

13th Sunday after Pentecost August 19, 2018

12th Sunday after the Trinity Proper 15 (20)

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

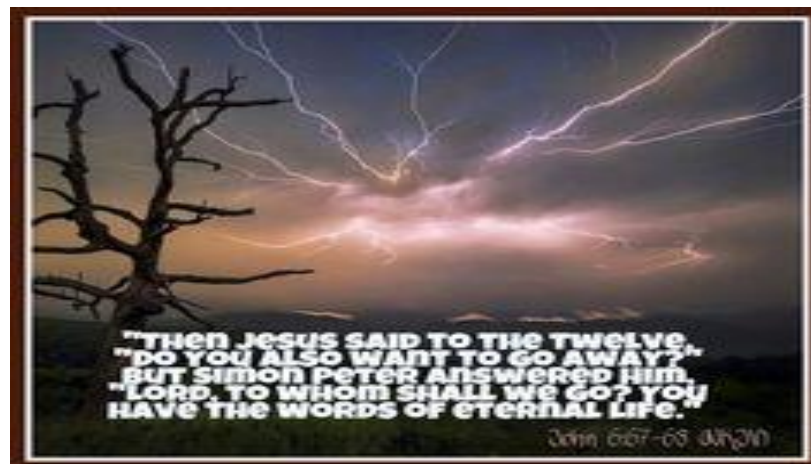
*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
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Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104



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Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 696 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 395

“O God, my faithful God”

Remember him? Much of (author) Heermann's manhood was spent amid the distressing scenes of the Thirty Years' War; and by his own ill health and his domestic trials he was trained to write his beautiful hymns of "Cross and Consolation." Between 1629 and 1634, Koben was plundered four times by the Lichtenstein dragoons and the rough hordes under Wallenstein sent into Silesia by the King of Austria in order to bring about the Counter-Reformation and restore the Roman Catholic faith and practice; while in 1616 the town was devastated by fire, and in 1631 by pestilence. In these troublous years Heermann several times lost all his moveables; once he had to keep away from Koben for seventeen weeks; twice he was nearly sabred; and once, while crossing the Oder in a frail boat loaded almost to sinking, he heard the bullets of the pursuing soldiers whistle just over his head. He bore all with courage and patience, and he and his were wonderfully preserved from death and dishonour. He was thus well grounded in the school of affliction, and in his *House and Heart Music* some of his finest hymns are in the section entitled "Songs of Tears. .."

- https://hymnary.org/person/Heermann_J
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us3EOACBCa0> "Organist is Mark Peters. The prelude for hymn 696 in Lutheran Service Book is from Four Preludes for Trust by Bernard Sanders."
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5EtrNhNtF4> One in Christ: Hymns of the Month, Gr. 7 - O God, My Faithful God · Concordia Publishing House
- <https://vimeo.com/12709454> "Stanza 5 is sung by the congregation a cappella according to the hymnal harmonization. Stanza 6 is sung by Bethany Lutheran-Naperville's youth ensemble, "DavidSong," in an arrangement of the chorale from Bach's Cantata #24 by Cantor Phillip Magness."

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.](#)

Proverbs 9:1-10 or Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Proverbs 9:1-6 or I Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14 (Next week: Isaiah 29:11-19;; RCL, Joshua:24:1-2a, 14-18 or I Kings 8:1, 6, 10-11), 22-30, 41-43)

Three years ago I used the lectionary reading from Joshua. RCL will use Proverbs this week, and the Joshua reading next week.

"Proverbs 9:1-6 is an invitation to wisdom.

"The invitation is given through a personification of wisdom as a woman who has built a house, prepared a life-giving meal, and invited all to partake. It is a simple passage at first glance, yet it contains riches in the description and in its connections to other places in the biblical witness..." (continued after the reading)

The Way of Wisdom

- 9 Wisdom has built her house;
she has hewn her seven pillars.
- ² She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.
- ³ She has sent out her young women to call
from the highest places in the town,
- ⁴ “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”
To him who lacks sense she says,
- ⁵ “Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- ⁶ Leave your simple ways, ^[a] and live,
and walk in the way of insight.”
- ⁷ Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse,
and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury.
- ⁸ Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
- ⁹ Give instruction ^[b] to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;
teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.
- ¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

- a. [Proverbs 9:6](#) Or *Leave the company of the simple*
- b. [Proverbs 9:9](#) Hebrew lacks *instruction*

“...Woman wisdom

Wisdom is first personified as a woman in Proverbs in 1:20-33; the personification is picked up again in 3:13-18 and 4:1-13. All of Proverbs 8, the chapter immediately preceding today’s passage, consists of the longest and most developed of the personifications. The basis for the particular personification of wisdom as a woman lies in the feminine gender of the Hebrew word for wisdom, *hokmah*. Interpreters have debated how the personification is to be interpreted, especially as wisdom is stated to be the first creation of God (8:22) and to be involved in the creation process itself (3:19). Is wisdom meant to be a specific aspect of God or even a separate being from God? Or should all such language be taken as mere metaphor? In today’s passage, however, such questions are not of direct relevance, as wisdom, while given a divine quality, refers to a way of living the human life.

The ways of wisdom and folly

The personification of wisdom in today’s passage is paired with a personification of foolishness in Proverbs 9:13-18, also as a woman. The similar structures of the two passages indicate that they are to be read together and in contrast. Both invite the “simple” into their houses for a meal, using the same invitation (vv. 4, 16). But while wisdom has gone so far as to build her own house, prepare her own meal, and to make efforts to invite people in, the foolish

woman merely sits at the door of her house, calling to whoever happens to pass by (vv. 14-15), and her meals are stolen (v. 17). Moreover, while wisdom's meal leads to life (v. 6), foolishness kills her guests (v. 18)...

Wisdom and Christian faith

A consideration of our passage in light of the broader witness of scripture enriches the passage yet further. There are two main ways the language of wisdom from Proverbs is found in the New Testament. First is the continuation of the wisdom tradition and teaching about wisdom, primarily in some of Jesus' teaching (most notably the Sermon on the Mount) and in the book of James...

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The *second* way we find wisdom in the New Testament is in the understanding of Christ. The connection between wisdom and creation in Proverbs is a significant part of the foundation for our understanding of Christ's pre-existence and involvement in creation as it appears in the New Testament, seen especially in John 1:1-5, Colossians 1:15-20, and Hebrews 1:1-4... The invitation to eat wisdom's feast in her house, therefore, can well be understood as an aspect of Jesus' invitation to follow him and to feast in the kingdom of God..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2601 **Scott Shauf**
Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs,
North Carolina

The Covenant Renewed at Shechem

24 Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

² Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says:...

¹⁴ "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD..."

¹⁶ Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!... We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

Psalm 34:12-22; RCL, Psalms 34:9-14 or Psalm 111 (Psalm 14; RCL, Psalm 34:15-22 or Psalm 84)

This is a continuation of last weeks Psalm which ended at verse 8.

“David was trying desperately to escape from Saul’s murderous hunt for his life. Thinking that Saul would never look for him in the enemy’s camp, David fled to the city of Gath, one of the five main Philistine strongholds. But Gath was the hometown of Goliath, the giant of a man David had killed a couple of years earlier. David was recognized and taken to the king, the Abimelech of Gath, whose name was Achish. David couldn’t run away. He certainly couldn’t fight his way out. So he pretended to be mentally disturbed. He drooled on himself. He scratched at the doorposts. Achish said, “I’ve got enough crazy people in my government. I don’t need one more!” – and he threw David out. (You can read the story for yourself in 1 Samuel 21:10-15.) David ran to a cave in the wilderness and composed this song for God’s mighty deliverance...” (continued after the reading)

⁸ *Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!*

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

⁹ *Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no lack!*

¹⁰ *The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

¹¹ *Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

¹² *What man is there who desires life
and loves many days, that he may see good?*

¹³ *Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.*

¹⁴ *Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.*

¹⁵ *The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry.*

¹⁶ *The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

¹⁷ *When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.*

¹⁸ *The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.*

¹⁹ *Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

²⁰ *He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.*

²¹ *Affliction will slay the wicked,*

and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

- ²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

“...In the middle of Psalm 34, David’s emphasis changed. He turned from praising God to teaching those around him. “Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (v. 11 NKJV), Verses 11-12 read like the book of Proverbs – short, wise saying, designed to help us live honorably before the Lord. David didn’t want his experience wasted or forgotten. When we find ourselves in various troubles, we have a psalm to sing. The focus, as always, is the Lord – the Lord delivers, the Lord redeems, the Lord hears, the Lord saves...”

- <https://www.amazon.com/Book-Psalms-Smart-Guide-Bible/dp/1418510106> The Book of Psalms, the Smart Guide to the Bible series. Douglas Connelly and Larry Richards; pages 77-79

Ephesians 5:6-21; RCL, Ephesians 5:15-20 (*Ephesians 5:22-33; RCL, Ephesians 6:10-20*)

The readings from Ephesians that will continue through September 2.

Paul Kreztman in his commentary divides this reading into 2 sections: “...Verses 6-14, The children of light avoid the works of darkness” and “Verses 15-21, Things demanded by the correctness of the Christian walk...”

“...The apostle concludes this section(vs 6-14) with a reference to a well-known verse: Therefore it is said, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee. This quotation is not taken from Scriptures, but may have been a verse adapted from the synagogue or Christian liturgy of Paul's days, or Paul applied a common greeting of the Jewish New Year to the situation. At God's call the Christian should open his eyes and, in turn, call out to his unbelieving, godless neighbor: With your sins you are lying in spiritual sleep, death, and destruction. Therefore arise from sleep, arise from the dead; repent, be converted! If this call works the knowledge of sin, then Christ will give the knowledge of salvation. Christ is here pictured as a beautiful, shining, flashing light. The sinner, having arisen from the sleep of sin and death, is surrounded and flooded with Christ, the Sun of Salvation, and thus becomes blessed and happy in this illumination. The quotation which Paul here makes use of, therefore, comes in very relevantly to show both the need for the reproof and the good effects of such a reproof by the grace of God...” (additional commentary about verse 14 is after the reading)

- <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/kpc/ephesians-5.html>

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed

by the light, it becomes visible,¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.” Isa. 60:1-2*

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

* In Ephesians we find that light (religious truth) is described as very powerful as it is able to make dead things living just by shining on them.

But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5:13-14, ESV)

However, this is no direct quote of any biblical passage, so I imagine Paul simply puts it in his own words to apply it to the context. But what is 'it'; what scripture is he paraphrasing here which fully suits the context? Why is it an appropriate verse to quote in this context?

When one sleeps, it actually appears like the person is a corpse. (When I sleep, I snore, but that is different.) When my children were very, very young and sleeping in the crib, I would actually nudge them to ensure they were not dead, because in sleep the resemblance is almost exactly akin to death (except for those who snore like me).

When the Bible talks about those who sleep (**and who are still physically alive**), the connotation is that their righteousness, which is received through faith, is not visibly evident, and therefore the person appears to be no different than someone who is unrighteous. That is, the believer and unbeliever are sometimes indistinguishable, because the believer is living a lifestyle that is no different than an unbeliever.

Thus the believer is “sleeping.” While they have righteousness, and therefore are “alive” to God, they are indistinguishable from someone who is a corpse (that is, someone who is an unbeliever, and therefore unrighteous). The living believer actually looks dead from a spiritual perspective, but since they are actually alive to God, they are called “sleeping” Christians. We have to remember that no one is physically unconscious (that is, no one is literally sleeping in this imagery). Thus the “sleeping” Christian is someone who **consciously** lives in darkness, where the light does not shine. Their Christian testimony therefore is compromised.

What I have described in the previous four paragraphs was the problem with the Church in Sardis, whose Christians were “sleeping” (the walking dead). Their garments were soiled (Revelation 3:1-6), that is, their Christian testimony was compromised with the world, because they were sleep-walking in the darkness. They were NOT physically unconscious in any sense of

literal sleeping, but they were indistinguishable from the unbeliever, who is dead (spiritual corpse).

Now the passage is Ephesians 5:14 is cut from the same cloth (same imagery, same concept, same problem, same idea). From what passage is Paul quoting in the Hebrew Bible? If we follow the logic that is described directly above, then the passage in question is Isaiah 60:1-2.

This passage in Isaiah 60:1-2 is **NOT** talking about physical unconsciousness, but in the original Hebrew it LITERALLY starts and says “Rise and Shine!” from the “darkness” from among the nations (unbelievers) so that the glory of the Lord can shine upon you.

The Apostle Paul therefore compressed Isaiah 60:1-2 into one verse in Ephesians 5:14, which (again) is **NOT** about PHYSICAL unconsciousness!!

In the NABRE (New American Bible Revised Edition), we read this explanation: An early Christian hymn, possibly from a baptismal liturgy. For the content compare Eph 2:5–6; 3:9 and Is 60:1. This makes much sense since it is not a direct quotation from Scripture. – [Dcn. AndyMar 17 '17 at 0:53](#)

➤ <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/2850/what-scripture-is-paul-referring-to-in-ephesians-514>

The Lutheran Study Bible (page 2024) has a similar comment “...perhaps a baptismal hymn...Death, even sinners spiritual death, is like sleep to God (cf Mk 5:39-42; Jn 11:11; 1 Th 4:14), Through Baptism, Christ resurrected us (Eph 2:1-6; Rm 6:4)”

John 6:51-69; RCL, John 6:51-58 (Mark 7:1-13; RCL, John 6:56-69)

“Today's Gospel brings us to the end of John 6, the Bread of Life chapter. In this chapter, Jesus has been teaching us that He is the Bread of Life from heaven. As we come to the end of this chapter, we see that our attitude toward Jesus as the Bread of Life depends entirely on who we think He is. Is He God in the Flesh come to offer Himself up for our sins or is He just this guy who happened to have a teaching ministry in Galilee? Our thinking on this one question determines how we think about His teaching in this chapter. If Jesus, the Bread of Life, is God, then this chapter is a beautiful word picture of His plan to save mankind from sin. If Jesus is merely a man, then this chapter is just plain gross and comes very close to promoting cannibalism. It all depends on who you think Jesus is.

Since today's Gospel is still part of the sermon that Jesus began in the Gospel from two weeks ago, some of what He says in today's Gospel depends on remembering what He said earlier. Context is always important when reading any book, especially the Bible. One verse from last week's Gospel is especially important when we want to understand what Jesus means when He speaks of eating and drinking. [John 6:35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. This verse is important because it helps us understand that when Jesus is talking about eating and drinking in this sermon, He is talking about coming to Him and believing in Him.

Believing in Jesus means believing that He saves from sin and gives eternal life. It means believing that He is not only the man who preached in the synagogue in Capernaum, but that He

is also God and Savior. That is exactly what Jesus preached to His listeners in the synagogue in Capernaum. Today's Gospel continues to teach that Jesus gives His flesh for the life of the world as we begin reading with the very words that ended last week's Gospel: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."..."

➤ <http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=1390> James T. Batchelor Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hoopston, IL.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 6th Chapter

⁵¹ *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread^[a] the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."* ⁵⁹ Jesus^[b] said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

The Words of Eternal Life

⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" ⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, *"Do you take offense at this? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe."* (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, *"This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."*

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, *"Do you want to go away as well?"* ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

- a. [John 6:58](#) Greek lacks *the bread*
- b. [John 6:59](#) Greek *He*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord”

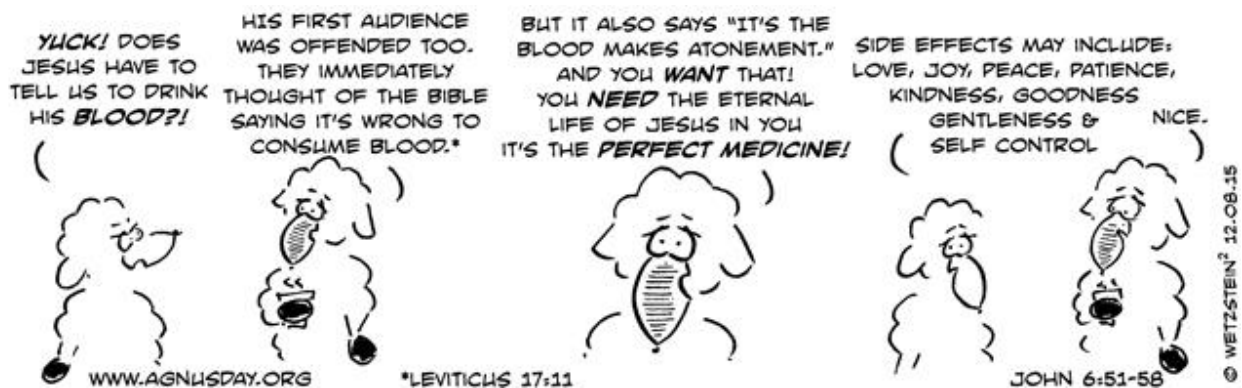
“Praise to You, O Christ”

“...And so I’d wager that the picture St. John draws for us in today’s reading may not a pretty one, but it is a rather realistic one. It is, in other words, a fairly accurate portrait of disbelief, with Jesus surrounded by folks who wanted to believe, who used to believe, who have been trying to believe, but have gone through the motions too long and have finally given up. At the same time, though, St. John’s picture is also one of belief, of courage, and of faith. For as he writes, after many disciples drew back and no longer followed him, “Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Will you also go away?’ [And] Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”

Where, I have often wondered, do Peter and the other twelve get their faith. Or to put it another way, what makes them different from all those who gave up on Jesus and went away? Now, in asking this question we must, again, be careful. Because as easy as it was to write off those other disciples as foolish or faithless unbelievers, it is even easier to imagine Peter and the rest as flawless faith giants. And this, as each of the four evangelists point out, was simply not the case. These disciples were also plagued by doubt and fear, they suffered at times from an over abundance of pride and a lack of courage, and they, too, eventually deserted Jesus, and at the very time he needed them the most. So if they aren’t smarter, or more faithful, or more courageous, or, in short, any better than the rest of Jesus’ disciples – then or now – then what it is that sets them apart.

One thing. Listen, again, to Peter as he says the words we say before the reading of the Gospel: “Lord,” he replies to Jesus’ question, “to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” Peter, you see, knew where to look. That’s it. That’s what makes him and the others different – it’s not their brains or the ability or their status or even their faith: **they simply know where to look...**”

- <http://www.davidlose.net/2015/08/pentecost-13-b/> David Lose, senior pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minn.



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