

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are currently in the midst of the Lenten season, the forty days in the Church calendar that begin with Ash Wednesday and end with Good Friday and the celebration of Easter. One of the important images in the Bible attached with the number forty is the image of the journey. Noah floated on the ark for forty days, the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, and Jesus himself went into the desert to fast for forty days after his baptism. And as we enter Lent, we join Noah, the Israelites, and Jesus in our own journeys as we look to God to reveal himself, rescue us from sin, provide for our needs.

I think Lent is an appropriate time to meditate upon God's journey with us and the way he has made himself known to His people throughout the history of the world. That journey is most clearly recorded in the Bible, what we Lutherans lift high as "The Word of God". Over the next five weeks, I'll be sharing some thoughts with you here in "Flock Notes"<sup>1</sup> on **FIVE** themes concerning what we believe about Holy Scripture. These themes include: *Revelation*, *Inspiration*, *Infallibility*, *Perspicacity*, and *Illumination*. These are big words to be sure, but they are all about our heavenly Father's desire to make His love known to us and to draw us into a relationship with Himself.

To begin our journey, let's start with the topic of *Revelation*. Every human relationship that we experience begins with someone taking initiative. I still remember working up the nerve to ask my wife out on our first date. She didn't make it easy on me, but I knew that if I didn't make a move she certainly wasn't going to ask me out. So eventually, I got up the courage to hem and haw, and see if she didn't want to try out a new sandwich shop on our end of town. The rest is history.

In much more elegant and bold fashion, God has always been making the first move to win the hearts of the people he has made, and we can think of this wooing of our hearts as *revelation* in action. God doesn't leave anything to chance and is continually working to make himself known to us. Here are some ways that he is at work to reveal himself to us.

First, God reveals himself to us through the wonder and beauty of nature. Paul tells us in Romans 1:20 that God's "invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So that they are without excuse." The grandeur of the universe, the billions of stars in the Milky Way, the Grand Canyon, the intricacy of the human eyeball, and the complexity of a planet that tilts at exactly at 23 degrees—at 22 we incinerate; at 24 we freeze—all point clearly to a universe that doesn't exist by chance. Every nook and cranny of our world bears the thumbprint of a creating God, and we are without excuse if we don't see it. Psalms 14 takes it a bit further: the reality of God is so obvious that only "the fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'". God reveals himself in the natural realm.

Secondly, God reveals himself through his recorded actions in history. We call this the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New. Each Testament records and describes the faithful way in which God constantly makes the first move with humanity. The Old Testament records God's faithful love for the people of Israel. From humans being kicked out of the Garden of Eden to the people of Israel taken into captivity by the Babylonians, the Old Testament shows us a pattern: We humans burn every bridge God builds for us to connect with Him, and He constantly works to repair and rebuild that bridge. The New Testament tells us the story of God building a permanent bridge to him that we can't destroy, and that bridge is the person of Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> "Flock Notes" is Our Savior's Lutheran Church's weekly email missive sent out to the congregation on Monday Morning

The New Testament records the life and actions of Jesus, which are consistent with the actions and words of God in the Old Testament. In our human relationships, we know each other by what we say and by what we do, in a humble way that is how we reveal ourselves to each other. Although sometimes what we say is crosswise with way we do, God's words and actions point to a steady and faithful character that is consistent over thousands of years of time. We proclaim that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We know this to be true because Jesus Christ has revealed himself to us in the Scriptures both Old and New.

Lastly, God has revealed himself through his Son, Jesus the Christ, who the Apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:15 is the "image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." We believe that God has revealed himself in a physical way through Jesus. Jesus was born into this world as a human, and although he was fully God, He chose to suffer as we have suffered, and to undertake death. He died, was buried, and was resurrected. His life shows us God's love, care, and attention. He isn't a God who is far off, but One who gets right in the mix of human things like eating and drinking with all classes of people, going to weddings and funerals, playing with children, and spending time with those suffering from the spiritual and physical pain of this world. The way he lives his life (for indeed, he continues to live in the throne room of God) shows us in person us the faithful love of God, the same faithful love that was made manifest in God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all God's people in the Old Testament. God reveals himself through the person of Jesus.

All in all, revelation is nothing less than God making the first move of showing us who He is and what He wants for our lives. The Bible is the greatest love story ever told. But the best part is that this love story doesn't end with words of the Bible but extends to include you and me. The world around us and the story of God as written in the Bible exist because God is making the first move. He loves you and wants you to know Him, and—perhaps this is the most mysterious part—he wants to know you as well. Because this is true, I want to challenge you to use this week of our Lenten journey to read through the provided lectionary readings and as you read ask yourself this question: "What is God revealing to me about his nature and character by what I am reading?" I know that He will answer you, because after all, He's been doing exactly that with us humans since the day we were made.

Grace and Peace,  
Blaine Davis  
Your Seminarian