

Central Lutheran Church

Narrative Lectionary Bible Study - Fall, 2020

October 14 Lesson

Welcome and Introduction

We are off and running on our weekly Zoom Bible study, rooted in the narrative lectionary. A few quick reminders, if needed:

1. The narrative lectionary was developed with the goal of hearing lessons that we do not often encounter in the common lectionary. This year we will “travel” through the history of God’s love for the world.
2. These Bible studies are more holy conversations. No previous knowledge is expected, in fact it helps to seek to enter the study as if for the first time. You are invited to attend the Zoom study each week, but the invitation is always open for when it works in your schedule.
3. Christ Care Prayers begin each lesson, it is a time when we pray for one another and the needs of the world. If you have a prayer concern that you do not want to share in front of the group, you can send a private chat to the pastor who is leading the study.
4. Yep, we will break out into conversation groups. Have no fear, one of the pastors will be in each of the groups to help facilitate the conversation.
5. Thank you for joining this Bible study, these holy conversations.

Schedule

September 9 - Genesis 2: 4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8 (Creation and “fall”)

September 16 - Genesis 15: 1-6 (God’s promise to Abraham/ Sarah)

September 23 - Genesis 37: 3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21 (Joseph’s dreams)

September 30 - Exodus 12:1-3; 13:1-8 (Passover)

October 7 - Exodus 32: 1-14 (Golden Calf)

October 14 - 1 Samuel 1: 9-11, 19-20; 2:1-10 (Hannah and Samuel)

October 21 - 2 Samuel 7: 1-17 (David)

October 28 - 1 Kings 17: 1-24 (Elijah and the widow)

November 4 - Jonah 1:1-17; 3: 1-10; 4:1-11 (Jonah)

November 11 - Isaiah 6: 1-8 (Holy, Holy, Holy)

November 18 - Jeremiah 36: 1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31: 31-34 (New Covenant)

November 25 – NO Zoom Study, Thanksgiving Weekend

December 2 - Joel 2:12-13, 28-29 (Merciful God, promise of Spirit)

December 9 - Isaiah 61: 1-11 (Spirit of the Lord)

December 16 - Luke 1:26-45, 46-56 (Annunciation and Magnificat)

December 23 – NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

December 30 – NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

January 6 – Zoom Study Resumes

Narrative Study for Wednesday, October 14

Welcome

Christ Care Prayers

Where have we been?

We began in Genesis, engaged with two of the central lessons in Exodus and now we jump to Hannah's prayer for a child. We know of this theme, the question of children. The promises to Abraham and Sarah included children more numerous than the stars in the heavens. Jacob has twelve sons but showed such favoritism to one son that is caused a cascade, leading to God "working all for the good." Last week we wrestled with the golden calf moment. Before we open to 1 Samuel, we will look at the Biblical story between Exodus and 1 Samuel.

Tonight's Lesson: 1 Samuel

The Book of Ruth is a bridge, a transition from the time of Moses, Joshua and the Judges into the time of the prophets and kings. There is heartbreak here, the people long for a king despite God's pleading that they remain in direct, or less mediated, relationship. A king is what they want, and so God grants the people their prayer.

First, God raises up the prophets. In raising them up, there is now a permanent tension or balance (depending on the moment) between the prophet and the king. Abraham Heschel, perhaps one of the most gifted scholars on the prophets (and one you may hear us quote from time to time) wrote that the prophets are "some of the most disturbing people who have ever lived: the {people} whose

inspiration brought the Bible into being - the {people} whose image is our refuge in distress, and whose voice and vision sustain our faith." The Prophets, p xxi

The bridge to the prophets and the prophetic writings that will dominate the remainder of the Hebrew scriptures is Samuel. Samuel is a mediator like Moses, a Judge and Prophet. He serves as the delicate balance of all three, creating a tradition which gives way to the pure call of the prophet to speak on behalf of widows and orphans, the corruption of government and commerce, care for the poor and outcast, and all who are marginalized.

Samuel begins as Hannah's prayer, a cry for belonging and the deepest of hope. How can one who begins all of life in this way not serve as the bridge and the continual call for people of faith to look beyond their lives to the ways of God's love, mercy, justice and peace? How do we hold in our memory, remember in our bones, that Samuel is God's gift to an oppressed woman?

If you have time before we gather on Zoom, enter the divine reading process with the lesson. What do you think and feel? Then, what do you notice as you read from the depth of your soul, attentive to God?

Hannah sings her song of praise. We know this song; it is sung by Mary after the visitation. Hannah's song is the basis for Mary's Magnificat. With the prophets we do begin the expectant looking and longing toward Advent and the One who bridges all for us.

Lectio Divina

One of the oldest ways to enter into the holy conversation at a Bible study is to spend time reading the lesson slowly, and at least three times. This fall you will be invited to this way of reading called "lectio divina," or divine reading. You can read the lesson silently, or even out loud if you are in a quiet place. There are many ways to engage in *lectio divina*, here is one way to consider:

1. The first time simply read the lesson for the information, the story that is being shared. At the end of the reading, what did you notice? What was interesting, or confusing? What was familiar or unfamiliar?
2. The second time, slow down and perhaps circle words that stay with you or even underline a sentence that jumps out at you. Here you begin to read with your heart, along with your mind. What emotions do you notice as you read and respond or react to the lesson?
3. The third and final time, really slow down. Perhaps you pause or stop at a verse, linger there. Here you begin to read with your soul. What is God or the LORD GOD saying in, with and under this story? What is God or

the LORD GOD not saying, in other words, is God speaking or does it seem more like human interpretation at this point. What is liberating or what is troubling? How are you open to God as you pause for this third reading?

4. Be sure to write down what you may have learned and the questions you may have at this point. Note what emotions were stirred up and what you may want to ponder. Note how the lesson draws you to God, how are you opened or where are you restless.

1 Samuel 1: 9-11, 19-20; 2:1-10 (Hannah and Samuel)

After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the LORD. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. ¹¹She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

Hannah prayed and said,

"My heart exults in the LORD;
my strength is exalted in my God.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in my victory."

²"There is no Holy One like the LORD,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God."

³Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed."

⁴The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength."

⁵Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.
The barren has borne seven,

but she who has many children is forlorn."

⁶The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts."

⁸He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,
and on them he has set the world."

⁹"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail."

¹⁰The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed."

Conversation and Questions from the Divine Reading

1. What did you notice? What was interesting, or confusing? What was familiar or unfamiliar?
2. What emotions did you notice as you read and responded or reacted to the lesson?
3. What is God saying in, with and under this story? What is LORD not saying, in other words, is God speaking or does it seem more like human interpretation at this point. What is liberating or what is troubling? How are you open to God as you pause for this third reading?
4. What questions do you bring tonight for us to discuss?

Questions for Discussion in Small Groups, Time Permitting

- Abraham Heschel uses the word "passion" for the person and work of the prophet. When you reflect on your life of faith, what are you "passionate" about? What are your essential faith values and how do they shape how you live and relate in the world?
- Where do we need the prophet's call in our world today? How are we called to the prophetic role to speak and work for the marginalized?
- A helpful image of Jesus, when in prophetic mode, is that Jesus calls for us to care for the least, the last, the lost and the little. How do those four images resonate with you? How do they open our life as Church?