

16th Sunday after Pentecost, September 24, 2017

15th Sunday after Trinity, Proper 20(25)

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

September 21, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (Sundays at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa.



<http://slaughtersbaptist.org/media.php>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 555 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 377

“Salvation unto us has come”

“**Speratus, Paulus**, D.D., was born in Swabia, Dec. 13, 1484. In a poem, written circa 1516, on Dr. J. Eck, he calls himself **Elephantius**, i.e. of Ellwangen; and in his correspondence, preserved at Königsberg, he often styles himself "a Rutilus" or "von Rötlen."...

In 1518 we find him settled as a preacher at Dinkelsbühl, in Bavaria. In the end of that year he was invited to become preacher in the cathedral at Würzburg. He went to Würzburg in Feb. 1519, but his preaching was much too evangelical for the new bishop, and he had to leave, apparently in the beginning of 1520. Proceeding to Salzburg he preached for sometime in the cathedral, until the archbishop there also would not tolerate his pronounced opinions...

He was already married (probably as early as 1519), and was one of the first priests who had dared to take this step. After a violent sermon against marriage, delivered by a monk in St. Peter's church, at Vienna, the governor of Lower Austria (Count Leonhard von Zech) asked Speratus to make a reply. With the consent of the bishop he did so, and preached, on Jan. 12, 1522, a sermon in the cathedral (St. Stephen's), founded on the Epistle for the 1st Sunday after the Epiphany, in which he expressed his opinions very freely regarding the monastic life and enforced celibacy, and also clearly set forth the doctrine of Justification by Faith. This sermon (published at Königsberg in 1524) made a great impression, and was condemned by the Theological Faculty at Vienna...

On his way from Vienna to the north he stayed at Iglau in Moravia, where the abbot of the Dominican monastery appointed him as preacher. Here the people became greatly enamoured of him and of the Reformation doctrines, and stood firmly by him, notwithstanding the remonstrances and threats of the king, and of the bishop of Olmütz. In the summer of 1523 king Ludwig came to Olmütz and summoned Speratus to him. Without even the form of a trial he put him in prison, but after three months he released him...

As a hymn writer Speratus is principally known by the three hymns published in the *Etlich cristlich lider*, 1524... **Es ist das Heil uns kommen her**. *Law and Gospel*. This, his most famous hymn, is founded on Rom. iii. 28. It was probably written in the autumn of 1523, either during his imprisonment at Olmütz, or else during his stay at Wittenberg...

Lauxmann, in *Koch*, viii. 236, calls it "the true confessional hymn of the Reformation, or, as Albert Knapp puts it, 'the poetical counterpart of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans.'" He relates many instances of the effects it produced. It is a Scriptural ballad, setting forth, in what was, for the time, excellent verse, the characteristic teachings of the German Reformers; and is indeed of considerable historical importance. But for present day use it is too long, somewhat harsh in style, and too much a compend of doctrinal theology.

The only version we have found in English common use is:—**To us salvation now is come**. Excerpts from John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907) https://hymnary.org/person/Speratus_P “

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAOFTAoQ3x8> “Concordia Theological Seminary Kantorei From a 1989 taping session for "Worship for Shut-ins" at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana.”

<https://vimeo.com/16367476> “Stanza 6 Setting by Johann Sebastian Bach, ed. by Phillip Magness for Liturgy Solutions, liturgysolutions.com Sung by the adult choir (Proclaim) of Bethany Lutheran Church, Naperville, Illinois, October 31, 2010”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBXooSIKmB8> “The Vine” from Koine. Modern accompaniment.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

Isaiah 55:6-9; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Exodus 16:2-15 or Jonah 3:10-4:11 (Next Week :Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Exodus 17:1-7 or Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32)

“Have you ever lost something and then had to go looking for it? I'm pretty sure that has happened to all of us. I'm also sure I'll be doing that a lot after my bride and I move into the parsonage later today. Have you ever known someone who did? I used to laugh at my parents when they did that. I thought it was funny, a sign they were getting old and forgetful. Then I started doing it, and I realized it's not so funny, after all. After you've found what you misplaced, how often have you told others that you found it in the last place you looked. Now there's some insight! Once we've found what we were looking for, that place where we found it is, in fact, the last place where we looked. Nobody—at least nobody I know—looks for something, finds it, and then keeps on looking for it. That would be foolish...” <http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=2401>

[Pastor Mark Schlamann](#), Zion Lutheran Church, Harbine, Nebraska

- ⁶“Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
⁷let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

“...In [verses 1-5](#) the poet calls his listeners to make a clear choice. He offers them an option of the generous self-giving of YHWH, the God of covenant. This God has in times past given Israel manna-bread and water in the wilderness, and will now generously give all that is needed for life...free water, free milk, and free wine, all gifts of God. But reception of these free gifts in faith requires his listeners to choose against the quid-pro-quo economy of Babylon. In that imperial economy of demand-production, these deported Jews had to do work that was not

satisfying; they had to buy consumer goods that had no sustaining value. The quid-pro-quo of production (“labor for that which does not satisfy”) and consumption (“that which is not bread”) is in fact a dead-end project that only results in fatigue, disappointment, and despair. The summons of the poem is that, because of the living God, an alternative way is possible. That alternative way is a homecoming that will be enacted because of God’s fidelity to the covenant with David.

In [verses 6-9](#) the poet introduces a second riff. While verses 6-7 may be familiar to us as a generic “call to worship,” in fact these verses are not a “call to worship.” Rather they are a call to sanity in a quite specific social situation. The “wickedness” and “unrighteousness” of which Israel is to repent concerns Israel’s wholesale compromise with the quid-pro-quo of the Babylonian empire that entailed a shift away from covenantal commitments. Thus the Jews who compromised with Babylonian practices, values, and procedures of production and consumption are invited back to the generous governance of YHWH who, in the context of the parsimonious empire, gives the gifts needed for life. To return to YHWH is to depart the Babylonian calculus and reengage the covenantal values of a neighborly kind.

The ground for such a radical reengagement with faith is the elemental contrast between the anxious assumption of deported Jews who thought they were on their own in Babylon and the intention of YHWH who has indeed left God’s people on their own for time (see [Isaiah 54:7-8](#)), but who will now provide what they need. The poem makes a vigorous and emphatic contrast between “your ways and thoughts” and God’s “ways and thoughts.” The poet dares to introduce to Israel in exile an alternative resolve that has not been on their screen. “Your ways,” you who have colluded with the empire of quid-pro-quo, is a way of fear, scarcity, and anxiety that requires labor that does not satisfy and purchases that are not bread. God’s way, by contrast, is a way of generous, reliable fidelity that makes such fearful collusion both inappropriate and unnecessary. Thus Isaiah’s listeners are summoned to deal with the reality of God, God’s way, God’s thought, and God’s future that constitute a palpable alternative to the offer of Babylon...”

<https://www.onscripture.com/covenant-neighborly-justice-break-chains-quid-pro-quo>

Psalm 27:1-9; RCL, Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 or Psalm 145:1-8 (Psalm 25:1-10; RCL, Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 or Psalm 25:1-9)

“One of the brightest jewels in the Psalter is the Psalm 27.

It’s situated on the third Sunday of Epiphany but could be read and pondered with great profit and joy any Sunday, or at any moment...

Maybe for the working preacher, a wise course might be to surrender on the work, and yield yourself to the Psalm or maybe even in worship just to let the Psalm stand on its own, and let the people listen and marvel while you let it do its own lovely work.”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1872 [James Howell](#) Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C

The LORD Is My Light and My Salvation Of David.

27 The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold^[a] of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

² When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.

³ Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet^[b] I will be confident.

⁴ One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire^[c] in his temple.

⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.

⁶ And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

⁷ Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me!

⁸ You have said, "Seek^[d] my face."

My heart says to you,
"Your face, LORD, do I seek."^[e]

⁹ Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger,
O you who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!...

(Psalm continues through verse 14)

- a. [Psalm 27:1](#) Or *refuge*
- b. [Psalm 27:3](#) Or *in this*

- c. [Psalm 27:4](#) Or *meditate*
- d. [Psalm 27:8](#) The command (*seek*) is addressed to more than one person
- e. [Psalm 27:8](#) The meaning of the Hebrew verse is uncertain

“As much as any psalm in the Psalter, Psalm 27 expresses trust in the lord and claims absolute dependence on God.

This is apparent in **verse 1**, which begins the lectionary reading: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

The psalm is a prayer for help. It presumes the psalmist is in some type of trouble (verses 7, 9, 12). Psalms of this type typically contain petition, complaint, and expressions of trust (see Psalm 13 as an example). Psalm 27 is unique in its heightened emphasis on trust. The opening verse describes the Lord with language that suggests his presence is life-giving and protective...

Verses 2-3 continue the statement of confidence that began in verse 1... Here the psalmist identifies the place of God’s protection and shelter as the central sanctuary in Jerusalem...

This identity is evident in the way **verse 4** pairs the general expression, “house of the lord” (see also Psalm 23:6) with the specific term, “temple” (*hekal*). An additional expression “in his tent” here and in verse 6 has the same meaning..

Verse 5 continues to express confidence in the Lord’s protection with further descriptions of the safety of the temple...

In **verse 6** the psalmist declares the intention to worship with song and sacrifice in response to God’s salvation. But then the psalm turns to complaint and petition for the rest of the lectionary reading and for the rest of the psalm (**verses 7-14**). The sharp break between verses 6 and 7 has led some scholars to conclude that the two main portions of the psalm were originally separate psalms.

Nevertheless, verses 1-6 and 7-14 hold together around themes of salvation (verses 1, 9), enemies (verses 2-3, 12), trust (verses 3, 14) and seeking God (verses 4, 8). The psalm closes with petitions that draw upon the language of trust earlier in the psalm: “seek his face” (verse 8 [see verse 4]); “O God of my salvation” (verse 9; see verse 1)... “

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3150 **Jerome Creach**
Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn

Philippians 1:12-14, 19-30; RCL, Philippians 1:21-30 (*Philippians 2:1-4, (5-13), 14-18; RCL, Philippians 2:1-13*)

“With an eye on the letter he had just received by the hand of Epaphroditus ([Phil 2:25, 4:18](#)) from the church at Philippi, Paul now begins to answer some of the questions which were perplexing the Philippians. They had become greatly distressed by the apostle’s prolonged imprisonment and wondered what was going to happen to the extension work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Surely this ends it all, they thought. But Paul reminds them in [Phil 1:12](#) that “the

things which happened unto [him had] fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” The imprisonments and trials had only served to advance the Gospel. **Stephen Olford** - (Expository Preaching Outlines - Volume 2)” http://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_112-17#1:12 This website is an extensive resource for commentary, word studies and comparison of translations.

The Advance of the Gospel

¹² I want you to know, brothers,^[a] that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard^[b] and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word^[c] without fear.

¹⁵ *Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.*

¹⁶ *The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.*

To Live Is Christ

Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰ as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴ But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy^[d] of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

- a. [Philippians 1:12](#) Or *brothers and sisters*. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, the plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”) may refer either to *brothers* or to *brothers and sisters*; also verse [14](#)
- b. [Philippians 1:13](#) Greek *in the whole praetorium*
- c. [Philippians 1:14](#) Some manuscripts add *of God*
- d. [Philippians 1:27](#) Greek *Only behave as citizens worthy*

“The Apostle Paul wrote these lines during his imprisonment in Rome, probably some time between 61 and 63 C.E. This specific situation is important to understand our text. Most likely,

Paul's imprisonment was rather a situation of house arrest under military custody that would have allowed him certain privileges, for instance visits of Timothy with whom he penned this letter.

It is nevertheless clear that Paul's theological reflections are a response to the imminence of death, which was a potential outcome of this predicament. (His death in Rome just a few years later is the topic of the 2nd century apocryphal writing called *Martyrdom of Paul*). In our pericope, Paul provides an impressive reevaluation of death (Philippians 1:21–26) that leads to an exhortation of the congregation to suffer for Christ (1:27–30). The passage is followed by the famous hymn celebrating Christ's humility until death (2:6–11), the lectionary text of the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost...

... "For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:21–23, NRSV). When hearing such a statement, some might be impressed by Paul's religious enthusiasm. Others may feel uncomfortable or might even want to accuse the apostle of boasting. I feel compelled to ask, "Are you sure, Paul, you don't hang on to life more than that?" What kind of principle is "dying is gain" anyway?...

So how could the Apostle Paul make such a statement...? We find the answer first in his situation of imprisonment mentioned above. It came with the potential of death, and thus it was only appropriate for Paul to reflect on death instead of adopting a state of denial. We encounter the result of his reflections in verse 23: "my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

Second, it is clear that Paul's reflections hinge on the presence of Christ. Paul is absolutely certain that death is not a transition into a state of non-existence; hence, he is not afraid of it. Paul does not doubt at all that death can only be the moment when he will be united with Christ. This is a faith perspective the apostle has developed earlier: "... we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8 NRSV)..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2180

Christian A. Eberhart, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Houston, Houston, Texas

"The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 20th Chapter"

"Glory to You, O Lord"

Matthew 20:1-16; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 21:23-27; RCL, Matthew 21:23-32)

"What, in a word or two, is the parable of the laborers in the vineyard about?"

Before reading any further in this commentary take a moment to re-read Matthew 20:1-16 and think about this question. The parable of the laborers in the vineyard is about _____." (continued after the reading)

Laborers in the Vineyard

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius^[a] a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ ⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ ⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’^[b] ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

- a. [Matthew 20:2](#) A denarius was a day's wage for a laborer
- b. [Matthew 20:15](#) Or is your eye bad because I am good?

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” **“Praise to You, O Christ”**
(Read Matthew 19:30)

“...So, to answer my own question:

First, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard is about the 9th (and 10th) commandment. In a very real sense this parable is about coveting... Coveting lies at the heart of this parable...

We covet what God chooses to give to others. A parable is essentially an elaborate allegory. We are invited to see ourselves in the story, and then apply it to ourselves. The wages at stake (even at the moment of Jesus' first telling of the parable) are not actual daily wages for vineyard-laborers, but forgiveness, life, and salvation for believers. We need not literally be laborers in a vineyard, as we are all of us co-workers in the kingdom (1 Corinthians 3:9)...

Second, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard is about the first and the last. The parable itself displays a reversal of expectations -- "the last will be first and the first will be last"; this is not only the summary of the parable (20:16), but a critical aspect of New Testament theology.

Notice the flow of the narrative as the workers are compensated for their labors...

The last are literally first in that they are paid first. And the first, who have labored longest, must also wait the longest to get theirs. But notice as well that the first who are now last do not receive nothing or less, they receive the same, as the laborers themselves say, "you have made

them equal to us...." So perhaps it should be said that the last shall be first, and the first shall be the same...

The scandal of this parable is that we are all equal recipients of God's gifts. The scandal of our faith is that we are often covetous and jealous when God's gifts of forgiveness and life are given to other in equal measure. And the scandal of our preaching, if based on this parable, ought to encompass both."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1046 **Karl Jacobson**
Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn.

"It just isn't fair that all are paid the same regardless of the number of hours worked!" This is not an uncommon expression of feelings or belief in our world or even in our selves. It is our nature to focus on what we will get. We are by nature competitive and comparing. We live with one eye on what others are getting. And when they exceed us, jealousy and envy set in. Jesus spoke this parable in the context of Peter's question, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" ...

But, the parable is ... a revelation of the wonderful grace of God. This is a grace that seeks and keeps on seeking. This is a pursuing grace

This is a "grace alone" grace. It is not grace plus Gifts are given not on the basis of what is earned or even on the basis of potential earnings...The saving gifts of the Savior are freely given and received by faith. Our human performance is excluded. In fact, it is our performance that stands in the way of God's grace given in Christ Jesus. They all received the same. There were no distinctions. This is what makes grace so offensive. Such a grace does not sit well with the self-righteous.

But, this is also what makes grace so precious and powerful... And this grace is not diminished because of the lateness of the hour, the greatness of their sin, or because of their lack of potential, but it delivers all of Christ. Such is the generous grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

<http://www.clba.org/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost/> Church of the Lutheran Brethren, Dr. Boe



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