

Service of Daily Prayer
St. Mark the Evangelist
Athens Lutheran Church - Athens, TN
April 25, 2021

St. Mark, the Evangelist

Today, the Holy Church celebrates the Festival of **St. Mark, Evangelist**, author of the second Gospel and companion of St. Peter and St. Paul.

John Mark was cousin to the apostle Barnabas. His mother's home in Jerusalem was a meeting place for the Early Church. "The weak by grace made strong" in the hymn stanza refers to the famous incident recorded in Acts 15. Though John Mark had begun the first missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas, he did not finish it. We're not told exactly why he returned, but it was clearly without Paul's blessing. Barnabas, the true son of encouragement, was all for giving the young man a second chance when he and Paul determined to begin a second journey. Paul adamantly refused. The disagreement became so sharp that they ended up splitting ways. Paul took Silas and went to Asia Minor; Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus.

If that were the end of the story it would be sad indeed. What a comfort, then, to read in St. Paul's final letter, 2 Timothy 4:11: "Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry." Though a veil of silence remains over the details of how it happened, the two were reconciled before Paul's death and the Church's ministry strengthened all the more.

Additionally, Peter, writing from Rome, would say, "She who is at Babylon [code name for Rome, as in Revelation], who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son." Thus Mark ministered not only with the apostles Barnabas and Paul but with Peter too. Very early and nearly unanimous tradition states that Mark's Gospel itself is actually a summary of the account of our Lord's life that Mark learned from Peter before the apostle's martyrdom in Rome. Scholars have pointed out that Peter's sermon in Acts 10:34–43 provides a strikingly precise outline of Mark's Gospel.

*For Mark, O Lord, we praise You,
The weak by grace made strong,
Whose labors and whose Gospel Enrich our triumph song.
May we, in all our weakness,
Reflect Your servant life
And follow in Your footsteps,
Enduring cross and strife. (LSB 518:15)*

Mark's is the shortest of the four canonical Gospels and the fastest paced ("immediately" is its watchword). It provides a beautiful picture of Christ as the conquering King, who battles and drives out the enemies of the human race (the

demons) just as Joshua drove out the inhabitants of Canaan, a battle that culminates at the cross. The symbol associated with St. Mark is the lion, king of the beasts. Mark's Gospel contains some teaching sections from our Lord, but it is overwhelmingly a fast-paced action account, right up to the disproportionately long narrative of the Lord's Passion. In fact, it has been called a Passion narrative with a preface.

Mark is said to have finished his service to Christ by serving as bishop in the great city of Alexandria in Egypt, ultimately dying there a martyr's death.

Almighty God, You have enriched Your Church with the proclamation of the Gospel through the evangelist Mark. Grant that we may firmly believe these glad tidings and daily walk according to Your Word; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Weedon, William. Celebrating the Saints . Concordia Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Versicles

In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.
My mouth is filled with Your praise,
and with Your glory all the day.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 52:7–10

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,

for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

Reading

2 Timothy 4:5–18

⁵As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

⁹Do your best to come to me soon. ¹⁰For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. ¹²Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. ¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. ¹⁵Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. ¹⁶At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Reading

Mark 16:14–20

¹⁴Afterward [Jesus] appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

Final Reading Response

LSB 238

- P** In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.
- C** **But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.**

Apostles' Creed

- C** **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

Koine Worship Song - I Hear the Savior Calling

Sermon

Rev. Don Coulter

Lord's Prayer

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- C** **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You have enriched Your Church with the proclamation of the Gospel through the evangelist Mark. Grant that we may firmly believe these glad tidings and daily walk according to Your Word; through Jesus Christ, our

Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

In the morning

Almighty God, merciful Father, who created and completed all things, on this day when the work of our calling begins anew, we implore You to create its beginning, direct its continuance, and bless its end, that our doings may be preserved from sin, our life sanctified, and our work this day be well pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Luther's Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Benedicamus

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Then go joyfully to your work.

Stewardship Sentence

John 10:14 – *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”*

What does it mean to know the Lord? It starts with being known by the Lord. He claims us as His own and calls us by name. Then, once we are His, we learn to know Him. In knowing Him, we learn to imitate Him. That is how the Christian life of good works and generosity grows from the Lord's grace.

Lectionary Summary for Next Week - May 2, 2021

Acts 8:26–40; 1 John 4:1–11 (12–21); John 15:1–8

Jesus Christ Is the True Vine Who Bears Much Fruit in Us

“God is love,” and He has manifested Himself to us by sending *“his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him”* (1 John 4:9, 16). By the ministry of the Gospel, *“he has given us of his Spirit,”* so that we also believe and confess *“that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.”* In this way, we *“abide in him and he in us,”* and we *“love one another”* (1 John 4:2, 7, 13). Such divine love is exemplified in Philip's preaching of *“the good news about Jesus”* to the Ethiopian eunuch. And when *“they came to some water,”* the eunuch was baptized into the very Gospel that Philip had preached (Acts 8:35–38). That Ethiopian was thereby grafted into *“the*

true vine,” Jesus Christ (**John 15:1**), just as we are. Already we are clean because of the Word that Christ has spoken to us and by the washing of water with His Word. We now abide in Him by faith in His forgiveness. As He abides in us, both body and soul, with His own body and His blood, He “*bears much fruit*” in us (**John 15:3–5**).

Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV[®] Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version[®]), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2021 Concordia Publishing House.