

Saturday, 9/4 at 4:00 & Sunday, 9/5 at 9:00

15th Sunday after Pentecost / 14th Sunday after Trinity – 2021



Scripture References, NAS 1995

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We were dead in our sins and going to hell, but now – **because of our Great God** – *we are alive in Christ and going to heaven!* Notice the **examples of positive change** in these readings:

1. **OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 35:4-7a:** ***Good news for God’s people!*** ⁴ Say to those with anxious heart, “Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come *with vengeance [as a judge who imposes the just penalty (TLSB)];* The recompense [retaliation] of God will come, But He will save you.” ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶ Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah [dry and dusty area]. ⁷ The scorched land will become a pool And the thirsty ground springs of water. // Being saved through Jesus is radical – like:
 - a. Blindness to sight (*close your eyes for 5 minutes*)!
 - b. Deaf to hearing (*stop your ears for 5 minutes*)!
 - c. Lame to leaping (*if you are now struggling to walk, try to imagine the leaping you will do in heaven*)!

d. Mute to shouting (*think about Zechariah being mute for about a year – until God restored his speech; Luke 1:5-20!*)

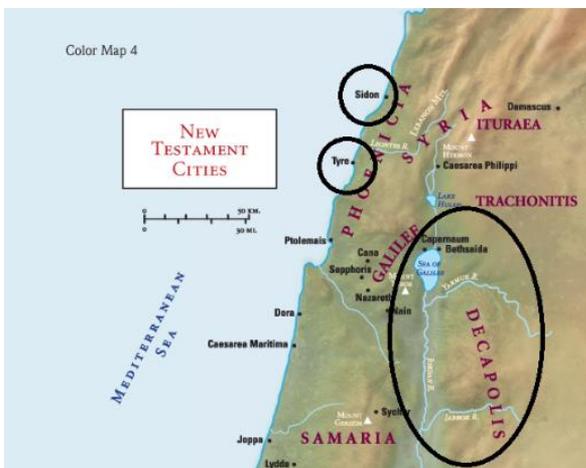
2. **PSALM – 146:** *The LORD who made heaven and earth is worthy of our trust!* Read Psalm 146; then: “Do not put your faith in human beings—in politicians, social elites, or individuals, **none** of whom can save and **all** of whom will die. Rather, put your trust in God” (TLSB). **Especially, let us trust IN Jesus FOR eternal life!** Then, *as Christians:* “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).
3. **EPISTLE – James 2:1-10, 14-18:** *Believers have a new attitude and works!* ¹ My brethren, do not hold [or live] your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of personal favoritism* [so that you judge others based on worldly standards]. ² For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, ³ and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?
- ⁵ Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? ⁷ Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called [by rejecting the poor man who was chosen in Christ]?
- ⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,”

you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality [*by loving some and disrespecting others*], you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all [*because “even one violation falls short of the righteousness God requires” (TLSB)*]. ...

¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith [*thus, **claims** to have faith*] but he has no works? Can that faith save him? [*“No!”*] ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? [*None!*]

¹⁷ Even so faith [*thus, the claim of having faith*], if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, “You have faith [*which is invisible*] and I have works [*which can be seen*]; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” // Works that are **seen** are the evidence of the faith that is **unseen**. We are saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone – *because it is active in doing good works!* Dr. Luther wrote that faith is “**a living, busy, active, mighty thing**” (LW, 35:370). A true claim? *It Shows!*

4. **HOLY GOSPEL –**
Mark 7:31-37:
Nothing is impossible for Jesus! ³¹ Again [Jesus] went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis [*mostly occupied by Gentiles*].



³² They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him.

³³ Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself [*since the man could not hear, notice the ways that Jesus communicated with the man before He healed him*], and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue *with the saliva*; ³⁴ and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, “Ephphatha!” that is, “Be opened!” ³⁵ And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he *began speaking plainly* [*a fulfillment of today’s Isaiah 35 prophecy*]. ³⁶ And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.

³⁷ They were utterly astonished, saying, “He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

// Jesus showed that He is the Promised Messiah. Since Jesus – *during His ministry* – did repeatedly what seemed to be impossible, let us be certain that our sins are forgiven *through our God-given faith in Jesus!*

Conclusion:

- **Truth** – God is aware of everything!
- **Relevance** – Since God has saved us, *He has also changed us in many positive ways!*
- **Inspiration** – Since we know Jesus, and many others need Jesus, *let us focus on sharing Jesus with others!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, since God has changed us in many positive ways, *help those ways to show in our lives!*

Website: www.blc7500.com (our short URL); **YouTube-watch:** Benefit from the Bible
Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma; **Podcast-listen:** Benefit from the Bible
Address: 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134; **Phone:** 440-845-2230