



“Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter”, by Lorenzo Veneziano (active 1356-1372 in Venice), *Museo Correr*, Venice. © Web Gallery of Art. In the central panel, the Venetian dating of 1368 is visible, corresponding to our 1369. This is the central panel of an altarpiece. The side panels were destroyed in Berlin in 1945, but five lower panels survive, comprising the Conversion of Paul, the Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew, Christ Rescuing Peter from Drowning, the Apostle Peter Preaching, and the Crucifixion of Peter. In the Gospel reading Sunday, Jesus tells Peter that Jesus will give him “the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Although the Waters around Us Are Turbulent, the Church and We Are Still Held Securely in Jesus’ Hands

“Last week, Jesus delivered people from hunger” when he fed the 5,000, the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his August 10 sermon. “This week, Jesus delivers people from fear,” including Peter when he set out to walk on the water to Jesus.

The “conventional wisdom” that Peter took his eyes off Jesus may contain truth, Pastor Thelander continued, but it may be that “Peter represents the only disciple in the boat who is beginning to ‘get it,’ who is beginning to . . . understand that, with God’s power in our lives, we *can* begin to do what God does.” Although Peter then begins to sink, “I don’t believe doubt is the real culprit here. . . . I suspect that the real culprit here is *fear*, not doubt. . . . Matthew is writing to persons who have faith, but who become *afraid* to draw on it when they need it most. Fear—not doubt—is the heart of their struggle.”

Throughout Church history, “the boat has often been seen as an image of the Church as she floats in the turbulent waters of secular culture. . . . Matthew reminds us that the Church is still securely held in Jesus’ loving hands. . . . Jesus is still Lord over those waters,” for the Church and us.

God Casts His Net of Mercy and Grace Widely, to Reach Outsiders, Even Us

Jesus’ first response to the Gentile woman who sought help for her sick daughter “is simply to ignore her, to give her the silent treatment,” perhaps (because) he is simply so exhausted that he has nothing left to give,” the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his August 17 sermon.

Possibly because they were in foreign territory and didn’t want to be conspicuous, Jesus’ disciples asked him to send her away. Still, she persists, but Jesus tells her he was sent to the people of Israel, and that “it isn’t right to take food from children and throw it to the dogs.” These were severe words, because the people of Israel hated Gentiles, and especially Canaanites such as this woman, and called them dogs.

Jesus then responded to the woman’s persistent faith and healed her daughter. “What was probably happening was that the faith community to which Matthew wrote was . . . struggling to accept ‘outsiders’ and those coming to faith who were historically considered ‘dogs’ and enemies of God and God’s people.

“It’s a challenge that still confronts us today. Our human nature struggles to understand and accept those who are different from us, those who come from different backgrounds, those who practice their faith differently. . . . We find it hard to believe and accept that God loves Muslims (p. 2→)

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On the Web: www.epworthchapelonthegreen.org

Sundays, 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

Sundays, 11:45 a.m.: Moderated post-service discussion

Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.: Evening Prayers

For the poor: Meat; fresh produce; canned fruits and vegetables; dairy products; peanut butter; cooking oil; pancake mix; syrup; spices; diapers; baby wipes; bathroom tissue; for personal care: soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream; new underwear (adults and children); cleaning supplies; bleach.

Readings, 8/24: Is. 51:1-6; Ps. 138; Rom. 11:33-36; Mt. 16:13-20. **8/31:** Jer. 15:15-21; Ps. 26:1-8; Rom. 12:1-8; Mt. 16:21-27.

Prayer Emphases: Singapore; The Southern Baptist Convention; Second Baptist Church, Boise, and the Rev. Jim Steiner; American Bible Society; parishioners on Raymond Street.

(8/17 sermon, cont’d.) or Jews, and extends his mercy and compassion to them as much as he does to us. But, as Paul tells us, we were at one time the ‘dogs,’ the outsiders, those who had no right to God’s covenant promises. . . . We were not worthy to pick up the crumbs under the table, and instead we now have been invited to have a full place at the table. . . . God casts his net of mercy and grace very widely—so widely that it reaches even us.

Ice Cream Social Reaches Record Number: For Epworth’s 7th annual ice cream social for our parish/neighborhood on Aug. 10, at least 119 were served.

Outreach Series on Chesterton’s *Orthodoxy*: 9 a.m., 9 Sundays, 9/14 *et seq.*