



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

January 28, 2018

Pastor Randy Ott

4th Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson: [Deuteronomy 18:15-20](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 1](#)

Second Lesson: [Hebrews 3:1-6](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 1:21-28](#)

Sermon Text: [Hebrews 3:1-6](#)

Jesus Reveals Glory In His House

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.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Pastoral training in our church body goes like this. After high school, you go to college for four years at our worker training school. In my day, it was in Watertown. Now it's in New Ulm. Then you go two years at the Seminary in Mequon. The third year you go as a vicar to intern in a congregation. You go back to the Seminary for your final year. So by the time you have studied the six years, you're kind of going nuts a little bit. With all that studying, you need to do something, to go someplace else. At least that was what my thinking was.

So a good friend and I spent six weeks in Europe with a back pack, a Eurail Pass, and hopefully enough deodorant to cover up just rinsing out our clothes in the sink every night. It was one of the greatest six weeks as far as a trip goes that I've ever had. It was fascinating to see some of the sights that we had studied about in history and things like that.

One of the places that stuck in my mind was the Palace of Versailles, King Louis' palace in France, outside of Paris. It could be because of how we got there. We were supposed to meet up with some other guys that had gone over from the Seminary. We were supposed to meet at Notre-Dame. We were there at the time, and they never showed up. So we figured something happened and they didn't make it.

The next day we were in line at the Louvre, going to enter the Louvre, and there are all these different entrances to the Louvre. We looked behind us and there they all are, right behind us. So the next day we all piled into their little dinky car they had rented as we drove out to Versailles. It was interesting to say the least.

To go through Versailles and see the Hall of Mirrors where the Treaty of Versailles was signed in World War I was just incredible. It was mind numbing. There was so much ornate incredible stuff there. To go around the grounds and look at the grounds - I'm not a horticulturist, but man, it was amazing to see the stuff they had done on the grounds. You look at all that and it becomes really clear that the king of France, when anyone entered his palace, he wanted them to be overwhelmed with the power and the wealth and the glory that was his as the king of France. If you're coming from some other place and you're meeting in there, it was designed to say "Man, France must be something special! Look at this! This is incredible!"

Okay, I understand that. As we look at Scripture, we see how God reveals his glory at times in incredibly spectacular ways, way beyond the Hall of Mirrors, like what we read in our Gospel where he taught with authority and cast out demons. I understand that. That reveals God's glory, right?

So now you see in our Second Lesson how God's glory is revealed in his house. Maybe you're thinking like Notre-Dame or you're thinking our church, which is beautiful. A big, brick church. Looks like a mighty fortress. When you pull up, it looks really cool and glorious looking, right? Well, no. Did you notice in there, the last line of [Hebrews 3:1-6](#), what he says his house is? His house isn't this building. It isn't bricks. It isn't paint. It isn't carpeted. It isn't wood. His house is YOU!

Think about that! **"...holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling...we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory."** Think about that! God has chosen to reveal his glory in his house, and he says his house is you and me! He reveals his glory in us, if we hold to our faith in Christ.

That's a little counterintuitive, isn't it? Look at us. We aren't that impressive. I see you guys sitting out there every week. You aren't that impressive. A week ago Thursday night I preached up in the pulpit. I walked down from the pulpit after the sermon, after I said "Amen," and I started laughing to myself. I was thinking, *You know, they never taught me at the Sem, 'Hey, when no one is listening anymore, just say Amen,'* but that's what happened that Thursday night.

So now you're thinking, *Hey, wait a minute pastor! You aren't all that glorious either. I've sat through your sermons and I had no clue what you were talking about or why, so don't say it's all on us! It's you!* Yes! Every single one of us here, we're weak! We're frail! We're sinful! We're messed up! And this idea that God says his glory is revealed in us?! Mind boggling, isn't it? Especially when we know each other. I mean, look at the person next to you. Do you look at them and think, *Oh glorious God, there you are?* Yet that is what he is telling you this morning. I find that fascinating. Especially when you stop and think about how God revealed his glory in the Gospel.

If one of you guys stood up and started yelling at me in the middle of the sermon, that would be interesting, right? That's what that guy did that was possessed by this impure

spirit. But then Jesus revealed his glory by casting him out. That I can understand. But in us? We're messed up.

Here's how messed up we are. God is pretty serious about his work. Did you notice that today in worship already? In Psalm 1. *Blessed are you when you meditate on his Word day and night. You're like a tree planted by water, which yields its fruit in season, whose leaf does not wither.* God is telling you the Word is important in your life.

That First Lesson talked about Moses, and our lesson talks about how Jesus is superior to Moses. He is the great prophet that Moses promised that would come after him. But did you notice how it talked about the prophets there at the end of the First Lesson? It says *I will put my words in his mouth and he'll speak it faithfully, but woe to anyone who presumes to speak in my name but doesn't speak what my Word says or who speaks in the name of another god.* Remember what it said should happen to them? It didn't say to shake your finger sternly at them. It didn't say tsk tsk them until they turn away from preaching falsely. It said they should be put to death! Doesn't that tell you God is really, really serious about his Word? That should scare us, shouldn't it?

Oh yeah, we're Christians. We wouldn't speak in the name of another god, would we? I think every one of us here has. I think at one time or another every single one of us here has spoken the name of another god. When God's Word has said *This is what is right and wrong* and God, who is serious about his Word says *Certain things are absolutely right, certain things are absolutely wrong and I'm calling them sin*, and we have taken that, and, in our lives, or, we have said, "I don't know if I can believe in a God that would send anyone to hell," or "I can't believe that God would let anyone suffer this kind of sickness or disease;" when we try to reshape God into our own image, we're speaking in the name of another God, and that God is myself. That is as certainly idolatry as anything else. So if you and I do that, we're worthy of death, right? Somebody should be winding up and pitching stones at us 98 miles an hour until we're dead because that's what it said to do in Biblical times.

So now here is where God starts revealing his glory in us, weak, frail people that we are, who often worship ourselves or our ideas more than others. If you doubt that at all, pick up that book we're looking at on Sunday nights, **12 False Christs**, and read how we want to reshape Jesus in our image instead of him reshape us. We do it all the time.

Here is where God reveals his glory. We put our hope in him. What did it say in the start of what I read to you? He is the apostle and our high priest. He was an apostle, one sent out. He was sent out from heaven to come to this world, to live perfectly in your place, and then, as a high priest, to offer, not some ram or some lamb or some drink offering or some graining offering, but to offer himself as the once for all sacrifice to pay for all of our sins. Then, he is the one that sends the Holy Spirit into your heart, through Word, through Baptism, and gives you the gift of faith to believe that Jesus did

this for you. And now you live as his house and you have this glory that is not your own. It is his, because he has done for you what you could never do. He made you his child again, even though you're worthy of death.

Now he tells us to go out and serve in our daily life. In every area of our life, in whatever our calling is, we serve in so many different ways and at so many different times, and when we're at our best, we do it to give glory to God, who made us a part of his house. The fact that we do it at all...it might be cloaked in weakness. It might be cloaked in our failings. But the fact that we can live to serve our God at all reveals his glory.

He has won the victory over Satan in our life when we believe in him. That victory keeps marching forward as we live for him. It doesn't look as glorious as some of his miracles, but it is a miracle that has touched our hearts and then touches the lives of others as we live for God and serve God simply because what he has done for us is glorious.

This is God's calling to you. You're his house. You reveal his glory to the world. Rejoice in that calling and then let the Lord build you up. You're going to fail from time to time yet. You're still weak. You're going to sin. But then your God comes and puts his arm around your shoulder and he walks with you to the altar. He gives you his very body and blood to say, "I don't care what you've done or how you've failed me. I love you and I forgive you because of me, not because of you." That's glorious. That's our life. That's what we get to share. Amen.