

# Bouquet Caboodle



Highland Lectionary Series

May 17, 2026

## Beware the Idols of March

Ezekiel 34:1-7; Psalm 115; 1 Peter 3:13-22;  
John 14:15-21

### Today's Big Idea

The uncontainable God resists human capture and instead captures human hearts by direct engagement

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### The Ides of March

Shakespeare's famous line in *Julius Caesar*

The 15th of March: Festival of Anna Perenna, monthly sheep sacrifice to Jupiter,

The assassination of Julius Caesar: how the thing you intend can create the opposite result

### The First Two Commandments: Exodus 20:1-6

Do not worship other gods; do not reduce God to an image

The story of the golden calf: **Exodus 32:1-35**

Artistic images versus images of YHWH

The story of the Nehushtan: **Numbers 21:4-9; 2 Kings 18:4**

Icon controversy during the Reformation

### The Psychology of Statue Worship

The symbol/pointer, the portal/magnifying glass, the essence-holder

Continuum between symbol and saturated presence (think of Christian eucharist debates)

### Reading **Psalm 115**

Possession of "God" is a human-centered glory: **vs. 1**

Israel will be different than its neighbors in not having a God-image/statue: **vs. 2-3**

The interesting "image battle" in between the Ark and Dagon: **1 Samuel 5:1-5**

Idols caricatured in the "essence-holder" mode: **vs.4-7**

We become like what we worship: **vs. 8** (the danger of "making God")

The children of Israel eat the golden calf ashes: **Exodus 32:20**

Trust invisible YHWH Who can out-perform the rival deities: protection and fertility: **vs. 9-18**

### Four Insights for Christian Discipleship

Sacraments and physical objects are good *transmitters* but bad *anchors*: Roumie syndrome

God is not to be reduced (here we include our mental projections and even Bible interpretations)

God relates to us from inside out (spirit and truth) more than outside in: **John 4:23-24; 14:17,20**

Julius Caesar assassination syndrome: one trying to control God, He becomes more uncontrollable

## The Key Excerpts for This Week's Thematic Thread

Ezekiel 34:1-7	Psalm 115	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
<p>34 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: To the shepherds—thus says the Lord God: Woe, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3 You eat the fat; you clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatted calves, but you do not feed the sheep. 4 You have not strengthened the weak; you have not healed the sick; you have not bound up the injured; you have not brought back the strays; you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and scattered they became food for all the wild animals. 6 My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.</p>	<p>1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness. 2 Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" 3 Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. 5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see. 6 They have ears, but they do not hear; they have noses, but they do not smell. 7 They have hands, but they do not feel; they have feet, but they do not walk; they make no sound in their throats. 8 Those who make them are like them; so are all who trust in them. 9 O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. 11 You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. 12 The Lord has been mindful of us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron;</p>	<p>13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, 16 yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,</p>	<p>15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."</p>

### Next Week's Readings: What thread do you discern?

May 17, 2026 - Ascension Sunday: Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 21:1-7; 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11; John 17:1-11