

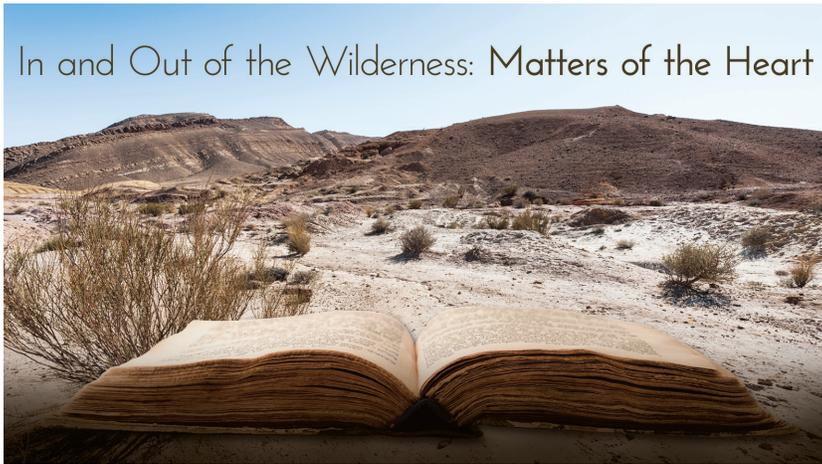


March 22 – 23, 2025

### Matters of the Heart

Exodus 7:20-25, Luke 16:19-31

## In and Out of the Wilderness: Matters of the Heart



### MUSIC THIS WEEKEND

**CONTEMPORARY**  
SAT 5:30 pm | SUN 10:30 am

**Praise**

**The Lord's Prayer (It's Yours)**

**The Goodness of God**

**Battle Belongs**

**CLASSIC | SUN 8:45 am**

BRASS, CHOIR: **Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow**

CHOIR ANTHEM: **Like a Mighty Wind**

BRASS: **Christus Factus Est**

CHOIR, BRASS: **On What Has Now Been Sown**

MESSAGE: **Paul Dean**

**Communion** (Saturday 5:30 pm)

### JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

**Classic: Sun 8:45 am | Contemporary: Sat 5:30 pm, Sun 10:30 am**  
Resources, livestreams, playlists and podcast links: [popmn.org](http://popmn.org)

### JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY

**Board of Directors Applications due March 31**

We're accepting Board applications: [popmn.org/leadership](http://popmn.org/leadership)

**EGGstravaganza | Saturday, April 12 | 10:00 am**

Join us for an egg hunt, crafts and a pancake brunch!

Register: [popmn.org/register](http://popmn.org/register)

**Help Prepare for EGGstravaganza | Tuesday, April 8 | 10:00 am**

Help us stuff eggs and decorate for the big event!

We're also accepting candy donations for egg stuffing – bite-sized, nut-free and no hard candy or gum, please.

Let Jeanne Kalsow know if you're coming: [jkalsow@popmn.org](mailto:jkalsow@popmn.org)

**Mission Outpost Volunteer Orientation | Tuesday, April 1**

Interested in volunteering in Mission Outpost?

Sign up for the next volunteer orientation: [popmn.org/register](http://popmn.org/register)

### JOIN US IN GENEROSITY

**Thank you for your gifts for mission and ministry!**



## Connect With Us

We are and open and affirming church, here to love God and all people. We value growing a relationship with God and with each other, and showing up for people in need in this community and beyond. **Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church!**



**Connect** with Prince of Peace!  
Scan here to join our mailing list and find ways to get involved.

Paper copies of this form are available at the Connect Desk.

## POP CHILDCARE: Did you know?!

**DID YOU KNOW**  
that POP Childcare and the Child Development & Learning Center (CDLC) are two separate things?

**DID YOU KNOW**  
that POP Childcare is located downstairs between CDLC and Mission Outpost?

[popmn.org/ministries/preschool/](http://popmn.org/ministries/preschool/)



## Trust the Story | In and Out of the Wilderness | Matters of the Heart

Last week we discussed Pharaoh and his struggle to understand the concept of an unconditionally loving God, one you would worship and celebrate by choice rather than mandate. Pharaoh's inability to imagine this kind of a God is on display again in **Exodus 7:20-25**. As the plagues – warnings and signs of God's power – unfold, Pharaoh's heart is continually hardened against the plight of the Israelites.

In this week's gospel reading, **Luke 16:19-31**, an unnamed rich man has a similarly hardened heart. He lives in comfort and wealth, while a poor man named Lazarus sits at his gate, with dogs licking the sores that cover his body while he begs for crumbs to eat. The rich man ignores Lazarus' need.

What does it mean to have a hardened heart? How does this relate to empathy and compassion? Do you think empathy and compassion were valued when these passages were originally written and shared? Do we value empathy and compassion in our culture today?

If you read through all the plagues, how many times does Pharaoh say the Israelites can leave? How many times does he change his mind? How many times do you suppose the rich man in the passage from Luke walks by Lazarus at his gate, desperate for food? Do you think Pharaoh or the rich man are ready and willing to live in a world where every living thing is cherished? What needs to change in order for them to see the world differently?

You might have heard the Hebrew word “shalom” used to mean peace. It's often used in a “peace be with you” sort of way, implying tranquility or lack of conflict. But the Hebrew word means so much more. It's an emphatic feeling of compassion, encompassing well-being and thriving into the future. Shalom is like a group of people traveling through the wilderness with the elderly and sick walking in the middle, at their own pace, protected by those around them – an active, ongoing expression of hope and wholeness.

The word “empire” suggests conquest, greed and acquisition by force. It's about taking more for oneself with no regard for others. Empire is like a group of people traveling quickly through the wilderness with the elderly and sick lagging far behind, left to fend off predators on their own – a failure of empathy and community.

Today's stories from Exodus and Luke both feel like a clash between empire and shalom. Pharaoh repeatedly refuses to extend freedom to the Israelites, regardless of the destruction unleashed by their continued captivity. Pharaoh doesn't care who suffers; he won't let go of what he thinks is his to keep. The rich man, even in death, thinks that Lazarus is beneath him, that Lazarus exists to serve him and his family. Even when he hits rock bottom, the rich man simply cannot see Lazarus' humanity. Both the rich man and Pharaoh repeatedly behave like empire.

Why do you think these characters ignore the pull of divine compassion? How do you think these stories would have ended if they had chosen the path of shalom instead of empire?

What happens when we abandon empathy in favor of greed? Where do you see empire thinking in your life, or in the world? Where do you see shalom?

What does it look like to whole-heartedly embrace shalom living, even with people you don't like? Is it realistic to work towards a thriving future for all people? What is your responsibility in that work? What is yours to do?

Is Jesus doing a new thing when he tells these stories? Is he bringing entirely new ideas, or is he re-telling stories that have existed since the beginning?