

Third Sunday in Lent February 28, 2016

LUTHERAN

## LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday.  
An opportunity to make the rhythms of the readings  
become a part of the rhythms of your life.

Available on line at:

[www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)

or

**through Facebook**

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

February 25, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship service on Wednesdays, 5:30pm, at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.)*



<http://www.fisheaters.com/parables24.html>

### Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 823/824 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 500

“May God bestow on us His grace”

[ES WOLLE GOTT UNS GNÄDIG SEIN](#) or [ELVET BANKS](#) – which tune do you like better? Which one was in the “old” hymnal? Hint- look in the lower right hand of the page of the LSB. Where did TLH give the tune information?

“ “You can’t out give the Lord!” My wife’s Aunt Annie used to say that, and Martin Luther begins this hymn with the same thought—how the “brightness of (God’s) face” shines on his people, guiding to life eternal. We are blessed!

However, God’s grace is never the *private* keepsake of his people; so stanza one (and Psalm 67, on which the entire hymn is based) hurries to point out the Church’s mission also—our calling not only to receive “Christ’s riches without measure,” but also to give Christ’s riches away. We are a blessing also!

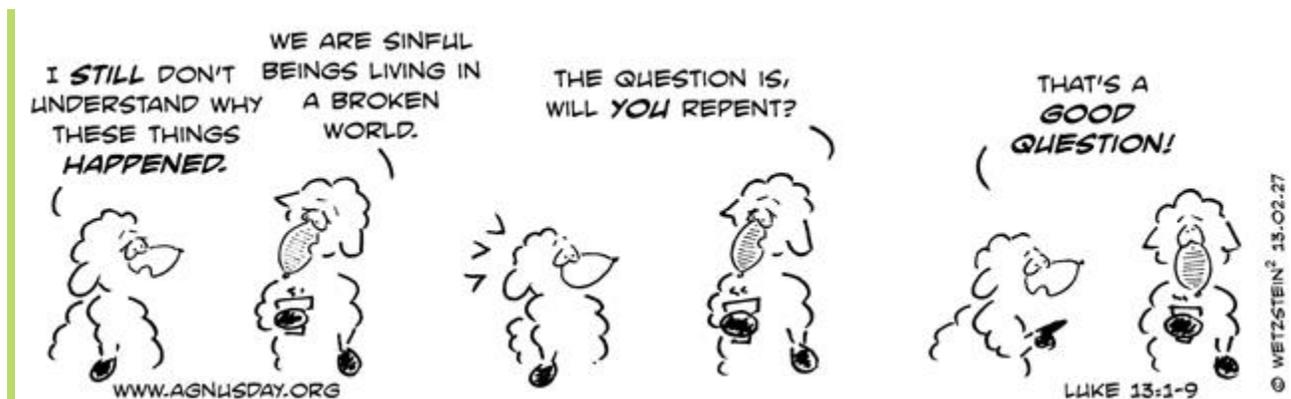
Stanza two anticipates the day when the light of Christ has prevailed over every darkness. The whole world will sing its grateful hymn of praise, for God will “judge the earth” (that is, “rule equitably,” as in Psalm 98:9) and sin’s terrible tyranny will be defeated. All will be “pastured” by God’s Word and led in “paths of righteousness” (as in Psalm 23:2-3).

In stanza three, humanity is called to praise God by an increase of “all good works.” Even the land “hears” the Word of God’s blessing and by yielding “plenteous fruit” gives the world of nature its part also in this great “Te Deum” to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At the end all believers are invited join the chorus in “solemn awe” and faithful “Amens.”

You may choose to sing this classic hymn with the Psalm 67 tune long associated with it, (ES WOLLE GOTT UNS GENÄDIG SEIN/LSB #823), or with a new tune called ELVET BANKS, (LSB #824) named by its 20th century British composer David Lee as an homage to the University of Durham, his alma mater...”

<http://www.cuchicago.org/globalassets/documents/center-for-church-music/devotions/hymn-of-the-day-devotion-lent-3.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xz8HUc3tl8w> Can you match this to the right melody?



**Ezekiel 33:7-20, RCL; Isaiah 55:1-9 (next week: Isaiah 12:1-6, RCL; Joshua 5:9-12)**  
*(Isaiah 55:1-9 The Compassion of the LORD)*

*55 “Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.  
2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good..”*

<sup>7</sup>“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. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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?**

<sup>10</sup>“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?’ <sup>11</sup>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?

<sup>12</sup>“And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> when he sins. <sup>13</sup>Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>14</sup>Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, <sup>15</sup>if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup>None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

<sup>17</sup>“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just. <sup>18</sup>When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. <sup>19</sup>And when the wicked turns from his wickedness

and does what is just and right, he shall live by this. <sup>20</sup> Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways.”

1. [Ezekiel 33:12](#) Hebrew *by it*

“THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT:

In the first six verses of this chapter, Yahweh sends Ezekiel with a warning for the people of Judah—called here "the house of Israel" (v. 7). If Yahweh is prepared to assault the people with a sword—and their sentinel warns them—and the people ignore the warning—then their blood will be on their own heads (vv. 2-5a). However, if they heed the warning, their lives will be spared (v. 5b). But if their sentinel fails to sound the alarm so that the people die without having been warned, then Yahweh will hold the sentinel responsible for their deaths.

The model for these verses is a military encampment that has posted guards. In that setting, if a guard sounds a warning and the rest of the encampment fails to rally, the guard cannot be held accountable. However, if the guard sees danger and fails to sound a warning—so that the enemy is able to infiltrate the encampment and kill its inhabitants—then the guard is held responsible. In that setting, the guard's failure would be considered a capital offense if it resulted in the deaths of his fellow soldiers. In other words, the guard would likely be executed for failing to sound the alarm.

EZEKIEL 33:7-9. I HAVE SET YOU A WATCHMAN TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

..."**So you, son of man, I have set you a watchman to the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me**" (v. 7). These are almost the exact words that Yahweh used in 3:17 when he appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. As noted above, verses 1-6 spell out the responsibilities of a sentinel.

"**the house of Israel**" is the people of Judah. As noted in the Context above, the Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, has ceased to exist. However, the word Israel is also used more broadly to indicate all of the chosen people.

Ezekiel is not charged with assessing the spiritual state of these people. Yahweh will do the assessment and will provide the message that Ezekiel is to give the people. Ezekiel's only responsibility is to deliver Yahweh's message faithfully.

In verse 2, the scenario had the people choosing a sentinel. However, now Yahweh appoints the sentinel—Ezekiel.

"**When I tell the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you don't speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand**" (v. 8). The death sentence, "you shall surely die," is not etched in stone. When Yahweh tells Ezekiel to pronounce that sentence on Israel, it will be for the purpose of warning Israel—redeeming Israel—rather than for setting her up for destruction...

"**Tell them, As I live, says the Lord Yahweh, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn, turn from your evil ways; for why will you die, house of Israel?**" (v. 11). The prophetic message to these people is that their

fate has not been sealed. Yahweh has no desire to punish them. He wants only that they turn from their sins so that they might live.

This verse is a keening cry—an anguished call from a grieving Yahweh. It is his plea that they might turn from their wicked ways so that they might not die. Any parent whose son or daughter has gone down the wrong path can appreciate Yahweh's heartbreak. In his holiness, Yahweh cannot overlook Israel's wickedness, but neither can he stop loving Israel...”

[http://www.lectionary.org/EXEG\\_Engl\\_WEB/OT/26-Ezek-WEB/Ezekiel.33.07-11\\_EXEGESIS.htm](http://www.lectionary.org/EXEG_Engl_WEB/OT/26-Ezek-WEB/Ezekiel.33.07-11_EXEGESIS.htm)

This is a part of a greater article from “Lectionary.org Making Preaching Less of a Chore and More of a Joy!” It is informative and well researched. This article has 17 references in it’s bibliography.

### **Psalm 85, RCL; Psalm 63:1-8 (*Psalm 32*)**

*(Psalm 63:1-8 My Soul Thirsts for You  
A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.)*

#### **Revive Us Again**

#### **To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.**

- 85 LORD, you were favorable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- <sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you covered all their sin. Selah
- <sup>3</sup> You withdrew all your wrath;  
you turned from your hot anger.
- <sup>4</sup> Restore us again, O God of our salvation,  
and put away your indignation toward us!
- <sup>5</sup> Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
- <sup>6</sup> Will you not revive us again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?
- <sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;  
but let them not turn back to folly.
- <sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,  
that glory may dwell in our land.

- <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up from the ground,  
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.
- <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before him  
and make his footsteps a way.

“ [Psalm 85] A national lament reminding God of past favors and forgiveness (Ps 85:2–4) and begging for forgiveness and grace now (Ps 85:5–8). A speaker represents the people who wait humbly with open hearts (Ps 85:9–10): God will be active on their behalf (Ps 85:11–13). The situation suggests the conditions of Judea during the early postexilic period, the fifth century B.C.; the thoughts are similar to those of postexilic prophets (Hg 1:5–11; 2:6–9).”

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/85>

“usccb” is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

## 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

### Warning Against Idolatry

<sup>10</sup> For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,<sup>2</sup> and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,<sup>3</sup> and all ate the same spiritual food,<sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown<sup>[b]</sup> in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup> Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.<sup>7</sup> Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”<sup>8</sup> We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. (See Numbers 24:1-8)<sup>9</sup> We must not put Christ<sup>[c]</sup> to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents,<sup>10</sup> nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.<sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.<sup>12</sup> Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1. [1 Corinthians 10:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*
2. [1 Corinthians 10:5](#) Or *were laid low*
3. [1 Corinthians 10:9](#) Some manuscripts *the Lord*

“This passage is taken from a letter addressed to a faith community rocked by the arrogance and choices of spiritual smart alecks!

It is clear from this particular passage of the letter that the lessons of history and the consequences of those considering themselves spiritual know-it-alls were designed by Paul as a means of pastoral warning. His instruction is focused on attempting to point out the dangers of improper spiritual behavior and the ways a true faith life can correct such directions.

Preachers who attempt this text will find themselves awash in somewhat obscure Old Testament interpretation on Paul's part. The chapter offers a rough outline of the spiritual nature of the exodus narrative. Paul is hoping to make his points about the gravity of the Corinthians' spiritual behavior by grounding it where he places all his theology -- in the heart of Israel's history. Care must be taken not to draw the analogies of baptism (washing) and Eucharist (eating and drinking) too tightly or analogically with this text of the exodus salvation narrative. By doing so, theological issues will become too complex for the ordinary sermon-listener. (Preachers seeking to untangle these will find literary assistance in Ulrich Luz's excellent commentary on this passage).

What then is the governing issue or theme in this passage? Verse 7 holds the key: it is behavior, faux spiritual and otherwise, which is idolatry. The Gospel text for this Third Sunday in Lent also bids the listener to repent and change, as does Paul in this passage, and to worship the true God...

There are many possible preaching foci in this text. Probably the two that are most obvious are idolatry and temptation. One useful resource in preaching about idolatry and its nature and consequences comes from Luther's two catechisms. He is clear in several of the explanations to the materials therein about the difference between worshipping what is false and what is God and of God.” [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=528](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=528)

**Susan Hedahl** Professor Emerita of Homiletics **Lutheran Theological Seminary Gettysburg, Pa.**

**“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 13th Chapter”**

**“Glory to You, O Lord”**

**Luke 13:1-9** (*Luke 15:1-3, 11-32, RCL starts verse 11 at 11b*)

13 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all

the others who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Repent or Perish

### The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

<sup>6</sup> And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ <sup>8</sup> And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup> Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

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

“This parable foreshadows Our Lord's cursing of the fig tree during His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as a sign of the faithless of the Old Covenant: Matthew 21:19:

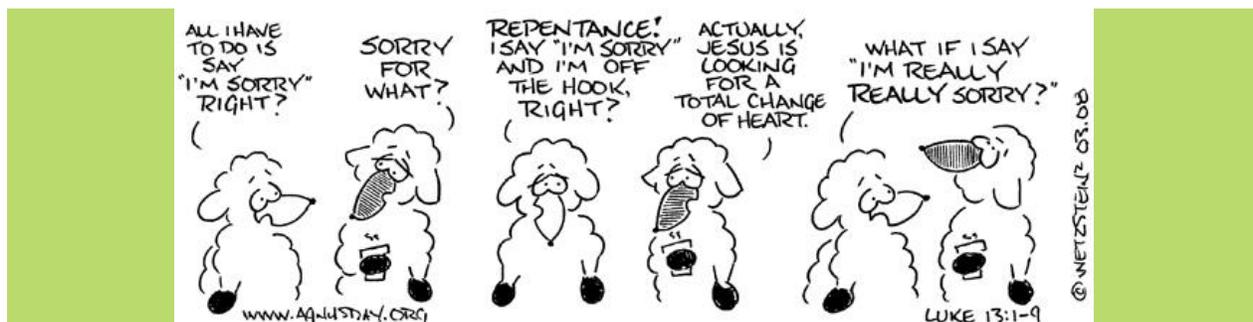
And seeing a certain fig tree by the way side, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only, and he saith to it: May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away...” <http://www.fisheaters.com/parables24.html>

“The purpose of this site is to bring souls to the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church -- the Church headed by Christ and built on the rock of St. Peter, the Church against which the gates of Hell will never prevail. Fish Eaters strives to do this by showing Protestants the errors of Protestantism and by teaching Catholics to recognize what is and isn't Catholic.”

“Does the fig tree deserve it?”

That’s not the question. It’s just a story about a fig tree and an extravagant gardener who should remind us of another gardener from way back in the beginning, who just couldn’t help it when he picked up some dirt. God just had to form it into a human and breathe life into it. God just had to make it into someone to love, someone who would be free to choose to love in return. Maybe we can hear this gardener at work in our own lives, saying, “Wait. Give me another year. I’ll do all that I can to nurture this tree.”

*Written by The Reverend Dr. Amy Richter (who) serves as Rector of St. Anne’s Church in Annapolis, MD.*



Agnus Day appears with the permission of <http://www.agnusday.org/> ”