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of the mind in service of the gospel of Christ.

Jessica: Welcome to Lectionary Kickstart,
where we're sparking your thoughts for Sunday
as you plan your sermon or teaching lesson.
I'm your host and producer, Jessica Bordeleau,
here with Dr. David Schmitt and Dr. Peter Nafzger.
They're both professors of homiletics
here at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
You can hear all about us in our introductory episode,
but trust me, they are pretty good preachers.
All right, let's get started.

David: David, where are we in the church year?
We're at the 26th Sunday after Pentecost,
and the church year is coming to a close,
so we're beginning to turn our attention to the last things.

Jessica: And Peter, what are the texts this week?

Peter: The texts are taken from Daniel chapter 12,
Hebrews 10, Mark 13, and Psalm 16.

Jessica: As always, I ask each of you to tell me
which text you would choose to preach about
to determine who goes first.
It's mid-November, it's chilly outside,
we're dressing for the weather.
Describe your favorite sweatshirt.
Except for David, you can tell me your favorite sweater,
because I bet you don't have a sweatshirt, do you?

David: You are right, I do not have a sweatshirt.

Jessica: So.
I totally thought that you would say that too.
What's your favorite sweater?

David: I don't know.

Jessica: Peter, do you have a favorite sweatshirt?

Peter: My favorite sweatshirt would probably be the sweatshirt,
we had our church made sweatshirts kind of as a thing,
and we even had embroidered on the back of the hood
our last name.

Jessica: Oh, cool.

Peter: Which now I look at and I think that's kind of cheesy.
But I like when I wear that sweatshirt,
I think of my congregation in Minnesota.

Jessica: Nice.
Well, Peter, obviously you'll win,
because David doesn't own any sweatshirts.
My favorite sweatshirt is so old,
but it's a hoodie, no zipper, navy blue,
says Camp Luther on it.

I need a new one, because it is that old,
but I can't find one that's good.
So there it is.

Peter, you win, you get to go first.

What do you want to preach about?

Peter: I am going to preach this week on Psalm 16.
And Psalm 16 is one of my favorite Psalms.
Actually, it harkens back,
I mentioned the sweatshirt from my congregation,
there's a reason for my congregation.
But I want to think about Psalm 16 as a Psalm
that helps you pray, proclaim, and promise.
There's a prayer, there's a proclamation,
and there's a promise in this Psalm.
And the reason I like Psalm 16 is because it's a Psalm
that helps you pray, and it's a Psalm that helps you pray.
And the reason I like Psalm 16 is that this is one
that was kind of a go-to Psalm for me
when I was visiting members in the congregation
before they had surgery.

David: Oh, okay.

Peter: There's so much in there.
You meet someone for surgery,
and they're usually a little anxious,
so there's something going on.
And so walking through this Psalm,
there's a couple parts of it that I would find very helpful.
So I've got kind of a spot in my heart for this Psalm,
but I think I would organize a sermon in some way.
I'm not quite sure how I would do it,
but I would want to highlight the prayer,
the proclamation, and the promise.
And so the prayer comes in verse one.
Jessica, would you just read verse one?

Jessica: Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

Peter: The Psalm begins, preserve me, O God.
And that's really the end of the prayer.
The rest of the Psalm does not pray.
The rest of the Psalm is about confessing
or proclaiming what God has done,
and then it leads into a promise at the end.
But so what I want to do as I describe my idea
is I'm gonna describe for you what I would do
in the hospital room with these members.
And so of course, you're getting to the hospital,
and you read a text of scripture,
and you talk, you learn about the surgery,
and then you spend time in prayer.

And so the prayer would be very simple.
Preserve me, O God, in you I take refuge.
This would lead to a proclamation in the text
that I would invite the people going through surgery
to make their own.

So I would proclaim what a Christian proclaims,
what someone who trusts in God proclaims.

So just look at a couple of these verses.

Verse two, I say to the Lord, you are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you.

Verse five, the Lord is my chosen portion and cup.

You hold my lot.

Six, verse B, six B, I have a beautiful inheritance.

Jessica: You're taking my job, Peter.

Peter: I know, but these are so good, I gotta say them.

Because he's at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

Verse nine, therefore my heart is glad,
my whole being rejoices, my flesh also dwells secure.

So these words, the psalmist is proclaiming
kind of this personal faith in God.

And so when I would visit people in the hospital,

I would invite them to make especially
that second part of verse five their own,
the you hold my lot.

I would actually, you know like in the hospital room,
kind of the surgery staging area,
they'd always have like a little whiteboard
and it has your nurse written on it
and maybe some kind of instructions for what to do.

I would always find a marker and write on the whiteboard,
in quotes, you hold my lot, Proverbs five,
Proverbs 16, or Psalm 16, verse five.

And then I would tell the member going into surgery,
as you're going under, as they're giving you the anesthesia,
say that over and over again,

let that be the last thing you say,
you hold my lot, and speaking to the Lord,
you hold my lot, you hold my lot.

And then I would tell them,

I'm gonna ask you when you get out of surgery,
what was that phrase?

And so I would do that almost every time,
they would remember it and they would say,
you hold my lot.

And so that's the proclamation,
that's what I wanna give them those words,
you hold my lot, my flesh also dwells secure,
I shall not be shaken.

David: Why do you think that's important for someone who's in the hospital sick, awaiting surgery, why is it important to do that?

Peter: Well, I think, you know, when you're worried about your own mortality and you're worried about potential downside that could happen, whatever kind of surgery it is, your mind filled with all sorts of worried thoughts and concerns, and I wanted to put words in their mouths and in their hearts that were words that drew them closer to their Lord.
And so this, you hold my lot, almost kind of like a mantra to kind of let that calm their fears, I don't know, what do you think?

Jessica: No, that's so perfect, I can't tell you how many ambulance rides I've been in and three labors where all I thought was, you are my refuge and strength, you are my refuge and strength, over and over and over. That's the only thing.

Peter: And this, what I like about this is it's so clear, it's so direct, it's so gospel centered, and it's easy to remember, and it fits on a little whiteboard.

David: Right, yeah.

Peter: So that's the proclamation, and then I would let the heart of my message before they went to surgery be the promise, and Jessica, this time I'll ask you to read, would you read verses 10 and 11, because this is pure promise.

Jessica: For you will not abandon my soul to sheol, or let your holy one seek corruption. You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Peter: Okay, so that invites you to speak language of promise, and here's why, because of course the language of, you will not abandon my soul, you will not let your holy one seek corruption. The holy one draws us to Jesus, right? And the one who was not abandoned, even though He died, even though He was buried, He was not abandoned. He was not, He did not seek corruption, kind of as the end, but he rose again. And so this would be a time when I could emphasize the resurrection of Jesus as kind of our hope, and you, my member who's in surgery, have been united to Jesus, and He's not gonna let you seek corruption either.

He will raise you, even if surgery doesn't go well,
He will not abandon you.
In His presence, you have made known the paths of life
to me, in your presence there is fullness of joy.
At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
So kind of pure promise.
And so I find, I found this psalm really, really helpful.
I had members sometimes who would come back,
you know, years later and they'd see me after service
when they just say, you hold my lot.
You hold my, it was one that really stuck with them.
But the one that now, if I were preaching this sermon,
I would have to tell the story of Wally,
a member of our congregation.
And so let me just tell you a little bit about Wally.
Wally was one of these bigger than life guys.
He was a big, he was late 60s, early 70s, jovial,
booming voice, big red rosy cheeks.
He had one of those farmer hands
when you'd shake his hand afterwards,
it's like this huge paw, and you just,
your little hand just kind of barely fits in there.
And I remember when this big,
he was like president of the congregation for years,
leader in the church, very faithful man,
but he had heart surgery.
You know, it was pretty serious heart surgery.
And he was really scared.
And I remember being in the hospital room
with him and his wife, Kathy,
and we did this kind of thing,
and I wrote on the board, you hold my lot.
And then we prayed, and Kathy and I walked him
down the hallway, you know, as you're,
he's in the hospital bed, and they're ushering him down.
And there comes that point in the hospital room
where the two doors open,
where you can't go past that anymore, towards surgery.
And, you know, he was holding Kathy's hand,
and, you know, said, I love you.
And I said, you hold my lot.
And he kind of acknowledged, you hold my lot.
And he did not survive surgery.

David: Oh, oh.

Peter: And I think as a result of Wally's death,
that Psalm and that phrase became more for me
than just something I wrote
on the hospital room whiteboard.

It became kind of a very personal proclamation for myself.

When I preached his funeral,

I preached on Psalm 16 and Romans 8:35 to 39,
nothing can separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus.

And this Psalm, this phrase, reminds me of the,
the Ars moriendi, the art of dying.

So there are these manuals in the middle ages
that were written kind of how to die well.

And it was written generally during times of plague
where a lot of people were dying.

And Kolb, his book on Luther's preaching,
has a whole chapter, it's only about 10 or 12 pages,
about Luther's preaching that prepared people to die well.

And the two main points that the Kolb makes
from Luther's preaching is dying well
means recognizing the reality of death
and the awfulness of death, the separation of death,
but also it means leading people to trust
in the resurrection of Jesus and that kind of dying well.

So if I'm thinking about preaching a sermon on this text,
I want to help my hearers learn to die well
and as a result also learn to live well.

And so then the Psalm would help me lead them
to a life of prayer, a life of proclamation,
even to themselves, like you were mentioning earlier,
Jessica, when you're in a time of stress,
you proclaim the promises of God.

But then also there's the promise,
so the prayer, the proclaim, the proclamation,
and the promise.

I would use this Psalm to help my hearers learn to die well,
which is kind of getting to be appropriate
as we get toward the end of the church year,
we start thinking about end times.

And to do so, to try to equip hearers
to endure the fears and the struggles
and the anxieties they have going forward.

Jessica: Ah, you were a good pastor, Peter.

What about you, David, what would you preach on?

David: Well, I'm gonna go with Daniel,
but I struggled with Daniel or Mark, right?
Because they're both dealing with the end times.
But I thought the Daniel text
was taking a larger view,
a more global view of what's happening.
And so I thought that would be a better text to use
because it's shorter, it's clearer,

and it just kind of names some ultimate truths
that we need to be reconciled with
and we need to live in light of.
And so that's how I'm gonna go for the Daniel text.

Peter: And Daniel rarely shows up in the lectionary,
which is a shame.

But this is a nice chance
to familiarize your congregation with Daniel.

David: Right, and I mean, you know, some of the visions.

Peter: Oh.

David: Yeah, right, the visions are difficult.

But here we've got Daniel speaking about the end times,
Jessica, if you could read verse two and three.

Jessica: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth
shall awake, some to everlasting life,
and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness
of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness
like the stars forever and ever.

David: Okay, so here in a very clear and simple passage,
we recognize that there is life after death.
So you have death, and then you have resurrection,
those who sleep shall awake.
You have judgment, those division of the faithful
and the unfaithful.
And those who are faithful, you have this everlasting life
in the kingdom of God, shining forever and ever.
And so these are really, really simple, basic concepts.
And I agree with you, this is the end of the church year,
and it's a time for us every year to revisit
these fundamental truths.
And I mean, I think these are truths we call upon
most often in funerals, right?
I mean, it's at the time of a funeral
that we're gonna be dragging this stuff out
and preaching about it and sharing it with our people.
But what is happening now is that during
the regular church year, in the middle of November,
we have an opportunity to talk about fundamental truths.
And so, I don't know, Jessica, what do you think
is the value of covering these things outside of a funeral?
I mean, most of the time we cover these things,
it's in a funeral, but what about covering it
when you're outside of a funeral?

Jessica: Well, this is one of the most important things
that you can help people understand, right?
If we can't look past the life that we're living right now,
what's the point?

I heard Dr. Maxwell say that some sermons
help bring God's word close to you so you can understand it.
And he said, and some sermons should help you
look out of yourself and see something else.
And I thought that was powerful,
and sometimes that's what I need.
I'm sitting in the pew, I'm like,
tell me that this is not all there is, please.
Tell me the whole story because I need something
outside of myself, because everything around me
is too hard right now.

David: Yeah, I know, what do you think, Peter?

Peter: Yeah, I was thinking just it's so easy to get
such a narrow vision and get entrapped
by all the immediate things in life,
and to have a moment to step back and see the bigger picture,
especially even in the season of fall or November
where things are dying and there's this morose atmosphere,
almost a melancholy seems to set in
depending on where you're at in the country.
And I think in some ways the pump is primed
for kind of thinking deeply about things.

David: Right, there's a poet, Mary Oliver, she has this poem,
I think it's titled, You Think We Would Have Known.
I think that's the title of it.
And in the poem, she never has that phrase,
You Think We Would Have Known, but that's the title of it.
And what the poem is, it's about the sour cream
that goes bad in the fridge, the bread that turns moldy,
the leaves that fall and die on the ground,
the pet that passes away.
And she just lists all of these occasions of death
in very concrete, beautiful terms.
But the whole point of it is,
you think we would have known, right?
We tend to get sucked into life, our life,
and we tend to get sucked into the really,
really small aspects of our life.
And then we're kind of like this black hole
and we try to suck God into that.
And the only thing we come to church for
is for God to do something for my little life, right?
He becomes the servant of me.
And a text like this just kind of pulls you out of that
and kind of says, no, your life is more
than what you think it is.
Your life is bigger than what you think it is.
And God's work is much, much larger than you,

much larger than just your family,
much larger than even your generation.
This is a work that is cosmic in scope.
And so it gives us an opportunity, I think,
to pull back out and come face to face with these terms
that I like what Maxwell said, Jessica,
that cause us to look at ourselves as part of God's kingdom
rather than God as part of our kingdom, right?
I came across a real cheesy devotion the other day,
but it actually worked.
So it was like it was this devotion that was talking about,
when you try to plan everything and nothing works out
and it said, just lift your hands in prayer to God
and say, oh, well.
I thought, it's so funny, but it's such a good prayer.
It's like, we get so wrapped up in our own minuscule issues
and it doesn't work out and we get frustrated
and we're turning to God and asking him to come help.
And sometimes it's just, you'll just give it up and say,
oh, well, I tried, there's a much larger story
than me going on here.
And that's what this text, I think, does for me,
is it asks us to think about the larger picture.
And now how you do that as a preacher,
that's the hard thing, right?
I'm thinking of possibly doing kind of comparison contrast
with different situations.
And what happens when you look at that situation
through the lens of this life is all that there is.
And what happens when you look at that situation
through the lens of there's a much larger life,
there's a resurrection to eternal life.
So your example of your parishioner, Wally.
Yeah, I mean, that's a perfect example, right?
That you have situations in your life
where you're coming face to face with death
and if this life is all there is,
there's a huge, huge emphasis placed upon that surgery.
But if you kind of open your eyes and say,
no, there's a life after this, there's a resurrection,
there's a judgment and there's an everlasting life,
it, I don't know, it just,
it carries you through in a different way.

Peter: Well, it gives you the right perspective
and it helps you realize that we only see the world
through our two eyes.
But essentially, I think what you're doing,
you're preaching is you're trying to give people

the eyes of God, the eyes of Jesus,
to help them see that, yes, the little things
are important in our lives, but there's so much more.
So it doesn't have to be, if you do a comparison contrast,
it doesn't have to necessarily be that one's wrong,
the other one's right.
You could do one as kind of, yeah, part of the story,
It's part, but not the whole.

David: Right, yeah, so I think that's a good thing to remember.
We don't wanna shame people for being concerned
about their vocation, right, about raising their kids
and those type of things.
Don't want to shame them for living the Christian life now.
Actually, we want them to live the Christian life now,
but to not put everything in that moment.
And so part of me, I think, would probably maybe look at,
maybe look at Daniel and in my study, do some study
as to, you know, to whom is he writing, what's going on.
We've got kind of, I mean, I know he's putting this together
at the, after the exile is kind of ended,
that Cyrus has risen and he's gonna be sending them home,
and that's when he's recording all of this stuff.
But maybe talk about their experience
and why this would be such a helpful re-envisioning
of their world that is much larger than just these issues
for us right now, as important as those issues are.
Then maybe move to the gospel reading, I guess.
Jesus talking with his disciples, you know,
they're kind of relishing the beauty of the temple
and then Jesus is kind of offering them a vision
of everything's gonna be destroyed.
And, you know, what is the value of this grander vision
when you're facing something like the death of Jesus?
Recognizing that it's, His life was not for His time only,
but was for all time, for all peoples, right?
And so you've got kind of that grander vision
of who is Jesus, what is His mission?
And then maybe moving to us, either with stories
of individuals or maybe even with stories of churches.
I know there are churches that are struggling to stay open
and churches that, you know, attendance is declining
and it'd be easy to think that you're failing
when actually you're part of a much larger story,
grander narrative that God is at work
and will not stop working until the day He raises
all of the dead and brings them and brings those who believe
into everlasting life.
I guess that's what I would,

that's probably how I might work with it.

Jessica:

Thanks guys, that's all for today.

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While you're there, you'll find episodes of our other podcast, *Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived*. Twice a month, I host conversations with seminary faculty and we talk about the ways that their faith is real in their lives.

The show is for anyone who wants to deepen their theology, tell your congregation about it.

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or let your holy one seek corruption.
You make known to me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy.
At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Peter: Okay, so that invites you to speak language of promise,
and here's why, because of course the language of,
you will not abandon my soul,
you will not let your holy one seek corruption.
The holy one draws us to Jesus, right?
And the one who was not abandoned, even though He died,
even though He was buried, He was not abandoned.
He was not, He did not seek corruption,
kind of as the end, but he rose again.
And so this would be a time when I could emphasize
the resurrection of Jesus as kind of our hope,
and you, my member who's in surgery,
have been united to Jesus,
and He's not gonna let you seek corruption either.
He will raise you, even if surgery doesn't go well,
He will not abandon you.
In His presence, you have made known the paths of life
to me, in your presence there is fullness of joy.
At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
So kind of pure promise.
And so I find, I found this psalm really, really helpful.
I had members sometimes who would come back,
you know, years later and they'd see me after service
when they just say, you hold my lot.
You hold my, it was one that really stuck with them.
But the one that now, if I were preaching this sermon,
I would have to tell the story of Wally,
a member of our congregation.
And so let me just tell you a little bit about Wally.
Wally was one of these bigger than life guys.
He was a big, he was late 60s, early 70s, jovial,
booming voice, big red rosy cheeks.
He had one of those farmer hands
when you'd shake his hand afterwards,
it's like this huge paw, and you just,
your little hand just kind of barely fits in there.
And I remember when this big,
he was like president of the congregation for years,
leader in the church, very faithful man,
but he had heart surgery.
You know, it was pretty serious heart surgery.

And he was really scared.
And I remember being in the hospital room
with him and his wife, Kathy,
and we did this kind of thing,
and I wrote on the board, you hold my lot.
And then we prayed, and Kathy and I walked him
down the hallway, you know, as you're,
he's in the hospital bed, and they're ushering him down.
And there comes that point in the hospital room
where the two doors open,
where you can't go past that anymore, towards surgery.
And, you know, he was holding Kathy's hand,
and, you know, said, I love you.
And I said, you hold my lot.
And he kind of acknowledged, you hold my lot.
And he did not survive surgery.

David: Oh, oh.

Peter: And I think as a result of Wally's death,
that Psalm and that phrase became more for me
than just something I wrote
on the hospital room whiteboard.
It became kind of a very personal proclamation for myself.
When I preached his funeral,
I preached on Psalm 16 and Romans 8:35 to 39,
nothing can separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus.
And this Psalm, this phrase, reminds me of the,
the Ars moriendi, the art of dying.
So there are these manuals in the middle ages
that were written kind of how to die well.
And it was written generally during times of plague
where a lot of people were dying.
And Kolb, his book on Luther's preaching,
has a whole chapter, it's only about 10 or 12 pages,
about Luther's preaching that prepared people to die well.
And the two main points that the Kolb makes
from Luther's preaching is dying well
means recognizing the reality of death
and the awfulness of death, the separation of death,
but also it means leading people to trust
in the resurrection of Jesus and that kind of dying well.
So if I'm thinking about preaching a sermon on this text,
I want to help my hearers learn to die well
and as a result also learn to live well.
And so then the Psalm would help me lead them
to a life of prayer, a life of proclamation,
even to themselves, like you were mentioning earlier,
Jessica, when you're in a time of stress,

you proclaim the promises of God.
But then also there's the promise,
so the prayer, the proclaim, the proclamation,
and the promise.
I would use this Psalm to help my hearers learn to die well,
which is kind of getting to be appropriate
as we get toward the end of the church year,
we start thinking about end times.
And to do so, to try to equip hearers
to endure the fears and the struggles
and the anxieties they have going forward.

Jessica: Ah, you were a good pastor, Peter.

What about you, David, what would you preach on?

David: Well, I'm gonna go with Daniel,
but I struggled with Daniel or Mark, right?
Because they're both dealing with the end times.
But I thought the Daniel text
was taking a larger view,
a more global view of what's happening.
And so I thought that would be a better text to use
because it's shorter, it's clearer,
and it just kind of names some ultimate truths
that we need to be reconciled with
and we need to live in light of.
And so that's how I'm gonna go for the Daniel text.

Peter: And Daniel rarely shows up in the lectionary,
which is a shame.
But this is a nice chance
to familiarize your congregation with Daniel.

David: Right, and I mean, you know, some of the visions.

Peter: Oh.

David: Yeah, right, the visions are difficult.
But here we've got Daniel speaking about the end times,
Jessica, if you could read verse two and three.

Jessica: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth
shall awake, some to everlasting life,
and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness
of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness
like the stars forever and ever.

David: Okay, so here in a very clear and simple passage,
we recognize that there is life after death.
So you have death, and then you have resurrection,
those who sleep shall awake.
You have judgment, those division of the faithful
and the unfaithful.
And those who are faithful, you have this everlasting life
in the kingdom of God, shining forever and ever.

And so these are really, really simple, basic concepts.
And I agree with you, this is the end of the church year,
and it's a time for us every year to revisit
these fundamental truths.
And I mean, I think these are truths we call upon
most often in funerals, right?
I mean, it's at the time of a funeral
that we're gonna be dragging this stuff out
and preaching about it and sharing it with our people.
But what is happening now is that during
the regular church year, in the middle of November,
we have an opportunity to talk about fundamental truths.
And so, I don't know, Jessica, what do you think
is the value of covering these things outside of a funeral?
I mean, most of the time we cover these things,
it's in a funeral, but what about covering it
when you're outside of a funeral?

Jessica: Well, this is one of the most important things
that you can help people understand, right?
If we can't look past the life that we're living right now,
what's the point?
I heard Dr. Maxwell say that some sermons
help bring God's word close to you so you can understand it.
And he said, and some sermons should help you
look out of yourself and see something else.
And I thought that was powerful,
and sometimes that's what I need.
I'm sitting in the pew, I'm like,
tell me that this is not all there is, please.
Tell me the whole story because I need something
outside of myself, because everything around me
is too hard right now.

David: Yeah, I know, what do you think, Peter?

Peter: Yeah, I was thinking just it's so easy to get
such a narrow vision and get entrapped
by all the immediate things in life,
and to have a moment to step back and see the bigger picture,
especially even in the season of fall or November
where things are dying and there's this morose atmosphere,
almost a melancholy seems to set in
depending on where you're at in the country.
And I think in some ways the pump is primed
for kind of thinking deeply about things.

David: Right, there's a poet, Mary Oliver, she has this poem,
I think it's titled, You Think We Would Have Known.
I think that's the title of it.
And in the poem, she never has that phrase,
You Think We Would Have Known, but that's the title of it.

And what the poem is, it's about the sour cream
that goes bad in the fridge, the bread that turns moldy,
the leaves that fall and die on the ground,
the pet that passes away.
And she just lists all of these occasions of death
in very concrete, beautiful terms.
But the whole point of it is,
you think we would have known, right?
We tend to get sucked into life, our life,
and we tend to get sucked into the really,
really small aspects of our life.
And then we're kind of like this black hole
and we try to suck God into that.
And the only thing we come to church for
is for God to do something for my little life, right?
He becomes the servant of me.
And a text like this just kind of pulls you out of that
and kind of says, no, your life is more
than what you think it is.
Your life is bigger than what you think it is.
And God's work is much, much larger than you,
much larger than just your family,
much larger than even your generation.
This is a work that is cosmic in scope.
And so it gives us an opportunity, I think,
to pull back out and come face to face with these terms
that I like what Maxwell said, Jessica,
that cause us to look at ourselves as part of God's kingdom
rather than God as part of our kingdom, right?
I came across a real cheesy devotion the other day,
but it actually worked.
So it was like it was this devotion that was talking about,
when you try to plan everything and nothing works out
and it said, just lift your hands in prayer to God
and say, oh, well.
I thought, it's so funny, but it's such a good prayer.
It's like, we get so wrapped up in our own minuscule issues
and it doesn't work out and we get frustrated
and we're turning to God and asking him to come help.
And sometimes it's just, you'll just give it up and say,
oh, well, I tried, there's a much larger story
than me going on here.
And that's what this text, I think, does for me,
is it asks us to think about the larger picture.
And now how you do that as a preacher,
that's the hard thing, right?
I'm thinking of possibly doing kind of comparison contrast
with different situations.

And what happens when you look at that situation through the lens of this life is all that there is. And what happens when you look at that situation through the lens of there's a much larger life, there's a resurrection to eternal life. So your example of your parishioner, Wally. Yeah, I mean, that's a perfect example, right? That you have situations in your life where you're coming face to face with death and if this life is all there is, there's a huge, huge emphasis placed upon that surgery. But if you kind of open your eyes and say, no, there's a life after this, there's a resurrection, there's a judgment and there's an everlasting life, it, I don't know, it just, it carries you through in a different way.

Peter: Well, it gives you the right perspective and it helps you realize that we only see the world through our two eyes. But essentially, I think what you're doing, you're preaching is you're trying to give people the eyes of God, the eyes of Jesus, to help them see that, yes, the little things are important in our lives, but there's so much more. So it doesn't have to be, if you do a comparison contrast, it doesn't have to necessarily be that one's wrong, the other one's right. You could do one as kind of, yeah, part of the story, It's part, but not the whole.

David: Right, yeah, so I think that's a good thing to remember. We don't wanna shame people for being concerned about their vocation, right, about raising their kids and those type of things. Don't want to shame them for living the Christian life now. Actually, we want them to live the Christian life now, but to not put everything in that moment. And so part of me, I think, would probably maybe look at, maybe look at Daniel and in my study, do some study as to, you know, to whom is he writing, what's going on. We've got kind of, I mean, I know he's putting this together at the, after the exile is kind of ended, that Cyrus has risen and he's gonna be sending them home, and that's when he's recording all of this stuff. But maybe talk about their experience and why this would be such a helpful re-envisioning of their world that is much larger than just these issues for us right now, as important as those issues are. Then maybe move to the gospel reading, I guess.

Jesus talking with his disciples, you know,
they're kind of relishing the beauty of the temple
and then Jesus is kind of offering them a vision
of everything's gonna be destroyed.
And, you know, what is the value of this grander vision
when you're facing something like the death of Jesus?
Recognizing that it's, His life was not for His time only,
but was for all time, for all peoples, right?
And so you've got kind of that grander vision
of who is Jesus, what is His mission?
And then maybe moving to us, either with stories
of individuals or maybe even with stories of churches.
I know there are churches that are struggling to stay open
and churches that, you know, attendance is declining
and it'd be easy to think that you're failing
when actually you're part of a much larger story,
grander narrative that God is at work
and will not stop working until the day He raises
all of the dead and brings them and brings those who believe
into everlasting life.

I guess that's what I would,
that's probably how I might work with it.

Jessica:

Thanks guys, that's all for today.

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While you're there, you'll find episodes
of our other podcast, Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived.
Twice a month, I host conversations with seminary faculty
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I'm your host and producer, Jessica Bordeleau.

Join us next week here at Lectionary Kickstart
when Dr. David Schmitt and Dr. Peter Nafzger
will spark your thoughts for next Sunday.

David:

I don't own a sweatshirt.

Jessica:

I thought you were gonna say that.

David:

That's true.