

Lutheran Church of the Master
580 Kuhn Road, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188
Curt Gerald, Interim Pastor
November 21/22, 2009
Christ the King
“Sing to the Lord a New Song”

FIRST LESSON: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 (New International Version)

⁹ "As I looked,

"thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.

¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.
The court was seated,
and the books were opened.

¹³ "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Psalm: 93

¹ The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty;
the LORD is robed in majesty
and is armed with strength.
The world is firmly established;
it cannot be moved.

² Your throne was established long ago;
you are from all eternity.

³ The seas have lifted up, O LORD,
the seas have lifted up their voice;
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.

⁴ Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea—
the LORD on high is mighty.

⁵ Your statutes stand firm;
holiness adorns your house
for endless days, O LORD.

SECOND LESSON: Revelation 1:4-8 (New International Version)

⁴John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits^[a] before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

⁷Look, he is coming with the clouds,

and every eye will see him,

even those who pierced him;

and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

GOSPEL:

John 18:33-37

³³Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

³⁴"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

³⁵"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

This meditation began by listening to MercyMe's "I Can Only Imagine."

Listen to it at this link: <http://www.elyrics.net/read/m/mercyme-lyrics/i-can-only-imagine-lyrics.html>

MercyMe's vocalist Bart Millard's father died from cancer when Millard was an 18-year-old. Millard began writing the words "I can only imagine" on items when he was thinking about his father. He wrote the song in [1999](#) by drawing on his thoughts and personal faith about what one would experience upon meeting [Jesus](#) in [Heaven](#). Millard estimated that it took him only ten minutes to write the lyrics and melody. Millard told [Fox News](#) "I was always told that if he could choose, he would rather be in Heaven than here with me. As a Christian I believed that, but as an 18-year-old it was a little hard to swallow. So the questions in the song came from me asking God what was so great about Him that my dad would rather be there."

"**I Can Only Imagine**" is a song recorded by [contemporary Christian music](#) group [MercyMe](#). Released on MercyMe's [2001](#) debut album [Almost There](#), the song received major airplay on both Christian and mainstream radio. It earned three Dove Awards in [2002](#) for "Pop Song", "Song of the Year", and "Songwriter of the Year" for its author and MercyMe lead singer Bart Millard. The song is also their only single to date to receive significant airplay on Country radio, peaking at #52. The single has been certified Gold by the RIAA.

*This information is from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Can_Only_Imagine

The last Sunday of the Church Year ... which is what today is ... has throughout my lifetime always been a day in which the Church does what that 18 year old Bart Millard did in 1999 ... the Church thinks about what heaven is and what heaven will be like.

It is one of those days when the Church encourages its members to think about what we so often recite by memory ... perhaps without thinking about ...

The Third Article: *Of Sanctification.* I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?--Answer. I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

This is most certainly true Martin Luther says. **I believe it**, you and I say every week in worship as we proclaim, and hopefully not just "recite," the creed (Apostles' or Nicene). But what do we mean with those words?

After Mitch Albion caught our attention with his small book ***TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE***, he published his second small book ***the five people you meet in heaven***. If you have ever read those books or not, I want to push the question that they imply: **WHAT DO YOU MAGINE HEAVEN IS GOING TO BE LIKE WHEN YOU GET THERE?**

First of all ... I hope you believe there is a heaven.

Secondly ... I hope you are planning on being there. My understanding is that God has done everything in his power to make sure you will be ... but ultimately the choice is yours. If all this heaven talk is boring to you ... well ... God won't force heaven on you. Quite honestly if you want to live like hell on earth ... then it is your choice to live there in eternity too ... just don't blame God for kicking you out.

But for those of us who are planning on spending a lot of time in heaven ... right now we can only imagine what is really going to be like. Communion is a taste of it ... not so much the yeasty taste of bread or sweet smell of wine ... as the gathering ... the family of God gathered at the table of the Lord.

Scripture gives pictures ... not digital ... just word picture ... intended to help us realize that as great as this life is ... heaven is going to be so much better ... for some maybe just knowing that there won't be any preachers in heaven ... because Jesus will be speaking for himself.

But I think there will be singing in heaven ... and even if you can't carry a tune now ... you'll probably have the most beautiful voice in heaven there! And I don't think we'll argue over old hymns or new songs ... because we'll all be singing our new songs in heaven.

As MercyMe's song says, when we're surrounded by the glory of heaven ... we can only imagine right now if we'll be left speechless or if we'll be a soloist in the choir that day ... we can only imagine now if our legs will give way in awe or if we'll jump higher than Michael Jordan's at the sight of the living God.

Today I asked Mike for permission to sing LBW #558 before and after the sermon as a way of celebrating the life of its writer. Herb Brokering was one of my favorite seminary professors ... just a year ago he was the speaker for WheatRidge/Thrivents "wellness day for pastors and professional leaders" about 20 miles from here.

As the tribute on the ELCA website says (<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx#&&a=4344>), his legacy includes carefully crafted words on the lips of believers gathered around the means of grace. He has helped us bring our faith to rich expression," said the Rev. Michael L. Burk, bishop, ELCA Southeastern Iowa Synod, Iowa City.

"Thine the glory, thine the story, then the welcome to the least. Then the wonder all increasing at thy feast, at thy feast," he said, quoting one of Brokering's best-known

hymns, "Thine the Amen." (ELW 826) He wrote other popular Lutheran hymns such as "Earth and All Stars!" "Praise, Praise! You Are My Rock" and "Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!"

His faith in Jesus and confidence of the future formed his life. While in Germany after World War II he worked with the Lutheran World Federation services to refugees.

Brokering was director for confirmation education with the former American Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, 1960 to 1970. He became a free lance educator, writer and consultant working in the United States, Europe and Japan. Brokering co-directed the film, "Where Luther Walked" in 1981. He also taught at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., for several years.

Brokering was a promoter of healing, justice and peace, leading more than 100 pilgrimages in his lifetime to places in Europe, the Middle East, China and India. The East German Ministry of Culture presented him with a peacemaking award.

He authored more than 30 books for Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA, and more than 100 lyrics for almost 60 composers. "Herb was a gifted poet, author, speaker and composer. He was also a delight -- a man who cared deeply about his God, his family, his many friends and this publishing ministry," said Beth A. Lewis, Augsburg Fortress president and chief executive officer.

In his retirement Brokering served 11 years as a staff associate for Wheat Ridge Ministries, an independent Lutheran charitable organization based in Itasca, Ill., that awards "seed" grants to health ministries. He was an ambassador for Wheat Ridge, promoting and encouraging the seeding of new ministries of health and hope around the world. After leaving that role in 2007, he continued to write devotions for Wheat Ridge, sharing many of his hymns, poems, prayers and stories. Wheat Ridge recognized him as "Poet Laureate of the Lutheran Church."

As sense of eternity is embedded in the story of Daniel and repeated in the Revelation of John ... the Psalmist wrote it so that early Israel could sing it ... Jesus listed it as his home address.

And it is your home address and mine too. When death is done with us and can do no more to us, then we know that there is a room reserved for us in the Heavenly Hilton. And when we move in ... I suspect we're going to do a lot of singing!