

Sunday, April 2, 2017
Fifth Sunday in Lent

INTRODUCTION

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome new sisters and brothers at the baptismal font, as we renew our baptismal promises.

PRELUDE

"All Glory, Laud and Honor"

Austin Lovelace

***GATHERING SONG**

"Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

ELW 886

**Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!**

**My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.**

**The name of Jesus charms our fears
and bids our sorrows cease,
sings music in the sinner's ears,
brings life and health and peace.**

**He speaks, and list'ning to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.**

**Look unto him, your Savior own,
O fallen human race!
Look and be saved through faith alone,
be justified by grace!**

**To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever giv'n
by saints below and saints above,
the church in earth and heav'n.**

***GREETING**

ℙ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

☩ **And also with you**

***KYRIE**

ℙ *In peace, let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ **Lord, have mercy.**

ℙ *For the peace from above,
and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ **Lord, have mercy.**

ℙ *For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all,
let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ **Lord, have mercy.**

ℙ *For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ **Lord, have mercy.**

ℙ *Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.*

☩ **Amen.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE "Now The Feast And Celebration"**

ELW 167

Refrain

**Now the feast and celebration,
all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom;
praise and glory forevermore!**

**Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain,
whose blood has freed and united us
to be one great people of God. *Refrain***

**Power and riches, wisdom and might,
all honor and glory to Christ forever. *Refrain***

**For God has come to dwell with us,
to make us people of God;
to make all things new. *Refrain***

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

ℙ *Almighty God,*

☩ **your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death.**

**Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to
new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through**

Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!

ANTHEM

"How Great His Love"

Ruth Elaine Schram

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the Lord."

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

Reflection

Where is Ezekiel in this vision? (verse 1) What does he see? (verse 2) What is the question that the spirit of the Lord asks him? (verse 3) What would be your answer to that question? (Mine would be, no way!) What does Ezekiel answer? What does the Lord command him to do? (verse 4) Why? (verses 5-6) What happens to the bones when the word of the Lord is proclaimed to them? (verses 7-10) When the vision is complete, the Lord explains the message of it. What is it? (verses 11-14) Who do the bones represent? What do the dry bones represent? (verse 11) Have you ever experienced a feeling of dryness, hopelessness? What brought hope to the deadly hopeless people? What brings you hope? Is there a Scripture passage that brings life to tired faith for you? What hymns help you in difficult times?

PSALM 130

¹Out | of the depths
I cry to | you, O LORD;

²**O LORD, | hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my | supplication.

³If you were to keep watch | over sins,

O LORD, | who could stand?

⁴**Yet with you | is forgiveness,**

in order that you | may be feared.

⁵I wait for you, O LORD; | my soul waits;

in your word | is my hope.

⁶**My soul waits for the Lord more than those who**

keep watch | for the morning,

more than those who keep watch | for the morning.

⁷O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD

there is | steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plen- | teous redemption.

⁸**For the LORD shall | redeem Israel**

from | all their sins.

Reflection

This has been a psalm that has been helpful to me in difficult times. What is the plight of the psalmist? (verse 1) What does it mean to be “in the depths”? What does the psalmist do in his crisis? (verse 2) How does he express his trust in God? (verses 3-4) Sometimes our sin leaves us in the depths. Sin might be something we have done or not done, or it could be the experience of injustice, such as a person wrongly imprisoned with no way out. Forgiveness might entail saying “I’m sorry for my offense,” or it could be experiencing freedom even in the midst of injustice. When have you experienced forgiveness? What is the psalmist’s response of faith? (verses 5-6) What is it like for you to “wait for the Lord”? This makes me think of sleepless nights when it seemed as though morning would never come. What hope does dawn bring? How is hoping in the Lord like waiting for the dawn? Or what image helps you in times of darkness?

SECOND READING

Romans 8:6-11

For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Reflection

What does it mean to “set the mind on the flesh”? Note that Paul’s dichotomy is not between “religious” and “non-religious.” In this year of celebrating and reflecting on the Reformation, we are reminded that “flesh” is anything that makes us believe that our salvation depends on what we do (acting right, following the commandments, etc.) rather than what Christ has done. I think sometimes it is harder for religious people to let go of the “flesh” than it is for obvious sinners. God’s grace in Christ seeks us out;

anything that claims that what we do makes God love us is “hostile to God.” (verse 7) What is Paul’s confident assertion about his Roman readers and about us? (verse 9) We are not dead, dry bones; we are alive in Christ. (verses 10-11) For me, it takes constant reminders (through Scripture, song, prayer, the Sacraments, and the assurance of believing brothers and sisters) that the Spirit of Christ dwells in me. How do you find such reassurance of your faith?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

pg. 151

**Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger,
and abounding in steadfast love.**

GOSPEL

John 11:1-45

Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” ⁹Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” ¹¹After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹²The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to

him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

³²When Mary came where Jesus was and

saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Reflection

*The notes in the Lutheran Bible point out that this story is the last of Jesus' signs in the Gospel of John. John tells this story from the perspective of knowing that Jesus' own death is approaching. (See verse 2, which refers to an event that happens after the raising of Lazarus—John 12:1-8) What has happened as the narrative begins? (verses 1-3) What is Jesus' interpretation of the sign that he has not yet performed? (verses 4-6) I've always been struck by Jesus' odd reaction to the news of Lazarus's illness—we tend to rush to the bedside of loved ones who are sick and dying. Why did he act this way? (verse 5) Finally he decides to go be with Lazarus and his sisters. (verse 7) What do the disciples think of this decision? (verse 8) What do they think will happen? (verse 16) Note that Thomas, in verse 16, is the one we commonly refer to as “doubting Thomas.” What do you think of Thomas's faith in this story? What has happened by the time Jesus and his disciples arrive in Bethany? (verse 17) What is the significance of “four days” in the tomb? What would you expect to have happened by the time four days in the tomb was up? (see verse 39) Lazarus is as dead as can be. What is Martha's response when Jesus arrives? (verses 20-21) What is Mary's response when she sees Jesus? (verse 32) I find it fascinating to observe how Jesus responds first to Martha, and then to Mary. (See verses 23-27, and then verses 33-35) Sometimes grief needs a theological response, and sometimes it needs simply an emotional response. Jesus (not surprisingly) is a very skilled caregiver! What happens when Jesus finally is taken to the tomb? (verses 38-44) The text for this gospel reading ends with the response of “many of the Jews” who saw Jesus raise Lazarus. What is that response? (verse 45) I'd encourage you to read on, though. What did some of them do? (verse 46) How do the Pharisees and the chief priests respond? (verses 47-53) What about this act of raising Lazarus makes Jesus so dangerous, in their opinion? I would invite you to reflect on what would happen if the dead do not stay dead? (**DON'T** think about Zombies.) What if Martin Luther King, Jr., was still alive after his assassination? What if someone who is killed by the authorities did not stay dead? What is scary about death not having the last word? What if Jesus did not stay dead after he was crucified? What a revolutionary thought! (I'm just sayin'...)*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Debbie Kunz

SERMON

"New Life Here and Now"

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY "Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land"

ELW 333

Refrain

**Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
a weary land, a weary land;
my Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
a shelter in a time of storm.**

**No one can do like Jesus,
not a mumbling word he said;
he went walking down to Lazarus' grave,
and he raised him from the dead. *Refrain***

**When Jesus was on earth,
the flesh was very weak;
he took a towel and girded himself
and he washed his disciples' feet. *Refrain***

**Yonder comes my Savior,
him whom I love so well;
he has the palm of victory
and the keys of death and hell. *Refrain***

***APOSTLES' CREED**

pg. 105

**☒ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!**

***PRAYER SONG**

"Come and Fill Our Hearts"

ELW 528

**Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
You alone, O Lord, are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
You alone, O Lord, are holy.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lifting our voices and turning toward God, let us pray for the church, the earth, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God, our sure strength, set the mind of your church on the Spirit of love and kinship. Bring healing where there is division and hope where there is worry. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring life where there was despair and death. Bring new hope and new growth to barren lands and water to parched earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Listen to the voices of the weak and oppressed. Guard people in all lands from danger and injustice. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God, you are the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: hear our prayers and grant your healing for those who may be sick or in pain. *We especially pray for Trisha, Samantha, Bob, Sheylin, Terry, Stephanie, Dorothy, Linda, Scott, Alva.* We also pray for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bring life to dry bones in our community. Breathe your life-giving Spirit into the corners of our ministry that need renewal. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the faithful departed and for the assurance that we will join with them in the heavenly banquet. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love; through Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

☞ The peace of Christ be with you always.

☞ **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

"Just a Closer Walk With Thee"

arr. Mark Hayes

Praise Band

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE "Create In Me a Clean Heart"**

ELW 186

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

Q **receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

Q **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

Q **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

Q **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy, holy,
holy, holy is our God,
God, the Lord of earth and heaven.
Holy, holy is our God.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,*

*who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.
In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.
Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.*

☩ Amen!

***LORD'S PRAYER**

**☩ Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

☩ *Return to God with all your heart.
Receive bread for the journey, drink for the desert.*

COMMUNION

***BLESSING**

☩ *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace.*

☩ Amen!

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

℟ *Compassionate God,*

☩ **you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace, and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

℟ *May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth, and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into life renewed. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you ☩ peace.*

☩ **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG "Every Time I Feel The Spirit"**

Refrain

**Every time I feel the Spirit
moving in my heart, I will pray.
Yes, every time I feel the Spirit
moving in my heart, I will pray.**

**Upon the mountain, my Lord spoke,
out his mouth came fire and smoke.
All around me looks so fine,
ask my Lord if all was mine. *Refrain***

**Jordan River chilly and cold,
chills the body, not the soul.
Ain't but one train on this track,
runs to heaven and right back. *Refrain***

**I have heartache, I have cold,
I have trouble here below.
While God leads me I'll not fear,
I am sheltered by God's care. *Refrain***

***DISMISSAL**

℟ *Marked with the cross of Christ,
go forth to love and serve the Lord.*

☩ **Thanks be to God!**