

Central Lutheran Church

Narrative Lectionary Bible Study - Fall, 2020

October 21 Lesson

Welcome and Introduction

We continue with this weekly “water stop” in our shared covid-19 marathon. Thank you for joining this study, it is so good to be together for holy conversation and to “see” one another on Zoom. A few quick reminders:

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 may break out into conversation groups. Have no fear, one of the pastors will be in each of the groups to help facilitate the conversation.

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 and Nathan)

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 and 30 – NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

January 6 – Zoom Study Resumes

Narrative Study for Wednesday, October 21

Welcome and Christ Care Prayers

Where have we been?

We journeyed through some key moments in the Pentateuch – the Five Books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). We jumped over Joshua, Judges and Ruth and into 1 Samuel, listening to Hannah’s deep sorrow and her soaring song of praise. We are now in the time of the prophets. We continue with tonight with Nathan’s word of the Lord to David. In 1 Samuel, the people cry out for a King. God grants their prayer, but with a heavy heart (1 Samuel 8: 7-9). God knows that the Kings that follow will be more interested in power or their own will, rather than the ways of God. Saul is raised up as the first King, and if you don’t remember the story of Saul, well, it is not pretty. It ends in his death, a complex moment of sorrow for Saul and longing for what could have been. David is raised up as King. This is shepherd David, the one who as a young lad kills Goliath.

As 2 Samuel opens the people grieve for Saul, and his son Jonathan, a dear friend of David. There are politics here, and David needs to gather the various supporters in the north and south to build a coalition, for a strong Jerusalem. There is a lot going on here that is very interesting but will distract us from the center of our lesson for tonight. We know that David is now in power. David’s story will unfold in 2 Samuel and into 1 Kings. What David wants in the lesson for tonight is for God to have a house made of cedar. But what David wants, and even how the prophet might affirm what the king wants, is not necessarily the way of God.

Tonight’s Lesson: 2 Samuel

How do we know, or discern God’s call, will or vision? We may think that what we know is what God wants, but is that how it works? Tonight’s lesson draws us into what David wants for God, or what David thinks God should have. He shares this vision with the prophet Nathan, who has taken over for Samuel. Nathan affirms the plan, but that evening the word of the Lord comes to Nathan and there is a change. There is some comedy here for us to note, an invitation for us to laugh at this moment and perhaps laugh a bit at ourselves for all the ways we think we know about God or others, when it is about us all along. This will shape some wonderful conversations for us tonight.

Lectio Divina

One of the oldest ways to enter the holy conversation at a Bible study is to spend time reading the lesson slowly, and at least three times. This way is 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 we read the lesson for the information, the story that is being shared. Here we read with our head, asking what we first noticed?
2. The second time, we slow down and read with our heart. What emotions do you notice as you read and respond or react to in 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 saying in, with and under this story? What is 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?

2 Samuel 7: 1-17 (David and Nathan)

Now when King David was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"

⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from

the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹²When your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. ¹⁵But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever. ¹⁷In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

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? How did you respond or react to the lesson?
3. What is God saying in, with and under this story? What is 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. What questions do you bring tonight for us to discuss?

Questions for Discussion in Small Groups, Time Permitting

- Discernment. This is one of the mysteries and at the same time, the clear gift of faith. Ignatius teaches a way of discernment, and while over simplified, he invites us to consider “inner freedom.” Is there a sense of peace, and abiding in love, that accompanies a decision or sense of what you are to do? It does not mean that the easy path is the way, a sense of peace can be with you when you face the hardest decisions. How often do we make choices, even ones we might claim to be of God, from our own thoughts, comforts and maybe even a little ego?
- Have you ever decided for a family member or a friend and found them frustrated with you? You made the decision in love, certainly, but did you learn that you made it mostly for you and not fully for them? Any brave souls have a story to tell here?
- There is a bit of comedy in Nathan saying “go and do all you have in mind,” and then receiving the word of the Lord and going back to David

to say, “don’t do that, do this, the Lord is saying ‘did I even ask for a house to be built!’” When have you been so certain of something, only to have an insight from God, a glimmer, that caused you to change course and that change opened life?