



**MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

July 18, 2021

Pastor Randy Ott

8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Amos 7:10-17](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 78

Second Lesson: [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 6:7-13](#)

Sermon Text: [Psalm 78](#)

**Faith Responds by Sharing the Word**

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

One of the most enjoyable times in my ministry was in Minnesota when my brother-in-law came over two years in a row during Lent. We gutted different parts of the parsonage. One year it was the kitchen. The next year it was the living room, dining room, upstairs bedroom and some of that stuff. We took it down to the studs and found some wiring that scared to death the Fire Chief that was a member of our congregation. We updated everything and got it all looking good. It was really enjoyable for me. I might get home at night at 10p.m. after some meetings or things like that. Then I'd work with my brother-in-law, Buck, until 2a.m. or whatever it was. But it was fun because I could see a difference. Hang a piece of sheetrock after you've knocked down the plaster and lath and you can see a difference.

With most of the work I do, I don't see a difference. The only thing I get to see is what your eyes look like when they're shut. I don't get to see how this change takes place in your life. I'm up here talking about Jesus or teaching about Jesus in classes or in different things, and I don't always get to see immediate results like you do when you do a remodeling project. That's kind of fun.

I think that might be one of the reasons why some of that DIY stuff is really enjoyable for me. But there are a lot of other DIY things that I don't want to do. If the car breaks down, I don't care how many google videos I can view to fix a car, I'm not going to do it. I'm going to go to someone else that knows more about what they're doing and get it

done so it's done right. That kind of DIY does not interest me at all. It's understandable and it makes sense because that's not my skillset.

But what about where God tells us this DIY project IS our responsibility even if we don't think it's in our skillset? Then what do we do?

I kind of get the impression in congregational life that sometimes we think this whole idea of responding to the Gospel by sharing the Gospel with someone else: "Well pastor, that's why we have you and the teachers. That's not our job. That's your job." We're looking at "one another" passages in our Bible study on Sunday morning where we look very specifically at who He is talking to. Is He talking to all Christians or is He just talking to leaders in a church or called workers in a church? It's quite clear I belabor the point that it's all people. Yet some of the responses still are, "But that's your job pastors and teachers. I'm not here to share Jesus. That's why we have you." Is that the case? Is that what God says or is that just what we have fallen into?

Psalm 78, the part we sang (see [Service Folder](#)), did you pay any attention? Did it say *bring your children to the Levitical singers and they will teach them the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord? Bring them to the scribes and they will teach them who God is and what God has done?* Or does it say in there they will tell their children? God is really specific. A lot of the passages that we point to on why we run Christian day schools or Sunday schools or confirmation class are really speaking to parents. God is calling parents to share it as a response of their faith so that the next generation knows the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord so they don't do the things that their ancestors had done in disobeying God, in whining about the manna, in whining about the time in the desert, in complaining about "We wish we were back in Egypt" and saying "It's too hard to fight the Canaanites. We're not going to do it," and all the other whining they did instead of listening to and doing what God had said. God lays it straight out. Every Christian has a responsibility. Always give an answer for the hope that you have but do so with gentleness and respect ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). That's spoken to every Christian. It is a response of faith so that people stay IN the faith. That's what we talked about last week, about encouraging one another WITH the Gospel. Don't just go buy them a cat poster that says "Hang in there." Share the love of Jesus Christ with those who are hurting and with those who need strength. This is what God has called us all to do.

Think about this. You and I have a lot of advantages compared to the people that were being addressed in [Psalm 78](#), the Psalm of Asaph, either Asaph or one of his descendants, the court musicians. The people would only get together every once in a while and only hear Psalms like this once in a while, but this Psalm (I'm going to read the whole thing to you later) lays out the praiseworthy deeds of God that they were supposed to teach. It's not like they could go home and pull out their pocket scroll of Genesis or Exodus and read this to them. They didn't have those advantages that you and I have.

Think of how God has put us in a place and time where we can know His Word so much better than generations that have gone before us. Believe this or not, generations before us had to actually open a book and read and turn a page! How wearying that must be to turn a page? You and I can put our phone on the bathroom counter when we're getting ready in the morning. We might have to go to the length of hitting a couple of buttons or maybe we have one of those smart houses and we can just say "Alexa, read me Exodus 3," and we can hear God's Word as we're getting ready so that we can write it in our hearts and it becomes a part of us, how we think and how we approach things. We have so many opportunities to do things like that where the Word can be a part of our way of thinking because we are in it daily. We can even have someone else read it to us. Or we can read it ourselves. There are so many different things we can do to make that Word a part of our hearts.

The question I have to ask is, do we? Do we know the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord better than the generations before us? I can make a pretty strong case that we have every opportunity to do so. But one of the things I see when I go and visit, a lot of the people I go visit can't get out anymore. They are confined to a home, a lot of them. Right next to the chair they spend most of their day in there is a well-worn copy of Meditations. There is a well-worn Bible. They tell me they read their Bible every day. I have no reason to doubt that. I think they know what is in the Scriptures really well. If we make use of some of the Bible studies today where we get together and iron sharpens iron, I think many of those people that are doing that are better at applying the Word and using it in daily life. But I just have to sit back and wonder, do we know our Scriptures like we should?

About 9-10 years ago, maybe more, I gave a little quiz on different parts of the Bible, historical facts in the Bible to the different groups that we had. Back when we had Ladies Aid and we had other groups meeting I did it. The results were not encouraging. I think I can say we don't know the Bible as well as we have the opportunity to do so. And if we don't know it, here is the danger. We don't know the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord and then we can't share them with others when they need to hear them, when they need to be strengthened or encouraged by that and then we just simply sit back and wait for the so-called experts to come and do it. Whereas God's plan is to teach one another, encourage one another, admonish one another, love one another, carry each other's burdens, serve each other, etc. The way we do it is by sharing the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord; who God is and what God has done. God expected a lot of these people just from hearing a group sing this to know it and take it back and share it with their families. That's what God says. "This is what I expect of you." When they failed, you see the results in their history.

So when it comes to us today, if we expect to be the blessing to one another and to our community that God calls us to be, we need to be equipped to share the praiseworthy

deeds of the Lord. That comes from spending time having the Gospel in Word and Sacrament build up our faith so that we have a desire to and that we have the ability to point each other to Jesus. Not say "Come to my church. Come to my school. Come to our Sunday school. Come to our confirmation class." Those are all wonderful things. But if you and I share Jesus with them, if they never come the Holy Spirit will at least have had the chance to work in their hearts. You might say "I can't do that, pastor. I can't do that. I'm not an expert. I don't know it all."

I talked to a little girl this morning who was at our Vacation Bible School this week and who was at a restaurant later in the week and was singing one of the songs that she learned. Someone said to her, "You must have been at Vacation Bible School this week." I sure hope that you guys know more about the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord than she does; not that she doesn't know them, but she is pretty young yet! And she is sharing the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord! And you and I can't? Or only I can because I have a fancy, black gown?

God has laid it right out for us. He said "Do it." We're either going to be faithful in response to the Word, or we're not going to be. And when we're not, we have sinned. Our sins aren't to be excused away by saying "Well, other people didn't do it either so I guess I'm okay." Our sins aren't to be excused away by saying "But that's why we have pastors and teachers." Our sin is taken away by the life and death of Jesus Christ. So we go to Him and say "Lord, I have failed you. Forgive me." And through His life and death, we stand forgiven. We stand loved by a God who has unfailing love for us. Then knowing that His love surrounds us, feeling that joy of sins forgiven, we become not only empowered but motivated to know God better so that we share the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord as a response of faith. Not an obligation, not you "should" do this even though God says you should. We do it because He loved us first and took away the immense guilt of our sins and opened heaven to us.

I'm going to read the whole Psalm to you and as I read it to you (I know it is 72 verses long), don't just sit there and think about what you're going to have for lunch. Listen to the words of the Psalm. Think about what God was asking them to do, to hear someone sing this to them and then be able to share it with their families. Then think about how you can grow in your faith and know these praiseworthy deeds of the Lord so that you can share them with others.

So here is [Psalm 78](#):

**A *maskil*<sup>[a]</sup> of Asaph.**

<sup>1</sup> My people, hear my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth.

<sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth with a parable;

I will utter hidden things, things from of old—  
<sup>3</sup> things we have heard and known,  
things our ancestors have told us.  
<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their descendants;  
we will tell the next generation  
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.  
<sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob  
and established the law in Israel,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach their children,  
<sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them,  
even the children yet to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their children.  
<sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds  
but would keep his commands.  
<sup>8</sup> They would not be like their ancestors—  
a stubborn and rebellious generation,  
whose hearts were not loyal to God,  
whose spirits were not faithful to him.

<sup>9</sup> The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows,  
turned back on the day of battle;  
<sup>10</sup> they did not keep God's covenant  
and refused to live by his law.  
<sup>11</sup> They forgot what he had done,  
the wonders he had shown them.  
<sup>12</sup> He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors  
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.  
<sup>13</sup> He divided the sea and led them through;  
he made the water stand up like a wall.  
<sup>14</sup> He guided them with the cloud by day  
and with light from the fire all night.  
<sup>15</sup> He split the rocks in the wilderness  
and gave them water as abundant as the seas;  
<sup>16</sup> he brought streams out of a rocky crag  
and made water flow down like rivers.

<sup>17</sup> But they continued to sin against him,  
rebellious in the wilderness against the Most High.  
<sup>18</sup> They willfully put God to the test  
by demanding the food they craved.  
<sup>19</sup> They spoke against God;

they said, "Can God really  
spread a table in the wilderness?  
20 True, he struck the rock,  
and water gushed out,  
streams flowed abundantly,  
but can he also give us bread?  
Can he supply meat for his people?"  
21 When the Lord heard them, he was furious;  
his fire broke out against Jacob,  
and his wrath rose against Israel,  
22 for they did not believe in God  
or trust in his deliverance.  
23 Yet he gave a command to the skies above  
and opened the doors of the heavens;  
24 he rained down manna for the people to eat,  
he gave them the grain of heaven.  
25 Human beings ate the bread of angels;  
he sent them all the food they could eat.  
26 He let loose the east wind from the heavens  
and by his power made the south wind blow.  
27 He rained meat down on them like dust,  
birds like sand on the seashore.  
28 He made them come down inside their camp,  
all around their tents.  
29 They ate till they were gorged—  
he had given them what they craved.  
30 But before they turned from what they craved,  
even while the food was still in their mouths,  
31 God's anger rose against them;  
he put to death the sturdiest among them,  
cutting down the young men of Israel.

32 In spite of all this, they kept on sinning;  
in spite of his wonders, they did not believe.  
33 So he ended their days in futility  
and their years in terror.  
34 Whenever God slew them, they would seek him;  
they eagerly turned to him again.  
35 They remembered that God was their Rock,  
that God Most High was their Redeemer.  
36 But then they would flatter him with their mouths,  
lying to him with their tongues;  
37 their hearts were not loyal to him,  
they were not faithful to his covenant.

<sup>38</sup> Yet he was merciful;  
he forgave their iniquities  
and did not destroy them.  
Time after time he restrained his anger  
and did not stir up his full wrath.

<sup>39</sup> He remembered that they were but flesh,  
a passing breeze that does not return.

<sup>40</sup> How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness  
and grieved him in the wasteland!

<sup>41</sup> Again and again they put God to the test;  
they vexed the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>42</sup> They did not remember his power—  
the day he redeemed them from the oppressor,

<sup>43</sup> the day he displayed his signs in Egypt,  
his wonders in the region of Zoan.

<sup>44</sup> He turned their river into blood;  
they could not drink from their streams.

<sup>45</sup> He sent swarms of flies that devoured them,  
and frogs that devastated them.

<sup>46</sup> He gave their crops to the grasshopper,  
their produce to the locust.

<sup>47</sup> He destroyed their vines with hail  
and their sycamore-figs with sleet.

<sup>48</sup> He gave over their cattle to the hail,  
their livestock to bolts of lightning.

<sup>49</sup> He unleashed against them his hot anger,  
his wrath, indignation and hostility—  
a band of destroying angels.

<sup>50</sup> He prepared a path for his anger;  
he did not spare them from death  
but gave them over to the plague.

<sup>51</sup> He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt,  
the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.

<sup>52</sup> But he brought his people out like a flock;  
he led them like sheep through the wilderness.

<sup>53</sup> He guided them safely, so they were unafraid;  
but the sea engulfed their enemies.

<sup>54</sup> And so he brought them to the border of his holy land,  
to the hill country his right hand had taken.

<sup>55</sup> He drove out nations before them  
and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance;  
he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.

<sup>56</sup> But they put God to the test  
and rebelled against the Most High;  
they did not keep his statutes.

<sup>57</sup> Like their ancestors they were disloyal and faithless,  
as unreliable as a faulty bow.

<sup>58</sup> They angered him with their high places;  
they aroused his jealousy with their idols.

<sup>59</sup> When God heard them, he was furious;  
he rejected Israel completely.

<sup>60</sup> He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh,  
the tent he had set up among humans.

<sup>61</sup> He sent the ark of his might into captivity,  
his splendor into the hands of the enemy.

<sup>62</sup> He gave his people over to the sword;  
he was furious with his inheritance.

<sup>63</sup> Fire consumed their young men,  
and their young women had no wedding songs;

<sup>64</sup> their priests were put to the sword,  
and their widows could not weep.

<sup>65</sup> Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,  
as a warrior wakes from the stupor of wine.

<sup>66</sup> He beat back his enemies;  
he put them to everlasting shame.

<sup>67</sup> Then he rejected the tents of Joseph,  
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;

<sup>68</sup> but he chose the tribe of Judah,  
Mount Zion, which he loved.

<sup>69</sup> He built his sanctuary like the heights,  
like the earth that he established forever.

<sup>70</sup> He chose David his servant  
and took him from the sheep pens;

<sup>71</sup> from tending the sheep he brought him  
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob,  
of Israel his inheritance.

<sup>72</sup> And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;  
with skillful hands he led them.

### Footnotes

- a. [Psalm 78:1](#) Title: Probably a literary or musical term

**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7](#).) Amen.**