

14th Sunday after Pentecost, September 10, 2017

13th Sunday after Trinity, Proper 18(23)

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 7, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

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

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



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWp3SPFXkko>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 820 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 34

“My soul, now praise (bless) your Maker”

“**Poliander, Johann** was the pen-name of Johann Graumann who was b. July 5, 1487, at Neustadt in the Bavarian Palatinate. He studied at Leipzig (M.A. 1516, B.D. 1520), and was, in 1520, appointed rector of the St. Thomas School at Leipzig. He attended the Disputation in 1519 between Dr. Eck, Luther, and Oarlstadt, as the amanuensis of Eck; with the ultimate result that he espoused the cause of the Reformation and left Leipzig in 1522. In 1523 he became Evangelical preacher at Wurzburg, but left on the outbreak of the Peasants' War in 1525, and went to Nürnberg, where, about Lent, he was appointed preacher to the nunnery of St. Clara. He then, at the recommendation of Luther, received from the Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg an invitation to assist in furthering the Reformation in Prussia, and began his work as pastor of the Altstadt Church in Königsberg, in Oct., 1525. Here he laboured with much zeal and success, interesting himself specially in organising the evangelical schools of the province, and in combating the errors of the 355-59 : ii. 475; *Bode*, p. 78, &c). The only hymn of importance by him which has kept its place in Germany is **Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren**...It is translated as: **My soul, now praise thy Maker!** A good and full translation by Miss Winkworth...”-- John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* https://hymnary.org/person/Poliander_Johann

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dexUSRk0_uE “Subscribe today to discover the lost art of organ improvisation in the Lutheran tradition and the magnificent hymnody of the Lutheran church!” [Jeff Windoloski](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuxQhycdEko> “Buxtehude - Nun lob mein Seel' den Herren BuxWV 214 215 213 - Ton Koopman” (Read the comment by [Christopher Greenleaf](#))

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.](#)

Ezekiel 33:7-9; RCL, Exodus 12:1-14 or Ezekiel 33:7-11 (Next Week: Genesis 50:15-21; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Exodus 14:19-31 or Genesis 50:15-21)

:
 “...The meaning of this passage isn't too difficult to discern, but the oral interpretation of it to an unprepared congregation will be challenging. It's hard to proclaim because it's one person talking to a second about the second's relationship to a third person and to a group...

When you proclaim this, imagine you are God talking to the prophet. You love him but you have to lay a heavy burden on his shoulders because you love the people and you're very worried about them. It should sound quite solemn.

Secondly, make every effort to speak slowly and distinctly. While the words are simple, the sentences are complex. Use contrasting tones of voice to distinguish "you" from "him" and "he." If you read this too fast or if you sound too flat, it will be lost on your hearers. Think of how carefully Ezekiel would have spoken his warnings to the wicked, knowing what was at stake!...”

http://www.lectorprep.org/ordtime_23_yrA.html “Most people in a Sunday assembly hear the word of God only in that formal setting. Their only regular exposure to Scripture is from the lips of the lector and the preacher there. That lays a heavy responsibility on the lector; these notes aim to help you fulfill that

responsibility. And if the Notes help a lector sound prepared, earnest and competent, they'll help the congregation decide to take the Scripture's lessons more seriously."...“Lector's Notes try to serve the Church by helping lectors prepare to proclaim the Scriptures in our Sunday assemblies. For each day's first and second readings (and occasionally for the gospel), the Notes give the historical and theological background, plus suggestions on oral interpretation.” www.lectorprep.org

⁷ “So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

Why Will You Die, Israel?

¹⁰ “And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ ¹¹ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

“...Ezekiel gives us another slant on the difficulties inherent in being one of God’s prophets. (We have seen aspects of this already in Elijah and Jeremiah.) One of the functions of a prophet is to be a sentinel, a watchman, a lookout who sees the danger coming and tries to rouse people out of their doldrums before it is too late. As we saw with Jeremiah, reluctant listeners will not take kindly to the bad news and may, in fact, blame the messenger and make his life miserable (and even kill him if they get the chance). Since this is true, it would not be unusual for the prophet to draw back from the harsh message in order to avoid this difficult confrontation...

. Two further points to be made:

1. These pointed words to the sentinel make clear that God takes no pleasure in bringing punishment. God wants people to live and not die. God wants people to make the choices that will enhance their life and not lead to terrible consequences for themselves or others. So God depends on sentinels who will do their job...

2. So who is God calling to be sentinels in our day? Is this the task of the preacher? Can the one who is hired by a community of people to preach good news, make them feel good, help them through their trials and life transitions, also be a sentinel who warns them when it is apparent that continuation of destructive behavior will lead to great unpleasantness? What is tough love? Who carries on the prophetic functions of the church? Is this properly a lay rather than priestly function? The Ezekiel text should raise for all of us the question whether or not we are called to such a task. If we are so called and do not act, then responsibility for the fate of those who never had a chance to hear the warning falls on us...”

http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/16-3_Forgiveness/16-3_Simundson.pdf

Daniel J. Simundson Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

Psalm 32:1-7; RCL, Psalm 149 or Psalm 119:33-40 (Psalm 103:1-12; RCL, Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21 or Psalm 103:1-7), 8-13)

“Who knew? The ancient psalmist was a clinical therapist, saying in effect, “Don’t hold in your pain, or it will eat you alive!”

The author of Psalm 32 had discovered this modern truth long ago and acknowledged it to those around him: “While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long” (verse 3). His is a kind of teaching testimony, contrasting this deadly silence with the life-giving release of giving voice to honest confession. Note the deliberate move from “I kept silence...” (verse 3) to “I said...” (verse 5).

But what was the poet’s silence about? Luther, perhaps not surprisingly, saw it as pride...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1824 [Fred Gaiser](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn

Blessed Are the Forgiven

A Maskil^a of David.

32 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up^b as by the heat of summer. **Selah**

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. **Selah**

⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.

⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. **Selah**

- a. [Psalm 32:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 32:4](#) Hebrew *my vitality was changed*

“...The church has ranked this as one of the *Penitential Psalms* (along with 6, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143), thus suggesting that it should be used in connection with being sorry for sins. The lectionary has understood

the psalm this way, linking it with the story of the repentant prodigal (Luke 15:11b-32, 4 Lent C) or the forgiven woman (Luke 7:36-8:3) or David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:26-12:10, both for 3 Pentecost C). There is however a certain tension between the use of the psalm at a time of repentance and the rejoicing, happy theme that occurs at the beginning and the end. The structure or story that runs through the psalm explains that tension:

1-2 Four pictures of happiness

3-5 Confession is good for the soul--and body

6-11 Instruction on how to live a guilt-free, joy-filled life..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=736 **James Limburg**

Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.



<http://steadfastlutherans.org/2014/09/love-is-the-fulfilling-of-the-law-sermon-on-romans-131-10-by-pr-charles-henrickson/>

Romans 13:1-10; RCL, Romans 13:8-14 (Romans 14:1-12;RCL, the same reading)
The readings from Romans will continue through September 17.

"It's difficult for us to imagine now, but the world at the time of the Reformation was much different. The papacy wielded great power in the secular world and other earthly powers ruled matters of the Church. Martin Luther brought back the idea that, although God is the ruler of the whole world, he rules the worldly or left-hand kingdom through his Law and secular government, and the spiritual or right-hand kingdom through the power of his grace. James Madison, the principal author of the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, explicitly credited Luther as the one who "led the way" in providing the proper distinction between church and state..." <https://vimeo.com/227299485> " Recorded on July 23, 2017 at the 10:35 a.m. worship service from CLC Carmel's Worship Center. "Reformation Truths: Double Citizens" (Romans 13:1-10). Pastor Luther Brunette. Sermon Series: "Reformation Truths."

"Do you want to know what you should be doing this week? I can tell you with sure confidence what God's will is for you this week. It's pretty simple, actually. I can sum it up in one word: Love. That's right. Love. In terms of how you deal with the people you encounter this week, that's about the size of it: Love them. How can I be so sure of this? Because God's Word tells me this is so, that this is God's will for each one of us. It's no mystery. It's quite clear..."

<http://steadfastlutherans.org/2014/09/love-is-the-fulfilling-of-the-law-sermon-on-romans-131-10-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Rev. Charles Henrickson currently serves at St Matthew Lutheran Church in Bonne Terre, Missouri

Submission to the Authorities

13 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Fulfilling the Law Through Love

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

"In the first part of Romans 13, Paul addresses what those in the Christian community owe the civil authorities.

He writes, "Pay to all what is due them -- taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due" (Romans 13:7, NET).

Many readers of Paul's letters worry that the first half of this chapter can be easily appropriated by corrupt governments or misguided clergy to silence Christians who might otherwise courageously, faithfully resist systemic evil. In fact, the text has been used in this way. The ease with which Romans 13:1-7 is misunderstood may explain its absence from the Revised Common Lectionary.

From Obligation to Love

However, Paul is not counseling the Roman Christians to passivity vis-à-vis the Empire. In the second half of the chapter, Paul moves from the language of tax returns to the language

of love. "Owe no one anything, except to love one another" (13:8). With the mention of love, the scope of the imperative has changed. No longer is Paul talking about paying bills, but rather about seeking the neighbor's highest good.

This transition -- the move from fulfilling one's obligations to living in love -- is the same one Jesus made in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, "You have heard it said..., but I say to you" (cf. Matthew 5:21-48). "You have heard it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." (Matthew 5:43-44, NRSV).

The language of the balance sheet does not adequately describe the Christian life. Why? Because we are children of God, and God sends rain on the just and the unjust (cf. Matthew 5:45) and otherwise gives to the undeserving..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1061 [Mary Hinkle Shore](#) Pastor Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Brevard, N.C



“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 18th Chapter”

“Glory to You, O Lord”

Matthew 18:1-20; RCL, Matthew 18:15-20 (Matthew 18:21-35; RCL, the same reading)

Is this reading to be handled as a single insight into the kingdom or is one section of it going to be the subject of a sermon? Each section can be seen as a distinct topic: the greatest in the kingdom, when temptations come, the lost sheep, what is bound on earth is bound in heaven. Each would be worthy of homiletical exploration. But considering the flow of Matthew's chapters (chapter 14 asks who Jesus is and describes how Peter, after seeing him walk on the water, admits that he is the Son of God, chapter 15 tells of the great faith of the Canaanite woman, chapter 16 has Peter's confession, "You are the Christ," and chapter 17 tells of Jesus's transfiguration), the preacher can see that in chapter 18, Jesus's teaching is overturning misunderstandings about the kingdom. The whole chapter will be read over two Sundays.

<https://concordiatheology.org/2011/07/proper-18-%E2%80%A2-matthew-181-20-%E2%80%A2-september-4-2011/>

“Do you ever have one of those weeks where you just break down and admit that you don't much like the appointed gospel reading? Okay, sure you do, we all do. And, if you're like me, you then feel guilty. And then, if you're really like me, you decide you're gonna crack this nut and find something good to say from this darned passage if it kills you. (Okay, most weeks I just turn to the epistle or OT reading, but not always!)

For me, this is one of those weeks. I'm not exactly sure what bugs me so much about this passage from Matthew. Maybe it's that I've known way too many Christians who are more than eager to "go and point out the fault" of someone who has sinned. Or maybe it's the reference to treating the one entrenched in sin as "a Gentile and a tax collector" -- nice. Or maybe this all goes back to my days in InterVarsity when this passage was regularly cited first as a way to handle disputes and then as a rationale of why a "backsliding" member of the fellowship should now be shunned. Or maybe it's just the huuuuge promise tacked on near the end about asking and receiving that seems so, I don't know, dangerously optimistic. No matter how you slice it, I just can't seem to find a reason to like this passage. Which is of course why I can't seem to let it go..."

<http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1601> **David Lose** Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn. *David J. Lose was called as senior pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis in 2017. From July 2014 to June 2017, he served as president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.*

Who Is the Greatest?

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them³ and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me,⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,^[a] it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Temptations to Sin

⁷ “Woe to the world for temptations to sin!^[b] For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!⁸ And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell^[c] of fire.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹⁰ “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.^[d]¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one

that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of my^[e] Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

If Your Brother Sins Against You

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed^[f] in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

- a. [Matthew 18:6](#) Greek *causes... to stumble*; also verses [8](#), [9](#)
- b. [Matthew 18:7](#) Greek *stumbling blocks*
- c. [Matthew 18:9](#) Greek *Gehenna*
- d. [Matthew 18:10](#) Some manuscripts add verse [11](#): *For the Son of Man came to save the lost*
- e. [Matthew 18:14](#) Some manuscripts *your*
- f. [Matthew 18:18](#) Or *shall have been bound... shall have been loosed*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

The Gospel that we just read from Matthew 18 is very rich in a wide variety of topics: the serious nature of sin, the generosity of God's forgiveness, the love God has for His little ones, and the serious consequences of leading His little ones astray. Of all these topics, the one topic that seems to underlie most of the Lord's teaching in Matthew 18 is the topic of Christ's little ones.

Matthew 18 begins with one of those teachable moments in which the disciples plant their feet firmly in their mouths and ask Jesus a question...

As we proceed through the rest of Matthew 18, Jesus expands on His teaching about children. "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." That is pretty serious...

Jesus also said, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Even as Jesus tells the story of searching for the one lost sheep out of one hundred, He tells us, "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish..."

When Jesus talks of the little ones, He is of course, talking about those who are biologically young. Even so, we can also apply what Jesus says to those who are young in the faith - that is new believers no matter what their age..." <http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=1051>
James T. Batchelor Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hoopston, IL

"...Matthew 18:15-20 begins with an all too likely hypothetical situation: "If your brother sins against you....," which is followed by a second hypothetical, "If your brother refuses to listen..." which bears the not-purely-hypothetical truth to all of us who have brothers. If you have a brother (or sister) he (or she) will sin against you sooner or later; this is the nature of brothers (and/or sisters)... At stake in this issue of sin, confrontation, repentance and forgiveness is the presence of God and what it means for us.

The flow of the passage is important to make note of, as there is movement from the individual to the communal. Where there is sin, Jesus says, confront it directly, one-to-one, face-to-face. If this does not solve the problem, include someone else in the conversation, and if all else fails take it to the community as a whole. From individual confrontation to communal attention, the movement of the passage is a progression that follows the development of the hypothetical conflict from its origins in individual matters to its conclusion at the community level. At each point along the way sin has implications for everyone involved...

Jesus says, essentially, that being a member of the church means you have a responsibility. If your sheep gets lost you don't look for an hour and call it quits. You get out there and find that sheep. If your brother sins against you seventy-seven times (another hypothetical certainty), that's how many times you forgive him. And of course, we know from the Gospel of Matthew how Jesus treated the Gentiles and tax collectors.

Notice that Jesus follows this with talk about the power of agreement, saying that anything that is agreed upon by two on earth will be done for them by the Father in heaven. This is a promise. But notice as well that this is not where Jesus ends. Jesus says last, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." There is no question of agreement at this point. Jesus is present, really present, where two or three are gathered in the Divine Name, not just where two or three agree in Jesus' name, but where two or three are gathered; presumably this includes the two who cannot listen to each other about a matter of sin, and how to handle it. Even there, perhaps especially there, Christ Jesus is present..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1039 **Karl Jacobson**
Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn.

An extensive study of Matthew 18 and similar Scriptural references to this topic. [Public Rebuke Public Sin - The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod](#)

<https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=405> "catechism of Martin Luther in his explanation of the Eighth Commandment: ...response to how Matthew 18 and the Eighth Commandment relate to public error "



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