13:31-35 – Beginning of Jesus’ Farewell discourse to disciples before the Passion; the words are clearly an anticipation of the call and address of the Resurrected Lord Jesus to his disciples community, in the Promise of the Presence and Power of the Spirit
The new commandment of love as the center of the commission of the resurrected Lord to his new community

1) Now! (certainly a post resurrection stance) the Son of Man has been glorified (implication by his death on the cross)
2) And through his death God also has been glorified; God is glorified in the death and resurrection of Christ
3) I am no longer with you, but I leave you with a new commandment
4) The new Commandment of Love by the Risen Lord
5) You shall love one another just as I have loved you (cf. John 3:16)
6) Seeing and believing: by this everyone will know that you are my disciples: If you have love for one another

1) Setting: Paul has been forbidden by the Spirit to continue preaching in Asia Minor
2) Now, much like on the road to Damascus, he receives a vision and a call to cross over to Greece
3) In Philippi: Paul’s typical process: goes to synagogue
4) Meets group of women at a “place of prayer” led by Lydia
5) Telling story: “Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly”
6) She and her household baptized (cf. Cornelius and Peter)
7) Paul goes to stay at her house – of this one who is “faithful”

A story of the power and advance of the gospel, as God continues to open ears and hearts to the message of the resurrection in new and surprising places.
Revelation 21:10, 22 – 22:5 – In the Spirit, the vision continues: The new Jerusalem that comes down as the dwelling place of God and the Lamb

1) Image: not of going to heaven
2) But of a new Jerusalem that has come “down” and is the dwelling place of God and the Lamb
3) God’s dwelling with God’s people: those whose names are written in the book of life
4) In center of the city: the tree of Life
5) God and the Lamb will dwell in the city, and his servants will worship him; see his face, his name written on their foreheads
6) They need to lamp or sun, for God will be their everlasting light

A vision of the life of the saints in the glorious presence of God, and of the Lamb who has been raised and victorious
John 14: 23-29 – Jesus Farewell Discourse; the resurrected Jesus to his disciples; promise of the resurrection is God’s abiding presence in Jesus with a faithful community

1) Those who love me will keep my word
2) Key word is “abide”: we will come to them and we will make our home with them
3) The Advocate, the Spirit will come in my name
4) The Spirit’s role and promise: Spirit will teach you all things and remind you of Jesus’ words
   Spirit is sign of Jesus’ Peace that is given to the faithful community
Loving Jesus is not occasion for sorrow, but for rejoicing
5) This teaching is advance preparation, so that you may believe the promise

1) In part 1: all that Jesus began to “do” and “teach” through the power of the Spirit
2) Apostles are his chosen ones
3) Lived with them and appeared to them after the resurrection, giving proofs and power of the kingdom of God among them
4) Command: wait for the promise of the Father: the baptism with the Holy Spirit
5) But you will not know the times or seasons: all is in God’s hand; the mission belongs to God, not you
6) Key announcement: you will receive power when Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth!
7) Why are you standing around gazing up into heaven?
8) This Jesus will come again
Implication: the Spirit is coming, and that’s a promise, so get busy with the mission of the gospel

Ascension is securing and assertion of the beginning and continuation of the Gospel mission through the power of the gift of God’s Spirit among us
Ephesians 1:15-23 – Thanksgiving for the faith and love of the believers in Ephesus and prayer that this faith may increase in knowledge of the power of God at work among them through the power of Christ who was raised from the dead

1) I heard of your faith in Lord Jesus, and your love for the saints: a cause for thanksgiving

2) Remembrance of them in prayers:

3) That God gives you a spirit of wisdom, eyes of heart enlightened

4) Knowledge of the hope to which God has called you

5) Of the riches of your inheritance among the saints

6) God’s power is at work among us through Christ, whom God raised from dead and seated him in the heavens

7) All things are placed under his feet; he is the head of all things for the sake of the church, his community

8) The church is his body, the very fullness of Christ, who fills all things
Ascension of Our Lord - May 5

Luke 24:44-53 – The resurrected Lord addresses his gathered disciple community; assurance of the necessity of his suffering and death; commission of them as witnesses to proclaim repentance and forgiveness to all nations; promise of God’s outpouring of the Holy Spirit; Ascension into heaven

1) These are my words!
2) Everything in the law, the prophets, and psalms (writings) must be fulfilled: it is necessary
3) Opened their minds to understand the scriptures: understanding is a gift of the risen Lord to the faith community
4) Repentance and forgiveness is to be preached in his name: this is the heart of the gospel witness
5) You are witnesses, beginning from Jerusalem and to all the world
6) Promise: I am sending on you what the Father promised: so wait in the city until you are clothed with Power from above
7) Jesus blesses them, and while he is blessing them he was taken up into heaven
   Blessing is ongoing act of the risen and ascended Lord for the community of faith
8) The disciple community continues in worship, with joy and blessing of God
Acts 16:16-34 – Paul’s ministry in Philippi continues; heals a slave girl; riots; arrest and imprisonment; escape; a jailor is converted

A whirlwind ministry of the gospel in Philippi
1) A money-making slave girl is healed by Paul who prays for exorcism of her demons
2) Owners drag Paul before authorities; riots; flogged and thrown into prison
3) Paul and Silas praying and singing hymns to God, with prisoners listening
4) Earthquake occurs, jail is opened
5) Jailer contemplates suicide, but is calmed by testimony of Paul
6) Jailer responds: What must I do to be saved?
7) Call to faith: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ
8) Paul “preaches the word” and all in his household and the entire household was baptized
9) All rejoiced at becoming a believer in God
Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21 – The conclusion of the vision and promise of John: I am Alpha and Omega and I am coming soon

1) Blessed are all those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and dwell in the city of God
2) Spirit and bride (Christ) are One in their call and invitation to taste and experience the waters of life as God’s gift
3) Repeated promise of the assurance of Jesus presence and coming: I am coming soon, and that’s truth!
4) And response of the faithful: “Amen, Come Lord Jesus”
5) Concluding benediction: to Revelation’s vision, and to the whole New Testament:
“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen”

The promise of the gospel is that in Christ Jesus the Risen Lord, God’s grace abides with the community of all those who believe and have been washed and forgiven in the blood of the Lamb of God
A discourse on the abiding unity and presence of God, Jesus, and the community of his believers

1) Jesus prays to the Father on behalf of his followers:

2) An ever widening community; not only these, but those who will believe through their word (anticipates mission and its success)

3) That they may all be one: Jesus prays for unity of those who believe

4) Unity of Son with Father (You in me, and I in you) is sign for the world to believe that God has sent Jesus

5) Glory given to me, I have given to them: Jesus hands over to us, what Father has given him

6) So that they may be one, as we are one; unity of father and son mirrored in the Christian community

7) So that world may know: You loved them just as you loved me

8) Love that extends from before the foundation of the world (Jesus as the Word is there already at creation; see John 1:1f)

9) They know you through knowing me; just as I know you

10) Because I made your name known to them: we know the Father through the life and testimony of the love of God through the Son

11) Making known God’s name and the gift of love is the ongoing work of the Son, the Risen Christ in our midst: I have made it known, and I will keep on making it known.