5th Sunday after Pentecost July 5, 2020

4th Sunday after Trinity Proper 9 (14) Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.

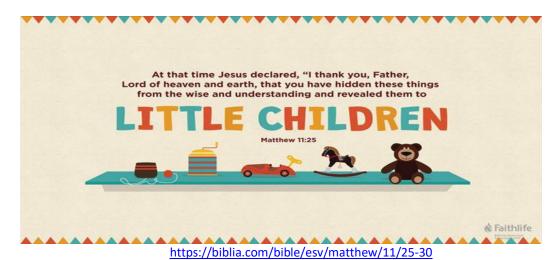
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

Available on line at:

- ★ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
- → Through <u>www.Facebook.com</u> at "Living the Lutheran Lectionary", "Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma", or "Harold Weseloh"
- ★ All links in this on-line copy are active and can be reached using Ctrl+Click

Gather and be blessed:

- **→ Thursdays at 10 AM (5pm Kenya/Uganda):** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through https://zoom.us/j/815200301
- ★ Wednesdays at 7 PM in a house church setting: For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- → Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (8pm Kenya time) via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology Nyamira, Kenya (Suspended due to Covid 19 restrictions in Kenya)
- → On Facebook through Messenger in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 699 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 277 "I heard the voice of Jesus say"

"The hymn's writer, Rev. Horatius Bonar (1809–1889), served as a Presbyterian pastor in Kelso, Scotland. He wrote this hymn for children in 1846, while serving his congregation. During this time, Bonar experienced a period of unrest within the church. The unrest within the established church led him and others to form the Free Church of Scotland. A prolific hymn writer, Bonar later in life became a leader of this denomination he helped form. Throughout church changes in Scotland, he kept focused on the hope of eternal life with Jesus, a hope that Rev. Bonar aids us in confessing today.

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" is selected as today's Hymn of the Day because of its connection (especially in st. 1) with Matt. 11:28–30. Bonar takes Jesus' invitation to come to Him for rest and expounds on it...

Notice that Bonar begins each stanza with Jesus' words of invitational promise. The hymn's third line, in each stanza, changes the speaker from Jesus to "I." The third and fourth lines give the response to Jesus' invitation...

Stanza 2 changes the invitation from "rest" to "drink."...

Stanza 3 again changes the invitation from "drink" to "look." Using one of Jesus' "I am" statements, Bonar incorporates John 8:12 in stanza 3. Read John 8:12. Study by Scott R. Schilbe"

- https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AmFu58Tk2Y AdventNatt Video accompaniment to Kingsfold melody.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHylH7m8TeE Piano by Andrew Remillard. TLH, 277 – Vox dilecti melody
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrfWTqRXiC8 Organ by Minister of Music Mark Johanson, LSB 699 Melody, Sarah-Elizabeth by Amanda Husberg https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amanda Husberg

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® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

O. T. - "Behold, your king is coming to you"

Psalm – "The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger..."

Epistle – "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil..."

Gospel – "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Zechariah 9:9-12; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 or Zechariah 9:9-12 (Next week: Isaiah 55:10-13; RCL, Genesis 25:19-34 or Isaiah 55:10-13)

"For me at least, this is one of those biblical texts that cannot be read without hearing music. In the midst of puzzling over the visions and sayings of Zechariah, it comes as a refreshing surprise to find the words of our lectionary text for today.

With Zechariah 9:9, I hear a soprano somewhere singing that melody, "Rejoice, rejoice, rejoi-oi-oi-oi-oice greatly!" from Handel's Messiah. The great composer's instincts were correct. This is one of those Old Testament texts properly classified as "messianic.""

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=992
 James Limburg Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHQpeGzio4k "Trinidadian soprano Jeanine De Bique joins Chineke! to perform 'Rejoice greatly' from Messiah by Handel."

Judgment on Israel's Enemies Verses 1-8

The oracle of the word of the LORD...

The Coming King of Zion Verses 9-13

I have made Ephraim its arrow.

and wield you like a warrior's sword.

I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece,

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey. on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River^[a] to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double. ¹³ For I have bent Judah as my bow;

The LORD Will Save His People Verses 14-17

16 On that day the LORD their God will save them...

a. Zechariah 9:10 That is, the Euphrates

"The Bible is replete with images of hope.

The image of a king riding on a donkey, a commander of peace, prisoners set free and restoration surely is one of its most poignant images. Times were unimaginably difficult. Cyrus's decree was the backdrop for what was, in effect, a second exodus, a new beginning, for the beleaguered Israelite community...

Perhaps people did not understand that there is a connection between the quality of life in a community and its care for sacred places and spaces. Not just symbolic, the practical side of everyday life, how people made decisions, how they interacted with one another, how they organized their life together was all affected by their respect and care for the temple.

Enter Zechariah. He understood the connection. He knew the difference it would make and could envision the work completed. He would not let Israel stay mired in the doldrums. His words encouraged the community to finish the work, to begin again. He extorted people to put away their sins, to rebuild their lives and their temple.

Israel's kings were to be guided by God, to live moral lives and govern ethically. Although a few had God's approval, most did not. Most lived loosely and contributed to Israel's decline. Perhaps he recalled that having a king was a concession that God made to Israel after warning them not to have one since kings would likely abuse their power and misuse the trust that had been given to them. Even the beloved David had done just that. As successful as he was, his relationship with Bathsheba was the beginning of troubles for both his family and his kingdom.

Zechariah envisioned a leader, a Messiah, who would live without the excesses of previous kings. One who would live righteously and lead justly. What better way to express his vision than to write of a king "triumphant and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). People would understand that unlike other leaders who rode horses, symbols of victory in war, Israel's leader would instead ride a donkey. He would lead by persuasion, not by coercion, physical or military force of any kind. This leader would rule not just Israel, but all nations.

Jesus knew this passage and intentionally fulfilled it by riding on a donkey on Holy Sunday at the beginning of Holy Week..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3339
Alphonetta Wines Senior Pastor, Union Memorial United Methodist Church, Coolidge, Texas

Psalm 145:1-14; RCL, Psalm 45:10-17 /Song of Solomon 2:8-13 or Psalm 145:8-14 (*Psalm 65: (1-8) 9-13; RCL, Psalm 119:105-112 or Psalm 65: (1-8) 9-13*)

"In Psalm 145 the writer breathes an air that is dense like fog and bright as a welder's torch. The poetry is thick with the unwritten experiences of the writer. It is the utterances of one who has experienced difficult life situations that reflect more keenly on the activity of God in the writer's life. It is the one who has had close brushes with the threat of death who can witness to something greater than one's own life or experiences of life. Those who are well acquainted with the trials of living know something that those who have not experienced them cannot quite comprehend or understand...

The Psalm functions in part like a dance of poetry in motion. The theological ruminations of the writer swirl, leap, tap, and bend like trees in the wind. The movements at times are like a blurry image that sweeps past too quickly for one to make out the details. It is like an Indianapolis 500 racecar that flies past one's viewing location at over 200 miles per hour. You know the car is there, but the details are difficult to discern. What is the measure of God's greatness? No one can discern it. Yet something can be said about it since there are traces of it in history, creation, and human experience..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3416
Paul O. Myhre Associate Director of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology, Wabash Center, Crawfordsville, Indiana

Great Is the LORD A Song of Praise. Of David.

- 145 I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.
- ² Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.
- ³ Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.
- ⁴ One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.
- ⁵ On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- ⁶ They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.
- ⁷ They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- ⁸ The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

- ¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!
- ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,
- ¹² to make known to the children of man your^[b] mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- ¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

[The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.][2]

- ¹⁴ The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.
- ¹⁶ You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.
- ¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.
- ¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
- ¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.
- ²⁰ The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.
- ²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.
 - a. Psalm 145:1 This psalm is an acrostic poem, each verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet
 - b. Psalm 145:12 Hebrew his; also next line
 - c. <u>Psalm 145:13</u> These two lines are supplied by one Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint, Syriac (compare Dead Sea Scroll)

"Psalm 145 is an acrostic in Hebrew, with verse one beginning with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the second verse with the second letter, and so on down to the last verse beginning with the last letter (verse 13 covers two letters). Each verse is divided into two parts, which the NRSV and most other English translations make into separate lines. As translations cannot convey the acrostic structure easily, the psalm may come across as slightly disjointed to many readers and hearers, reading as a series of somewhat loosely connected statements. But what does unite them all is the theme of praise--from start to finish this is a psalm of praise to God.

The lectionary selection, verses 8-14, covers eight lines of the acrostic, the Hebrew letters het to samek. The first two and last two lines (verses 8-9, 13b-14) testify to important features of God's character and dealings with humans. The middle four lines (verses 10-13a) are addressed directly to God and focus on the glory and eternal nature of God's kingdom. This alternation between testimony and direct address is common in the psalms and, indeed, is characteristic of authentic worship in general, which must always balance out prayer and testimony, praise and proclamation, confession and profession...

What is especially noteworthy about Psalm 145 is how the gracious character of God, initially revealed as a part of God's relationship to Israel, is then extended to all of creation. Verse 8 reflects Israel's traditional core understanding of God's disposition towards Israel itself. Verse 9, however, immediately broadens the recipients of this disposition to include everyone: "The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made." The word "all" appears over and over in verses 9-14, a strong indication of the comprehensive scope celebrated in the psalm of God's gracious dealings with the entire creation..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=958
 Scott Shauf Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina

Romans 7:14-25a; RCL, Romans 7:15-25a (Romans 8:12-17; RCL, Romans 8:1-11)

"Romans 7 has played a crucial role in Christian anthropology.* Whether one derives from this passage the Lutheran simul**, that we are and always will be both fundamentally saint and sinner, or some other variation that expresses ongoing human struggle with sin, the main thing most people take from this passage relates to human identity vis-à-vis sin.

In this regard, the present text, as the lectionary delineates it, can be quite misleading if left on its own. This is one of the times that the pastor or preacher needs to be careful to bring the larger context into view. Without this, it would be very easy to read, interpret, and preach this passage as saying something defining about human identity: that we are resigned to a life of struggle with no end, in spite of the exclamation, "But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" This can often lead to the foregone conclusion that we are stuck in sin, which is actually okay because there is grace. The statement in verse 25b often wins the day (even though not in the lectionary delineation, it should be included): "So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."

^{*}The study of humanity from a Christian / biblical perspective.

^{** &}quot;Simul justus et peccator" A Christian is at the same time both righteous(a saint) and a sinner. Read a complete discussion on this term by Dr. Aaron Moldenhauer, Concordia University, Wisconsin at https://logia.org/logia-online/issue-25-4-simul-justus-et-peccator2016

Released from the Law Verses 1-8

The Law and Sin Verses 7-25

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

- a. Romans 7:1 Or brothers and sisters; also verse 4
- b. Romans 7:2 Greek law concerning the husband
- c. Romans 7:6 Greek of the letter

"The hermeneutical framework through which the church viewed Romans 7 before the time of Luther was that of Augustine, who understood Paul's words to refer to the apostle's own struggle against sin as a Christian. Luther and Calvin both carried this perception forward in their theological formulations...

The Christian world owes its reawakening to the letters of Paul to Martin Luther. His understanding of Paul's meaning has formed the framework through which much of Paul's writings are still interpreted. Concerning 7:14, Luther writes:

For it is characteristic of a spiritual and wise man to know that he is carnal and displeasing to himself, to hate himself and to approve

the law of God because it is spiritual.²

In other words, the mark of a person's spirituality and wisdom is that person's awareness of just how unspiritual he or she is. It is the law of God which is spiritual, not the person seeking to obey that law.

Continuing on in this vein, Luther proceeds to exegete the remainder of the passage as Paul's own testimony of the power of sin within his life. Of particular interest is his dealing with verses 17-18, which read, "But now no longer am I doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for to will is at hand in me, but to work the good is not." Luther likens the Christian to a horseman who tries to make his horses go one way when they will not, and even in his struggling against the horses' waywardness is nevertheless the one responsible for making them go astray. This apparent contradiction of wanting to do good yet inexorably doing evil Luther sees as the tension of Spirit against flesh within the Christian, a tension which Luther explains in such a way as to make Christian living seem like a kind of spiritual schizophrenia:

[B]ecause the same one complete man consists of flesh and spirit, therefore he attributes to the whole man both of these opposing qualities which come from the opposing parts of him. For in this way there comes about a communication of attributes, for one and the same man is spiritual and carnal, righteous and a sinner, good and evil.⁴

The Christian is therefore both a good person who does evil and an evil person who wants to do good. But even in the midst of this wanting to do good, this desire is a longing which flows not from the person of the Christian but rather from the Holy Spirit within that person. The deepest nature of a human being remains that of rebellion against God. Luther sees Paul's cry of dereliction, "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" as being a rephrasing of Philippians 1:23 ("I desire to depart and be with Christ"), indicating that the Christian's only hope for freedom from sin is to be found in death. The only consolation that Luther can draw from this passage is that "it is a comfort to hear that such a great apostle was involved in the same sorrows and afflictions as we are when we try to be obedient to God..."

http://www.datamanos2.com/theology/thesis.html Michael E. Brooks Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (Read the entire dissertation were he "demonstrate(s) both what the apostle is saying and what he is not saying concerning Christian "being" and identity."

Matthew 11:25-30; RCL, Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; RCL, the same reading)

"...Skipping over the "woes" to unrepentant Galilean towns (11:20-24), our reading picks up again at verse 25, with Jesus' prayer thanking his Father because he has "hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to infants." The "wise and intelligent" may

refer to any who reject Jesus and his message, but perhaps especially to the religious leaders, whom Jesus often rebukes for their self-importance and hypocrisy. The scribes and Pharisees pride themselves on being learned in the law yet fail to understand the basics of justice, mercy, and faith (23:23). They repeatedly reject Jesus and conspire against him, thus conspiring against the very purposes of God.

The "infants," on the other hand, are not regarded as wise or important. They are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the persecuted, all whom Jesus calls blessed (5:3-12). They are the sick and the lame, the lepers and demon-possessed, the tax collectors and sinners, who come to Jesus for healing of body and spirit. It is God's gracious will to act in ways that confound human wisdom (11:26), and so these "infants" see what the "wise" cannot -- that Jesus is sent by the Father and reveals the Father (11:27).

Jesus' prayer then turns to invitation..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=970
Elisabeth Johnson Professor, Lutheran Institute of Theology, Meiganga, Cameroon

"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 11th Chapter of St. Matthew"

Messengers from John the Baptist Verses 1-19

11 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities...

Woe to Unrepentant Cities Verses 20-24

Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest Verses 25-30

25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.^[a] ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

²⁰ Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent...

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

"I'm sure they had their reasons. I refer to the folks who put together the readings for the Revised Common Lectionary. I'm sure they had their reasons to leap-frog over verses 20-24 but in so doing, they created something of an irony (if not something of an exegetical faux pas). Granted, Jesus' rant against various cities in the deleted/skipped verses here are difficult to read. They also seem to come from out of nowhere, nestled in between some nice musings about John the Baptist and some lovely words about rest for the weary. I imagine that if today one of us preachers suddenly interrupted one of our own sermons for a turn-the-air-blue diatribe, our congregations would arch a collective eyebrow and wonder if we'd had a bad burrito the night prior. Most of our congregants would also doubtless do their best to ignore what had just happened (and hope it did not happen again anytime soon!).

So maybe the Lectionary folks thought that, too. This does not fit here. Maybe it's even a textual mistake, a wrong insertion. Who knows? In any event, it's easier to skip these judgments than engage them.

But on that point I must hasten to demur. Because the skipped verses are framed by other verses that pretty much tell us we are making a mistake to pretend Jesus did not speak the words he did about Korazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum. In verses 16-19 Jesus pretty much says that it is a theological error to look at who Jesus is and what he does and then choose to deride Jesus for those words and actions...

That's what Jesus says. So how ironic that the Lectionary then turns right around and edits Jesus by having us ignore something he then went on to say! What's more, Jesus then goes on to comment in verses 25-27 that everything he says comes straight from the Father and that to know the Father, you need to know and embrace the Son who reveals the Father.

All in all, then, this may not be a good juncture in Scripture to skip over certain words spoken by Jesus! We may not like hearing Jesus in imprecatory mode. We may not enjoy the specter of judgment on those who refused to recognize Jesus through his miracles, but it's not up to us to edit the divine discourse..."

https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-9a/?type=the_lectionary_gospel Scott Hoezee

"Let's keep in mind the context of this grand paragraph in Matthew 11:25-30. Judgment awaits those who have had the greatest opportunity to respond to Christ's ministry, but have rejected Him. The context of these words deals with the unreasonable and determined rejection of both Jesus and John the baptizer by the Jews (vv. 16-19), and the impenitence of the people who live in the cities where Christ had performed miracles (vv. 20-24). Those who were rejecting Jesus were religious teachers and leaders in the Jewish community. They were wise and intelligent and acquainted with religious truth. But they were not humble in spirit. They were arrogant in their attitude toward God. Jesus said to these people, "Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33)...

Martin Luther said, "Christ's burden is light because He helps us to bear it, and when it becomes too heavy for us He puts Himself under the load with us."

He will get underneath and lift your burdens. His yoke is "gentle and humble in heart." His yoke is gentle because He is kind and gentle. The yoke Jesus puts on us is easy to wear. The load He gives is not heavy because He carries it with us.

The word "gentle" is the same word Jesus used in the beatitudes in Matthew 5:5. Here is power under perfect control. He is "gentle" as opposed to the haughty and harsh teachers of the law. He is "humble in heart," not arrogant, proud and repulsive. He condescends to that of a humble servant. He is the Sovereign God whose power is perfectly under control. How can we possibly fail when we are yoked up with Him who is the Sovereign?..."

- https://www.abideinchrist.com/messages/mat11v25.html
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Va2tVRUNXCk Georg Friedrich Händel: Messiah 23. His yoke is easy Monteverdi Choir English, Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner Try to keep up with the word "easy".
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaLOC74TVMQ The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square
 - Angus Day appears with the permission of https://www.agnusday.org/



The Matthew Challenge? Can you go back and read your copy of Chapter 10??

Weekly review thoughts

