

Rev Peter Lockhart

us as we week to engage the narratives through fresh lenses and hear again the good news. This will be my 6th run at preaching in Year A I pray that there are more surprises ahead for me this year and for all of

his coming reign those who feel ostracised, abused and desolate in this world in which we live.

Our place is to identify with those outcasts who Jesus identified with; our place is to challenge the systems of this world which enable a few to grow wealthy off the labour of others; our place is to welcome in to the presence of Jesus and might be given more and share in an already wealthy master's reward. No!

The suggestion is that in the coming kingdom our place is not to be using our 'talents' for our own gain, so that we is for the slave who is burdened by the oppressive systems and regimes that dictate his life.

By suggesting that Jesus was attacking Herod the outcome is that Jesus is turning things on their head. God's concern the work of others and suggesting slaves go and sin.

The traditional view of associating God with landowner is problematic to say the least if the landowner is profiting off was understood as a sin in the Old Testament.

do not sow, and gathering where you do not scatter seed'. The response of the landowner is to suggest usury, which wicked servants. But the words of the wicked servant are revealing 'I knew you were a harsh man, reaping where you The story portrays a landowner who profits off the work of others and when they don't work he casts them out as Jesus critique of Herod's greed.

reading of the parable instead of being about using our 'talents' for God so we don't get punished if it is understood as The second confrontation came when I encountered an alternative perspective to the parable of the talents. In this reassures us.

times when we cry out to God for healing for ourselves or for others and the answer appears to be silence the story This is the deepest expression of our Christian hope. That God will help us. And, whilst this may seem confusing at Jesus God acts and the girl is healed.

deserve it. She does nothing to earn it. It is not by her faith. It is not by her belief. The woman pleads and through The outcome is that the woman's child is healed by Jesus. The healing of the girl is utter grace. She does nothing to from people on his journey through life and more than that a humbling one.

experiences. Was Jesus growing through this one? It is a striking thought that the incarnate son of God might learn human then it seems illogical to suggest he knew all things and understood them. As people we grow through our The question emerged in my mind was "Did Jesus learn through this encounter?" If we truly believe Jesus was truly his initial response whilst surprising for us reflected what was probably socially and religiously acceptable for his time.

I have read all sorts of rationales for this story and Jesus harshness but last time we were in the year of Matthew I was struck again by the notion of Jesus own humanity in the story. Jesus was a Jewish male in a Jewish culture and only to be met with stony silence which is then compounded when Jesus infers the woman is a dog.

The first confrontation is found in the story of the Canaanite woman who comes begging for Jesus help in Matthew 15 well assumed meaning.

Matthew's gospel: one with a story which has always sat uncomfortably; and the other with a well known story with a As we begin this year of preaching I am reminded of two confrontations that I had in recent years preaching from into as we look at it through new lenses.

It is important to remind yourself that what we are reading is good news and maybe it is good news we need to grow and the confrontation with Jewish authorities and practices are uncomfortable.

religion. The teachings of Jesus contain a strong ethical vision, his confrontations with the Pharisees are full of polemics of the emotions it evokes. Matthew contains reminiscences of a violent culture which deeply divided on race and Yet to sit and read Matthew from beginning to end is no easy task. Not simply because of the time it takes but because paragraphs and excerpts rather than the whole story.

particularly the gospels. One can only imagine how it leaves many recipients of the sermons as we teach them to read Preaching the lectionary across the year can leave one with a distorted and disjointed feeling about some of narratives,

Preaching the Gospel of Matthew: Discovering a new lens

Lectionary Related Websites (Free Resources)—Australian

Anna Grant-Henderson's Home Page <http://www.oldtestamentlectionary.unitingchurch.org.au>

Bill Loader's Home Page <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader>

Bruce Prewer's Home Page <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>

Howard Wallace's Home Page <http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au>

Laughing Bird Liturgical Resources (Nathan Nettleton) <http://www.laughingbird.net>

Liturgies Online (Maira Laidlaw) <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au>

Mustard Seeds (Ann Scull) <http://www.seedstuff.blogspot.com/>

The Billabong, <http://thebillabong.info> (Rev Jeff Shrowder)

Together to Celebrate: Contemporary Christian Music Resources for Worship (Rev David MacGregor) <http://www.togethertocelebrate.com.au>

Lectionary Related Websites (Free Resources)—Other

The Revised Common Lectionary: A Vanderbilt Divinity Library Online Resource <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/> (includes links to relevant Christian art)

The Text This Week: Lectionary, Scripture Study and Worship Links and Resources <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/> (extensive links to a range of resources)

Lectionary Related Websites (Subscription Based)

Midnight Oil Productions <http://www.midnightoilproductions.com>

Roots on the Web (Churches Together in Britain & Ireland) <http://www.rootsontheweb.com>

The Work of the People: Visual Media for Ministry <http://www.theworkofthepeople.com>

With Love to the World <http://www.wlw.uca.org.au>

Additional notes regarding the way in which Sundays are identified and numbered in the Lectionary

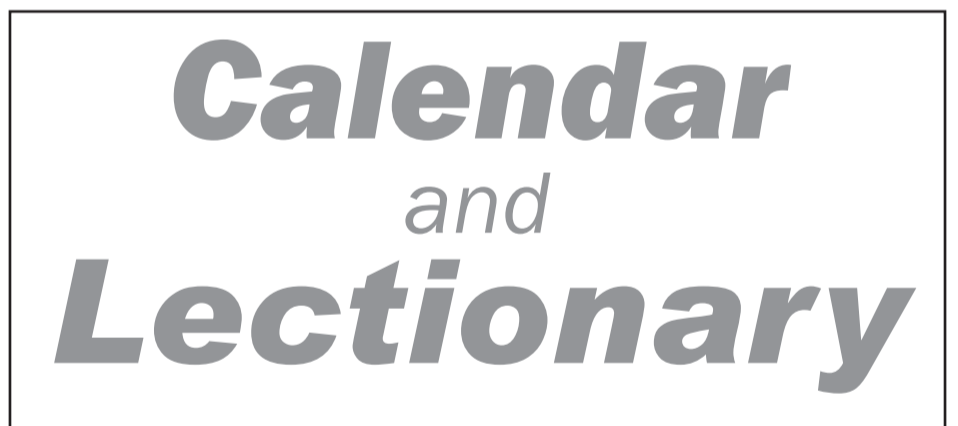
Firstly, the Lectionary numbers the Sundays after Pentecost. The Sunday after Trinity will always be Pentecost 2.

The numbers in brackets for the Sundays after Epiphany and after Pentecost refer to what is known as "Ordinary Time". This is not because these Sundays are "ordinary" in the way we usually understand the term. In the Lectionary, "ordinary" comes from the word "ordinal" and refers to the order in which the numbers come...first, second, third etc. The Sundays in "Ordinary Time" include all the Sundays outside of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.

It is important to understand that during Epiphany these numbers count forward from the Sunday marking the baptism of Jesus. However, after Pentecost they are counted backwards from the last Sunday of the Church Year (Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday). The actual numbering will vary from year to year depending on how early or late Easter falls.



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The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church has received the Books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which it hears the word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated...

The Uniting Church lays upon its members the serious duty of reading the Scriptures, and commits its ministers to preach from these...'

Basis of Union, paragraph 5



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