

**The Voice of Jesus: “He Interpreted to Them in All the Scriptures  
The Things Concerning Himself”**

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*Viva vox Jesu* – the living voice of Jesus – this is what we hear when his word is read and preached. The Word of Jesus is both a written and an oral word. This Word, though written in words inspired and canonically received, is also spoken and heard within a community called the body of Christ. This voice is a living voice, for by it Jesus Christ is present for us bodily.

This Word is interpreted within community, broken open homiletically as hearts burn through midrash on prophet and apostle. This Word creates what it says, coming from the Word made flesh, a Word that has power to cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, and release us from our sins. With the Old Testament saints, we acknowledge that God’s Word is God’s Food for hungry pilgrims who have journeyed in Christ through a baptism of his death and resurrection towards final destination of full communion with him in heaven. “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears” says Jesus to his relatives and friends in Nazareth (Lk 4:21), and so it is. Even now, the Scripture is fulfilled in our ears, as his Word becomes alive in us.

At the center of our hermeneutical task is the understanding that exegesis is always kerygmatic and therefore homiletical, and that to interpret Scriptures rightly requires a proper hermeneutical method that reflects a Biblical theology

of preaching. As a result, to confess our preaching as *Viva vox Jesu* is to also speak of the Christocentricity of the Holy Scripture. And those who proclaim Christ's living voice, suffer for that proclamation.

To begin, we turn to a good friend of this seminary and an enlightened Luther scholar. Ulrich Asendorf, in his article from David Scaer's festschrift, describes the *Viva vox Evangelii*. His essay provides a corrective to those who claim for Luther a narrow view of *sensus literalis*. But he begins by first stating how important it is to see the Word of God as a preached Word. Asendorf writes:

[*Viva vox Evangelii* is] one of the key words and catch phrases in Protestant theology. Its common usage refers to the Word of God as kerygmatically understood. Accordingly, God's Word is first and foremost the preached Word. Certainly, thereby is meant one of the central concerns not only of the theology of Martin Luther but also that of the Reformation in general.<sup>1</sup>

Hugh Oliphant Old, of a much different theological persuasion that Asendorf, describes a very similar understanding of the Word of God among both the New Testament writers as well as the early church fathers. He begins his entire discussion of the New Testament by stating the obvious: Jesus was a preacher of the Word of God and that his three year ministry in Galilee and Judea was a preaching ministry. Precisely because this was true, Old makes this claim about the early church:

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<sup>1</sup> U. Asendorf, trans. By K. D. Schulz, "Viva vox Evangelii: A Necessary Course Correction," *All Theology is Christology: Essays in Honor of David P. Scaer* (Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000) p. 229.

Christianity from its earliest beginnings was a preaching religion. At the center of its worship was the reading and preaching of Scripture. It was by preaching above all that it witnessed to the glory of God in the risen Christ. The kerygmatic dimension of its worship was characteristic. All of which went back to the fact that Jesus was preeminently a preacher.<sup>2</sup>

Old calls this Christ's "kerygmatic presence," and cites numerous examples in the Gospels and Paul's epistles where Scripture testifies that its very nature is kerygmatic, particularly Luke 10:16 and its parallel in Matthew (10:40), a passage we will consider later. For Old, "kerygmatic presence" simply means "that when the word of Christ is truly preached, then Christ is present."<sup>3</sup> These observations are in connection with Paul's well known words from Romans 10:14-17:

But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (ESV)

Citing John Murray's commentary on Romans in connection with Romans 10:14-17, Old finds the greatest implication for Paul's words in Murray's observation that "Christ is represented as being heard in the Gospel when proclaimed by the

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<sup>2</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* volume 1: The Biblical Period (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* volume 1, p. 186.

sent messengers. The implication is that *Christ speaks in the gospel proclamation.*"<sup>4</sup>

*Viva vox Jesus* understands therefore the Word of God as a preached word.

### **The *Didache***

Perhaps the document that best illustrates the link between the NT and later liturgical documents where this understanding of *Viva vox Jesus* is implicitly present is the *Didache*, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, a highly Semitic church order that was used in the first century to plant churches among the Jews. Its structure follows the initiatory pattern of catechesis (chapters 1–6), Baptism (chapter 7), and Lord's Supper (chapters 9–10). As a church order, it would be used by Jewish-Christian communities seeking to establish a Christian congregation through this pattern of initiation. Its very name, *Didache*, or "teaching," indicates that its purpose is instruction in the faith. It was written to assist leaders in the Christian community as they prepared catechumens for Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Due to its Semitic character, it would have served as a church order primarily during the early Jewish mission.

Although most date the *Didache* in late first century or well into the second century, there is a growing movement to date it in the middle of the first century (A.D. 40–60). Some even suggest that it is pre-Markan and pre-Pauline.<sup>5</sup> If the

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<sup>4</sup> H. O. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* volume 1, p. 187 citing J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* Vol II. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> J. H. Walker, "A pre-Markan Dating for the *Didache*: Further Thoughts of a Liturgist," *Studia Biblica* 1978, vol. 3: *Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors* (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1980) 403–11, citing Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didaché: Instructions des apôtres* (Paris: Études bibliques, 1958), claims that "a dating prior to [A.D.] 50 is not impossible" (p. 405). Walker also cites Anton

*Didache* comes from Antioch, as many have suggested,<sup>6</sup> then it might be linked to the work of Paul and Barnabas in establishing Christian communities during the latter part of Paul's "silent years" (A.D. 35–45), when he and Barnabas were quietly engaged in missionary work among Jews and God-fearers in Cilicia and Syria, with Antioch as their base. In fact, Paul and Barnabas, or leaders they trained, may have contributed to the *Didache*. In any event, the *Didache* testifies to a first-century theology of preaching in which the preacher speaks the very words of Jesus and represents the Lord himself.<sup>7</sup>

Old notes that the *Didache* suggests that the community gathers daily for a preaching service, with the Gospel as central to that preaching. He even posits the possibility that the Gospels were liturgical documents:

Could not the Gospel of Matthew as well as some of the other New Testament books have been written quite intentionally to fill the liturgical need of the worshipping Christian community? . . . Certainly one reason the gospel was written out was that it might be read in worship.<sup>8</sup>

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Vööbus, *Liturgical Traditions in the Didache* (Stockholm, 1968) in support of her thesis. J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 327, dates the *Didache* between A.D. 40 and 60.

<sup>6</sup> J. H. Walker, "A pre-Marcian Dating for the *Didache*: Further Thoughts of a Liturgist," 403–4.

<sup>7</sup> A. A. Just Jr, *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:50* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1996) pp. 10–11.

<sup>8</sup> H. O. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* volume 1, p. 263.

Old draws a conclusion from this that highlights the importance of the *Didache* for our own theological understanding of the Word of God, the ministry, and preaching:<sup>9</sup>

In what the *Didache* tells us about the reading and preaching of the Scripture in the ancient Christian Church, we are given a rather remarkable theology of preaching . . . The *Didache* has a very high regard for the ministry of the Word. In fact, according to the *Didache*, the bishops and deacons are to be honored because of their sacred service to the Church . . . The Greek word for service or ministry at this point is *leitourgia*, which is the word used for the priestly service of the Levitical priesthood. Here we find the same idea we found in Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom. 15:16), that the ministry of the New Testament is the ministry of the gospel. Again we find the same idea when the *Didache* speaks of the prophets and teachers as being the high priests of the Church. Here the Greek word *hierour* is used, which in the New Testament is used for the Zadokite priesthood. Clearly the *Didache* understands the ministry as above all the ministry of preaching and teaching. For the *Didache* it is by means of the ministry of the Word that Christ is present in the congregation. Apostles and prophets are to be received as the Lord. This is in accordance with the words of Jesus in the Gospel, "'He who receives you receives me'" (Matt. 10:40). This is made even more explicit when the catechumens are told to honor their teachers as the Lord, because where the things of the Lord are spoken, there the Lord is present, *gar hl kuriote" l aleitai ekei kuriol' ejstin*. This is a very strong statement, but apparently

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<sup>9</sup> The passage Old has in mind is the following from *Didache* XI 1-6: (trans. K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, reprint 1977] pp. 325–26):

Whosoever then comes and teaches you all these things aforesaid, receive him. But if the teacher himself be perverted and teach another doctrine to destroy these things, do not listen to him, but if his teaching be for the increase of righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord [*dekasqe aujton wl' kurion*].

And concerning the Apostles and Prophets, act thus according to the ordinance of the Gospel [probably [Luke 9](#) and [10](#)]. Let every Apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord [*decqhtw wl' kurio*"], but let him not stay more than one day, or if need be a second as well; but if he stay three days, he is a false prophet. And when an Apostle goes forth let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night's lodging; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.

Christ's presence in the worshipping congregation is understood to be by means of the teaching and preaching of the Word of God.<sup>10</sup>

### **Luke and Paul – Repreaching the Gospel**

Is a christological hermeneutic demanded if, in hearing Jesus' voice in the liturgical gathering of believers, there is an expectation of communion with the bodily presence of the risen Lord through both the Word preached and the Word in, with, and under bread and wine? This assumes that the context for Scripture is the worshipping assembly, and that Luke's Gospel, for example, is a book of the church, written for the church, to be used in the church's liturgy. For most of us, this is not new, nor even that startling a claim, but within the academy such assertions about Scripture are rare indeed. This is why it was so extraordinary to read from a scholar of such gravity as J. Louis Martyn in his commentary on Galatians that for him the setting for Paul's letter to the Galatians was "an argumentative sermon preached in the context of a service of worship – and thus in the acknowledged presence of God."<sup>11</sup>

Increasingly, my reading of Luke and Acts is mediated by a sense of Paul's hovering presence, and that Luke is not only Paul's Gospel but that Acts is Luke's apologetic for Paul's apostolic claims. An eye-opening book in this

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<sup>10</sup> H. O. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* volume 1, p. 264-265. Incredibly, Old makes this startling claim concerning Christ's eucharistic presence that goes counter to the NT evidence: "While in later centuries the Church came to think of Christ as being present by means of the consecration of the bread and the wine of the Eucharist, the *Didache* understands that presence in terms of the preaching of the Word of God. If we may put it succinctly, the *Didache* teaches a doctrine of the real presence which is kerygmatic rather than eucharistic."

regard is the posthumous publication of Bo Reicke's *Re-examining Paul's Letters: The History of the Pauline Correspondence*. It was to our own Concordia Theological Seminary to teach an S.T.M. course on this topic when Dr. Reicke fell ill and passed away in the spring of 1987. Reicke had some very specific thoughts about the place of Luke in the life and missionary journeys of Paul. For example, the notion that during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (A.D. 58-60) Luke and Mark compared notes, resulting in a unique dependence of Luke on Mark, was, to say the least, provocative and worthy of a great deal of thought and reflection.

Reicke also observes that Luke joins Paul in the second missionary journey in Acts 16:10-17 during the Macedonian call in Troas, traveling with him to Philippi and staying behind when Paul and Silas travel to Thessalonica, Berea, and then on to Athens. Reicke dates this in A.D. 51. Luke does not resurface in Acts until the third missionary journey in Acts 20:5 – 21:18 where he joins Paul and others in Troas, having come there from Philippi. He travels with Paul to Jerusalem around A.D. 58. Reicke's suggestion is that Luke served as pastor of the congregations in Philippi and Macedonia during those seven years between the second and third missionary journeys. This is supported by tradition that places Luke's birthplace in Thebes, where his bones have now been returned. Unlike Jesus, Luke may have preached the Gospel successfully in his home country, and would have understood quite well that Paul's letters to

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<sup>11</sup> J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1998) p. 21.



congregations in Galatia and Philippi were the apostle's voice as he repitched the Gospel in the place and by the stead of his Lord, so that his voice was the voice of his Lord, the very claims made by the *Didache*. Luke would have learned from Paul's epistles about Christ's "kerygmatic presence" through the apostolic word.

### Luke's Prologue

- 1.1 epeidhper polloi; epeceirhsan ajatakasqai **dihghsin**  
 peri; tw'n peplhroforhmenwn ejn hmin pragmatwn,  
 1.2 kaqw;" paredosan hmin  
 oilapla ajrch" aujtoptai kai; uphreitai genomenoi tou logou,  
 1.3 **efoxe kamoi;**  
 parhkolouqhkoiti ahwqen pasin ajkribw"  
**kaqexh" soi grayai**, kratiste Qeofile,  
 1.4 **iha epignw/ peri; wh kathchqh" logwn thn ajfaleian.**

- 1.1 Since many have endeavored to reproduce **a narrative**  
 concerning the events that have come to fulfillment among us,  
 1.2 just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and  
 became ministers of the Word  
 delivered these traditions to us,  
 1.3 **it seemed good to me also,**  
 after investigating from the beginning every tradition carefully,  
**to compose systematically a narrative for your benefit,**  
 most excellent Theophilus,  
 1.4 **in order that you come to recognize completely the reliability**  
**concerning the words by which you have been catechized.**

It should not surprise us, then, that Luke's stated purpose in his prologue for writing his Gospel is kerygmatic. By describing it as a "narrative" (*dihghsi*), Luke places his gospel into a literary category that was a familiar genre in the

first century and was subject to literary analysis. The gospel is not merely a historical narrative but also a kerygmatic one, a theological presentation of the events of the life of Jesus of Nazareth that bring to “fulfillment” God’s plan revealed in the great Hebrew literary work, the OT. The catechumen will listen to Luke’s gospel to hear how Jesus fulfills the OT, and he will not be disappointed. As the catechumen listens to each part, he also knows the end of the story. He knows the facts about Jesus, his teaching, his rejection, and his vindication. But in hearing the facts of the gospel, he will also hear the theological significance of these events as they are interpreted by the inspired evangelist, a catechist who knows their meaning for salvation history. And so the prologue instructs hearers of all times to seek to discover the theological significance of the events that are about to be narrated.

Luke the catechist does not give an unbiased, “neutral” narration, but a persuasive, confessional one filled with Christological meaning. As catechesis about Christ, it is a Christology. But at the same time, it is catechesis about the OT understood messianically, as Luke 24 narrates. The evangelist is a recipient of a tradition that was handed down by those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and became ministers of the Word. Luke is dependent on the witness of those who have seen and heard Jesus and have delivered a tradition to him. The gospels are books of the church to be read in the church for those who are members of the church—both for their own benefit and as a means of incorporating still others into the church. Luke is not only continuing this

tradition, but he is shaping it for a particular “Theophilus” who represents a particular audience, a community of catechumens and the baptized. Luke’s narrative is a reliable source for preaching and catechesis. It provides a single, Christological interpretation, which may be discerned by careful analysis.

The stated purpose of the gospel is also catechetical: “in order that you [Theophilus] come to recognize completely the reliability concerning the words by which you have been catechized” (1:4). *ginwskw* (“to know”) and its derivatives are part of the Lukan language for faith. The purpose of the gospel is a fully informed, steadfast faith that endures to salvation. This faith comes through the gospel’s additional catechesis (*kathchqh*) that assures of reliability (*ajsfal eian*). In the context of Luke’s prologue, *kathchqh*, “you were catechized,” implies that his gospel is a kerygmatic narrative that is to complete or possibly correct Theophilus’ earlier catechesis. “Catechetical” entails “kerygmatic.” Testimony regarding historical facts and *proclamation* of their doctrinal significance are elements of catechesis – as also in any of the church’s evangelistic activity. Luke concludes this single, beautifully crafted periodic sentence with *ajsfal eian* (“reliability, assurance”), indicating that the purpose of the gospel is the certainty of faith, which will come from accurate, systematic, and *kerygmatic* instruction in the events that are going to be narrated, events about the life and person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Excerpts on the prologue are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:50* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1996) pp. 37-40.



26                    **ouci; tauta eplei**  
                          **pagein ton criston kai;**  
                          **eijsetein ei' thn doxan autou**  
 27                    **kai; arxameno" apo; Mwusew" kai; apo; pantwn twn profhtwn**  
                          **diermhneusen** autoi"  
                          **en pasai" tai" grafai"**  
                          **ta; peri; eautou.**

25        And he himself **said** to them,  
                          "O foolish and slow in heart to believe  
    in all the things  
    that the prophets spoke!  
 26                    **Was it not necessary for the Christ**  
                          **to suffer these things and**  
                          **enter into his glory?"**  
 27                    **And after beginning from Moses and from all the prophets,**  
                          he **explained** to them  
                          **in all the Scriptures**  
                          **the things concerning himself.**

One way of reading Luke 24 is to use it to read back into the Gospel looking for themes that come to completion in this final chapter -- thus the subtitle for this paper: "He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Lk 24:27). *The personal presence and instruction of the risen Lord* is the element that sets Jesus' act of teaching on the road to Emmaus apart from all others. The first post-resurrection instruction comes from the risen Lord himself. The three days of passion and resurrection are pivotal in the fulfillment of Scripture by Jesus of Nazareth. The resurrection itself is *the sign of fulfillment*, bringing to completion the kerygma of suffering before glory and also the table fellowship of Jesus. The teaching of the risen Christ readies the Emmaus disciples for the meal with the risen Christ in 24:28–30 by giving them faith to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Later in Christian worship, the teaching of the

proper understanding of Jesus' suffering and of the real presence of his body and blood in his Supper will be prerequisite for participating in the Meal in which the guests receive the forgiveness of sins for their own resurrection life.

Jesus builds the faith of the Emmaus disciples on the foundation of the prophets. This prophetic theme will dominate the kerygmatic statements in [Luke 24](#) and become progressively broader. All three of Jesus' appeals to Scripture ([24:25](#), [27](#), [44](#)) should be understood as encompassing the entire OT, since the Christological, prophetic voice of the Spirit sounds forth from every passage of the inspired canon. That Christological perspective is the hermeneutical lens through which Jesus teaches his disciples to look as they view the OT. Luke's repeated use of *pa'*, "all," in [24:25–27](#) emphasizes the totality of the prophetic witness. The hearer is struck that the OT provides a prophetic witness that is, in its totality, Christological. According to Jesus, his passion and resurrection as the sign of fulfillment is the major thrust of the whole OT.

When Jesus reproves the Emmaus disciples for neglecting the prophets, he is pointing to the prophets themselves as well as to their utterances. For their lives and ministries of teaching, miracles, and rejection adumbrate Jesus' teaching, miracles, and crucifixion. The Emmaus disciples are foolish because they did not take to heart (1) the lives of the prophets; (2) Jesus' incorporation of the prophets into his own life and ministry (E.g., Lk 4:16–30; 7:18–35; 22:37; 23:30, 32–36); and (3) the prophetic life of Jesus himself. Had they listened to the voice of the prophets, they would have understood the necessity of the Christ's

suffering before entering into glory. Now on the third day after his atoning death Jesus' voice – the voice of the final eschatological prophet -- opens up the Scriptures to them and interprets all things in terms of himself.

The kerygmatic passion and resurrection formulae of 24:26 are supported by the scriptural foundation given by the risen Lord himself in 24:27. Jesus expands upon his reference to the prophets in 24:25 with a hermeneutical *tour de force* through the entire OT: “And after beginning from [apo] Moses and from [apo]<sup>55</sup> all the prophets [pantwn tw'n profhtwn], he explained to them in all the Scriptures [ēn pasai" tai" grafai"] the things concerning himself” (24:27). Moses and the prophets will be expanded in 24:44 to include the psalms. Already back in 16:29–31 (the parable of the rich man and Lazarus) Jesus linked Moses and the Prophets with the resurrection from the dead. The doctrine of resurrection is consistent with the OT Scriptures. Now Jesus goes farther by expounding the doctrine of *his* resurrection as a teaching found “in all the Scriptures” (24:27). The tenor of the verse is that Jesus did more than cite isolated prophecies of his passion and resurrection. The implication is that the very fabric of the entire OT is Christological. Every thread and every theme leads to and centers in the crucified and risen Christ.<sup>13</sup>

While the OT quotations in Luke do offer some specific predictive prophecies about the details and circumstances of Jesus' death (e.g., Ps 22:18 [MT

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<sup>13</sup> Excerpts on Luke 24 are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 9:51-24:53* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997) pp. 1003-1006, 1034-1036.

22:19] in Lk 23:34), more often they point to *the recurring OT pattern of suffering before glory, of violent opposition to the righteous, and to the hope of God's saints for rescue even beyond death*. Luke's goal is to describe to the hearer, on the basis of OT prophecies and patterns, the theological significance of the person of Jesus Christ. His suffering, death, resurrection, and testament of forgiveness constitute the core of the Lukan kerygma, as is evident in the church's mission in Acts. Luke uses the OT to interpret the death and resurrection of Jesus, not simply by citing OT proof-texts, but also by OT patterns that may be read in the lives of the prophets.

This continuity between the OT, Jesus' ministry, and the apostolic church has profound implications for the life of those in the church, particularly for those who occupy the office of the prophetic and apostolic ministry. Ministers of the Gospel must be conformed to this pattern of announcing the reality of Christ's "kerygmatic presence" whereby communion with Christ in the forgiveness of sins becomes a living reality. Precisely for serving as the voice of Jesus in the world, pastors will be rejected, suffering for the name of Jesus and bearing the cross for preaching the Gospel, since this is the shape of the one holy catholic and apostolic church—the body of Christ himself.

Yet at the same time, incorporation into this cruciform pattern of life is joyful. It involves the same spirit of rejoicing found in Luke 1–2 and Luke 24. Both the infancy narrative and the conclusion to Luke's gospel revolve around the temple, the location of God's presence, the place where his Word is spoken.



The participants in the worship that occurs around the temple are filled with joyful confidence in the Great Reversal that will occur at the end of the age and that already has begun to occur in the lives of the saints. This reversal will culminate in the resurrection of the dead, according to the pattern of both the OT and the NT, centered in Jesus Christ. His own suffering, death, and resurrection give shape to the entire canon and to the one church of all ages, which unites in worship of the Christ who suffered, died, then rose again on the third day in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

### **Luke 4:16-30**

- 16 Kai; **hl qen** ei]" Nazara<sub>v</sub>  
 ou|hh teqrammeno",  
 kai; **eijshl qen kata; to; eijwqo;"** aujtw/  
 ejn th/hmera/**tw n sabbatwn**  
 ei]" **thn sunagwghn**  
 kai; **ajesth** ajagnwhai.
- 16 And he **came** to Nazareth,  
 where he had been brought up,  
 and he **entered according to his custom**  
 on the day of **the Sabbath**,  
 into **the synagogue**  
 and he **stood up** in order to read.

Reading back then into Luke's Gospel from Luke 24, the hermeneutic is clear -- we must interpret the OT in terms of Jesus. The most programmatic text for christological interpretation of the OT and Christ's "kerygmatic presence" is Jesus' own citation and interpretation of Isaiah 61 and 58 in his first recorded sermon in Luke's gospel. At his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus continues his custom of teaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath (cf. 4:15). The worshipers

(and relatives) of Nazareth would expect Jesus, now a noted teacher (4:15, 23), to read Scripture and give an interpretation. Jesus came to the synagogue of Nazareth *in order to read Isaiah 61* (ἀπαγγῆναι—an infinitive of purpose) and to declare that the messianic era of salvation now begins in him. This is a climactic moment in salvation history. Here is Jesus, the Word made flesh, entering into a liturgical context in order to read the inscripturated word from Isaiah. Jesus' entire purpose in coming to the synagogue in Nazareth was *to read the word of God and interpret it christologically*. This text from Isaiah—and this episode—are *programmatic*. They reveal what Jesus will preach throughout his ministry.<sup>14</sup>

pneuma kuriou ep'ē ejne;  
 ou|ei|henen **ep**risen me  
**eu**aggel isasqai ptwcoi",  
**ape**stal ken me,  
**khru**xai ai|mal wtoi" **af**esin kai; tu|floi" a|hableyin,  
**ap**osteil ai teqrausmenou" **ej**h **af**esei,  
**khru**xai **ej**iauton kuriou de|kton.

The **Spirit** of the **Lord** is upon **me**  
 because of which he has **anointed** me  
 To **proclaim** **good news** to the poor  
 He **sent** me  
 To **proclaim** **release** to the captives  
 and recovery of sight to the blind,  
 To **send** away in **release** the broken ones  
 To **proclaim** the year of **jubilee**

Three of the four infinitives in Lk 4:18–19 deal with preaching: proclamation of Good News to the poor (**euaggel isasqai** ptwcoi"), the preaching of release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind (**khru**xai ai|mal wtoi" **af**esin kai;

<sup>14</sup> Excerpts on the sermon in Nazareth are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:50* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1996) p. 192.

tufl oi" ajableyin), and the preaching of the acceptable year of the Lord (**khrukai** ejiauton kuriou dekton). The other infinitive, "to send away," refers to setting free those who are oppressed (ajosteil ai teqrausmenou" ej ajfesei). For Luke and the other evangelists, the proclamation of Jesus is performative speech, that is, Jesus' words create what they say. They create reality and enact it. His word is a creative word, as in Genesis, so that when he speaks things happen. Jesus' preaching declares and enacts the new creation that comes through the presence of his flesh – the flesh of the Creator – coming to his creation to make all things new. Jesus announces this by means of the Old Testament where he now interprets texts christologically and sees those texts becoming reality by means of his voice that brings this new reality into existence. What shocked the people of Nazareth, and people in synagogues throughout Galilee, is that this preaching was unlike anything they had ever heard before. His preaching was authoritative and declared that from now on everything would be different. G. Friedrich, in his article on **khru~~ss~~w** in *TDNT*, says it this way:

Jesus did not give theoretical teaching when He spoke in the synagogue. He did not expound Scripture like the rabbis. He did not tell people what they must do. His teaching was proclamation. He declared what God was doing among them to-day: This day is this scripture fulfilled ([Lk. 4:21](#)). His exposition was a herald's cry."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> G. Friedrich, **khru~~ss~~w**, *TDNT* 3:713.

With this word, “Today,” Jesus announces the inauguration of the eschaton. This is a profound Christological statement that identifies the kingdom with Jesus.<sup>16</sup> Jesus announces in Galilee that the Jubilee year is now present in him and his ministry. This message of release unites the OT and the NT. It reveals to the hearer how his Baptism initiates him into a life of continual release, sustained in the Lord’s Supper.<sup>17</sup> In quoting [Isaiah 61](#), Jesus shows that the essence of his proclamation is release: release from the bondage of sin, sickness, and Satan. This proclamation is demonstrated in the miracles that Jesus performs; they testify to the presence of God in Jesus for salvation. Miracles certainly show that Jesus is the Son of God. But at the same time, they show that present in Jesus is the freedom he announced at Nazareth, as he casts out demons, heals the sick, forgives sins, and raises the dead. Wherever Jesus is and his voice is heard, there is the miracle of God’s presence in the flesh for our salvation. Thus, Jesus’ teaching and miracles announce that God’s salvation is present and active in his ministry to release the creation from its bondage.<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, Jesus’ relatives and friends testified against him and wondered how from Joseph’s son such words of grace could proceed concerning the Messiah. Jesus knows that they reject him for his teaching – his living voice that

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<sup>16</sup> The OT messianic hopes now find their fulfillment in Jesus. *shmeron* first occurs at the announcement of the birth of the Savior (2:11) and is placed at significant moments throughout Luke to proclaim the fleshly presence today of God’s redemption (5:26; 12:28; 13:32, 33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61; 23:43).

<sup>17</sup> Excerpts on the Nazareth sermon are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:50* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1996) pp. 193-194.

“today” they heard fulfilled in their ears -- for like all the prophets before him, a prophet is not honored in his homeland. Jesus corroborates this by two illustrations from the OT. Elijah and Elisha were prophets well known for their teaching and miracles. But at critical times they received no welcome “in Israel.” And so God sent Elijah to the (Gentile!) widow of Zarephath and let the (Syrian!) leper Naaman be cleansed by Elisha. The Gentile mission is anticipated already here. And the people of Nazareth understand well what he said in this second part. No longer confused, they are filled with anger—anger that he will not be the Messiah *they* want. This same anger is focused on prophetic and apostolic bearers of the Word. The people of Nazareth fulfill his prophecy. They do reject him to the point of attempting to kill him, the only place in Luke outside of the cross where such violence occurs. Like all the prophets before him Jesus is rejected –even here is his hometown -- for being the voice of God.

### **Luke 10:1-20**

3      **upagete:**  
 ipdou; **apostellw** uma" w/ aŋna" ejn mesw/ lukwn.

3      “**Go your way;**  
 behold **I am sending** you **as lambs in the midst of wolves**”

Perhaps the most significant text in Luke’s Gospel for our theme is Jesus’ sending the seventy-(two) disciples into every town and place where he was about to go. His commission of the seventy(-two) is *Christological and sacrificial* in

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<sup>18</sup> Excerpts on Luke’s prophet christology are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-*

nature. Jesus subtly implies this when he describes them “as lambs in the midst of wolves” (10:3).<sup>19</sup> By describing them as lambs, Jesus suggests that they will be rejected and suffer the consequences of announcing the presence of the kingdom of God. They enter a cruciform ministry of preaching and healing that will receive the hostility of the world and result in violence. Like their Lord, they will become sacrificial victims of the Gospel that calls for a reversal of the world’s values. They are *sacrificial lambs*, who go forth in full knowledge of the world’s enmity. But in their proclamation they will show that they are not ashamed of Jesus and his words. They are part of that privileged group to whom the Father, through Jesus, has revealed the secrets of the kingdom of God (10:21 and 8:9–10).

Moreover, the seventy(-two) carry in themselves, in their own bodies, Jesus’ redemption and his peace. As his emissaries, they now represent Jesus. They carry “in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in [their] body” (2 Cor 4:10). This is *the Christological principle of representation* according to which the emissaries bear in themselves the person of Christ, just as we saw in the *Didache* where “every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord [δεῦρας αὐτὸν ὡς κύριον].”<sup>20</sup> In bearing the cross daily,

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9:50 (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1996) pp. 184-188.

<sup>19</sup> The word for “lamb,” ἀρνίον, is used only here in the NT (cf. the diminutive, ἀρνίον, often of Christ in Revelation). It is a technical term for the sacrificial lamb of the Passover (Ex 12:5) or the burnt offering (Lev 1:10) or sacrifice of peace (Lev 3:7). In Is 11:6 and 65:25, wolves and lambs will dwell together in peace in the eschaton as a little child leads them.

<sup>20</sup> R. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978) p. 238, calls it “the christological principle” according to which “the guest thus entertained was really Christ himself, and one ‘received’ him ὡς κύριον [‘as the Lord’] (*Did.* XI, 2; cp. Mt 10,40>/Lk 10,16)” (emphasis Dillon). *Didache* XI, 1–6, which Dillon cites, is a

they also bear the image of Passover lamb who must be sacrificed for the people.<sup>21</sup> Thus the twelve disciples and the seventy(-two) follow the pattern of sacrifice first exhibited in the prophets, “from the blood of Abel until the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar [qusias thriou] and the temple-house [tou oi kou]” (11:51). As Jesus said to them: “Many prophets and kings wished to see what things you are seeing” (10:24). By calling the seventy (-two) “lambs,” Jesus says they must depend completely on the Lord and expect to give up their lives for the kingdom.

- 9 kai; **gerapeuete** tou;" eñ aujth/ajsqenei"  
 kai; **legete** aujtoi":  
    **hggiken ejf' uma" hbasileia tou qeou.**
- 10 eij' hh d'f ah pol in eijseiqhte kai; mh; decwntai uma",  
 ejelqonte" eij' ta;" plateia" aujth"  
**eipate:**
- 11 kai; ton koniorton ton kol hqenta hmin  
 ek th" polew" umwn eij' tou;" poda"  
    **apomassomeqa umin:**  
    pl hn touto ginwskete  
    oti **hggiken hbasileia tou qeou.**
- 9 **“Heal** the sick in it  
 and **say** to them,  
    **‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’**
- 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you,  
 go into its streets and  
**say**
- 11 ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet  
    **we wipe off against you.**  
 Nevertheless know this,  
    that **the kingdom of God has come near.’”**

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most instructive commentary on the significance and application of this principle in the early church.

<sup>21</sup> Luke introduces his Last Supper account by stating that on the day of Unleavened Bread “it was necessary that the Passover lamb be sacrificed” (22:7). St. Paul tells the Corinthians that “Christ, our Paschal lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7).

The first part of the **christological principle** of ministry was stated above: the disciples are representatives of the person of Jesus as sacrificial lambs (10:3). The second dimension of the christological principle describes the disciples as *spokesmen* for Jesus and the Father by speaking his prophetic words with his voice.<sup>22</sup> They are both a mouthpiece for God and a representative of his presence: “Heal the sick in it and say to them, *‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’*” (10:9). The message of peace is now expressed in more concrete acts of peace: healing and proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom. The seventy(-two) announce to the towns the arrival of the kingdom because of the presence of Jesus. This mission of deed and word continues the pattern of the prophets, which Jesus fulfills in his ministry. And this is the pattern of the mission in Acts.<sup>23</sup> And the effects of this mission are astounding. When Jesus reports seeing Satan falling like lightning from heaven, he is summing up the effects of the mission of the seventy(-two). In their preaching and in their healing, in their activity of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel comes the victory over Satan and

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Dillon, *From Eyewitnesses*, p. 239. These two categories were suggested by Dillon's observation that the disciples carried the "conviction of *representing Christ's person* (Mt 10,40) and *being his authentic voice* (Lk 10,16)" (emphasis Dillon). However, he does not see the first category in Jesus' sending them as "lambs in the midst of wolves."

<sup>23</sup> R. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses*, p. 248, notes: "Heralding that end in word and gesture, the Master had discharged the function of *prophet of the eschaton*, harbinger of the Kingdom of God. ... this eschatological prophet's function had been entrusted to the church, at least to the church of the itinerant mission, with its drastic renunciations, its distinguishing word of "peace," and its gestures of healing and exorcism (Lk 10,3-12.17-20, etc. ...). Whether carrying out physical healing or pronouncing the word of forgiveness in the households of the elect, the enthusiastic envoys of the Lord were carrying forward their master's 'prophecy of the end-time.'"



his angelic armies. As the disciples exclaimed, “Even the demons subject themselves to us in your name” (10:17).

When in their journeys they encounter resistance and rejection, they are to leave that city and say: “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you” (10:11). A similar action appears in the Talmud (*Berakot*, IX, 54a, Mishnah): “A man should not enter the temple mount with his staff or with his shoes or with his wallet or with his feet dust-stained.” The temple is not a place for lodging or business. And dust from mixed or Gentile cities must not be brought into its hallowed precincts. It is a place where “the covenant is ratified and made, through sacrifice, priesthood, and altar.”<sup>24</sup>

As the Twelve and seventy (-two) now go into the world healing diseases and proclaiming that the kingdom of God is near, they do so as members of the household of faith. Wherever they preach the Gospel and it is received, *there* is the oiko", the household of God. Their ministry, as it were, creates the new temple of God (cf. [Jn 4:20–24](#)). The dust from any place that does not receive their preaching is profane, to be shaken off, lest it stain God’s people and be brought into God’s house as they enter the presence of the “new temple.” As the new temple of God, Jesus is at one and the same time the sacrifice, the priest, and the altar. In the Twelve’s and seventy (-two)’s proclamation of the kingdom that comes in Jesus and in the miracles that testify to the kingdom’s presence, the

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<sup>24</sup> W. Brainerd, *An Enquiry into the Composition of the New Testament*, Appendix 1, “Who Were the Apostles?” 51 (unpublished manuscript).

kingdom is “among you” (17:21; ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν).

Proclamation of the kingdom and healing in Jesus’ name have replaced the temple. The new place of redemption is the cross and wherever the cross is proclaimed through the voice of Jesus. Thus, the twelve and seventy-(two) must conform their outward behavior to demonstrate that this is true.<sup>25</sup>

16     Ὁ ἀκούων ὑμῶν ἐμὸν ἀκούει,  
       καὶ ὁ ἀφῆκων ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ ἀφῆκει·  
       ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ ἀφῆκων ἀφῆκει τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με.

16     “The one who **hears** you **hears** me,  
       and the one who **rejects** you **rejects** me;  
       and the one who **rejects** me **rejects** the one who **sent** me.”

It is important that the words of Jesus ring in the ears of those whom he sends into the harvest. Twice he tells them to say to the people of the world: “The kingdom of God has come near to you” (10:9, 11). In the very preaching of Jesus’ emissaries, the kingdom of God has already become a present reality and the kingdom of Satan is firmly defeated. In their proclamation, the presence of Christ to redeem a lost and dying world ensures that Christ’s kingdom will triumph because “the one who hears you hears me” (10:16). Hearing the Word through Jesus’ disciples is the same as hearing the Word from Jesus himself. The one who does not hear rejects the Word. This entails a rejection of the person of the messenger, a rejection of his bodily presence. Jesus will be rejected *in his body* in crucifixion just as the people of Nazareth dragged his body to the precipice of the hill in order to kill him. Those who receive the messengers of the Gospel provide

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<sup>25</sup> Excerpts on sending of the twelve are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:50*

physical sustenance for them (10:7–8), and those who reject the messengers may do physical violence to them. The disciples who are sent out must be prepared for this.<sup>26</sup> D. Moessner in *Lord of the Banquet* points out the consequences of 10:16 in rejection:

[Lk 10:16] brings Jesus' address to a crisp conclusion by stating the *raison d'être* for the whole mission: *the dynamic presence of God in Jesus* is to be received in these missionaries. The identity of their presence with Jesus and God is inseparable; therefore their identity with them in rejection is inseparable as well. These messengers will learn the meaning of bearing a cross daily as they follow the One to Jerusalem who has no place to lay his head.<sup>27</sup>

Joseph Fitzmyer in his commentary makes an application of 10:16 to the whole purpose of Luke's gospel:

On the one hand, the saying lends authority to the preaching of the disciples. The principle implied in it is that of representation, akin to the institution of *shaliach* of contemporary Judaism: The one sent is to be regarded as the sender himself. The disciples, therefore, speak and act in the name of Jesus, just as he speaks and acts in the name of the one who sent him. This aspect of the saying is not to be neglected in the Lucan use of it, for it enhances the Lucan notion of *asphaleia* (1:4 ...). It inculcates the notion that what the church of Luke's day is teaching is rooted in the teaching of Jesus himself.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

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(St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1997) pp. 378-379.

<sup>26</sup> Excerpts on sending of the seventy-(two) are from A. A. Just Jr., *Concordia Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:50* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1997) p. 438.

<sup>27</sup> D. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) p. 139.

<sup>28</sup> J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV* (The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1985) p. 857.

To hear Jesus by hearing his voice through prophets and apostles is part of the prophetic pattern whereby God's Word creates what it says for *it is a christological word*. This is what Luke means when he says that Jesus "interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (24:27). Our Lord demonstrated how this is done as he interpreted Isaiah 61 and 58 christologically to show that by the presence of his flesh in the creation his word and his action made all things new. Such performative power, first given to the twelve and seventy-(two), is also given to those who are called and ordained to an office through which Christ's voice is heard. To draw out such implications for our pastoral vocation must be left for another paper. Our own confessional tradition, specifically from the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, shows us the trajectory of hearing Jesus' voice in the church's preaching and sacraments, providing a fitting conclusion to this paper:

The power of the keys administers and offers the gospel through absolution, which is the true voice of the gospel. Thus, we also include absolution when we talk about faith, because "faith comes from what is heard," as Paul says [Rom. 10:17]. For when the gospel is heard, when absolution is heard, the conscience is uplifted and receives consolation. Because God truly makes alive through the Word, the keys truly forgive sins before God according to [Luke 10:16], "Whoever listens to you listens to me." Therefore we must

believe the voice of one absolving no less than we would believe a voice from heaven.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII: Repentance, edited by R. Kolb and T. J. Wengert, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) p. 193:39-40.