

13<sup>TH</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 15 August 14, 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.

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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”

August 11, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

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



<http://carolinasnalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/luke12-51.jpg>

*Do you remember the nalc reference from a previous lesson?*

### Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 655 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 261

“Lord, keep us steadfast in Your (Thy) Word”

st. 2 = John 17:11

In 1541 the Turkish army was threatening to take Vienna. The German rulers called for special prayers for safety from these Islamic forces. Martin Luther ([PHH 336](#)) responded to this request by writing the original German text ("Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort") for a prayer service in Wittenberg. Convinced that the church was threatened not only by the Turkish army of Sultan Suleiman but also by the Roman Catholic Pope, Luther began his text as follows (English translation):

Lord, keep us in thy Word and work,  
 Restrain the murderous Pope and Turk,  
 Who fain would tear from off thy throne  
 Christ Jesus, thy beloved Son.

After these threats to the church subsided, the text was altered: it eliminated the reference to the Pope and Turk and referred generally to all enemies of the Word. The text was published in Low German in the *Magdeburg Gesangbuch* (1542) and in High German in Joseph Klug's *Geistliche Lieder* (1543). The English translation by Catherine Winkworth ([PHH 194](#)) was published in her *Chorale Book for England* (1863).

The text is a fervent prayer in song cast into a Trinitarian mold. As we sing, we pray that God the Father will keep his kingdom from the powers of evil (st. 1), that God the Son will rule the church (st. 2), and that God the Spirit will bring peace and unity on earth and will support us in our "final [earthly] strife," the doorway to eternal life (st.3). Liturgical Use: In times of war and persecution that affect us or, perhaps more commonly, in solidarity with other people who experience such turmoil; as a prayer hymn before the proclamation of God's Word; peace services.

*--Psalter Hymnal Handbook*

[http://www.hymnary.org/text/lord\\_keep\\_us\\_steadfast\\_in\\_your\\_word](http://www.hymnary.org/text/lord_keep_us_steadfast_in_your_word)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3K9MFWOqWhU> Organ only, read the comments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4VkWpYwOnI> Sing along with the students at morning chapel at Martin Luther College, MN. An interesting comment by a past WELS member.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4Grx59YLR0> So, can you figure out how he plays without his hands?

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by  
[Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**Jeremiah 23:16-29; RCL, Isaiah 5:1-7 or Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19 (Next Week: Isaiah 66:18-23; RCL, Jeremiah 1:4-10 or Psalm 71:1-6)**

*"Many false preachers have risen to popularity speaking words that people like to hear, disguising them as "God's Word." This is not new today, though, as we hear in Jeremiah. After the fall of the Kingdom of Israel to the Syrian army, God continued to send prophets to His people in Judah. Their message was a warning that they would suffer the same punishment if they did not*

*repent and change their false religious practices. The Word of the Lord called out to all stubborn sinners to repent or suffer discipline.”*

<http://www.geneseolutheranchurch.com/documents/sermons/081813sermon.pdf> Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Geneseo, IL

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup> They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

<sup>18</sup> For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD  
to see and to hear his word,  
or who has paid attention to his word and listened?

<sup>19</sup> Behold, the storm of the LORD!

Wrath has gone forth,  
a whirling tempest;

it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

<sup>20</sup> The anger of the LORD will not turn back  
until he has executed and accomplished  
the intents of his heart.

In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

<sup>21</sup> “I did not send the prophets,  
yet they ran;  
I did not speak to them,  
yet they prophesied.

<sup>22</sup> But if they had stood in my council,  
then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,  
and they would have turned them from their evil way,  
and from the evil of their deeds.

<sup>23</sup> “Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? <sup>24</sup> Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. <sup>25</sup> I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’

<sup>26</sup> How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, <sup>27</sup> who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? <sup>28</sup> Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup> Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

“The scathing scolding present in Jeremiah 23 suggests that false prophets had become an insidious problem.

The rebuke is palpable even for those of us who hear these words over two-and-a-half millennia later. Curiously, just when Jeremiah's poetic rant is in high gear, there is a change in tone as well as form. This pivotal point is where the pericope begins (verse 23). The form changes from poetry to prose while the content seems to reflect an intentional distancing from the previous harangue in order to focus on the character of God. There is a series of rhetorical questions which get at the heart of who God is. Of course, it is Jeremiah who is speaking, but he is presenting himself as a true prophet through whom God is speaking. Jeremiah's hope is that he will be seen as a true prophet distinguished from the false prophets. Even more, the hope is that God is seen as the one true God distinguished from the false gods.

While an interesting angle of this text is to delineate false from true prophets, it is especially intriguing to discern what this text says about the character of God. While every biblical text deserves this inquiry, it is especially valuable with a text that highlights God's identity and role in the midst of human unfaithfulness. Exploring this text theologically reveals a God who

1) laments, 2) is pervasive yet near, and 3) speaks powerful words....”  
[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=648](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=648) [Shauna Hannan](#)  
 Associate Professor of Homiletics, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA

**Psalm 119:81-88; RCL Jeremiah 23:23-29 or Psalm 82** (*Psalm 50:1-15; RCL, Isaiah 58:9b-14 or Psalm 103:1-8*)

“This Psalm has been referred to as the “*orphan psalm*” of the Hebrew hymn book. Throughout the Psalm we are made aware that the singer is in trouble. Since he remains anonymous, the Holy Spirit intends his suffering to be of universal significance. Any struggling saint of God can put his or her name at the head of this psalm and sing to themselves... [http://www.fbcw.org/am/cms\\_media/09282014sermonnotes.pdf](http://www.fbcw.org/am/cms_media/09282014sermonnotes.pdf)

### *Kaph*

- <sup>81</sup> My soul longs for your salvation;  
 I hope in your word.
- <sup>82</sup> My eyes long for your promise;  
 I ask, “When will you comfort me?”
- <sup>83</sup> For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,  
 yet I have not forgotten your statutes.
- <sup>84</sup> How long must your servant endure?<sup>[a]</sup>  
 When will you judge those who persecute me?
- <sup>85</sup> The insolent have dug pitfalls for me;  
 they do not live according to your law.
- <sup>86</sup> All your commandments are sure;  
 they persecute me with falsehood; help me!
- <sup>87</sup> They have almost made an end of me on earth,

but I have not forsaken your precepts.  
<sup>88</sup> In your steadfast love give me life,  
 that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.

- a. [Psalm 119:84](#) Hebrew *How many are the days of your servant?*

“...The eleventh letter, Caph, signifies the hollowed hand. The expositors, however, looking only to the meaning curved, which is but half of its import, explain the section as signifying the act of bowing down in penitence, or as noting that the fathers of the Old Testament were like veteran soldiers, stooping with years and toil, and bowed down yet further by the heavy weight of the law, only removable by that coming of Christ for which they prayed. Others extend the notion to the saints of the church, weighed down by the sorrows and cares of this life, and therefore desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ. The true meaning is to be sought in the full interpretation of the word; for the hand is hollowed either in order to retain something which actually lies in it, or to receive something about to be placed in it by another. Thus the hand may be God's, as the giver of bounty, or man's, as the receiver of it; and the whole scope of the section, as a prayer for speedy help, is that man holds out his hand as a beggar, supplicating the mercy of God. --Jerome, Ambrose, and others, in Neale and Littledale...”

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/treasury-of-david/psalms-119-81.html>

**Hebrews 11:17-31 (32-40); 12:1-3; RCL, Hebrews 11:29-12:2 (Hebrews 12:4-24 (25-29); RCL, Hebrews 12:18-29) The readings for August all come from Hebrews.**

*“We often consider the results when we’re asked to do something—and that includes what God asks of us. But what if obeying God is risky? What if the predictable results don’t look favorable? What if God asks us to do something that simply doesn’t make sense? Would you still obey? It’s called “uncalculated obedience,” and Abraham demonstrated it when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar. Confidence, determination, and resolve are required to faithfully obey even when the consequences look grim or catastrophic or embarrassing or uncertain. According to Martin Luther King, Jr., “Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.” Are you willing to take the first step?”* <https://bible.org/seriespage/20-more-desirable-obedience-hebrews-1117-31> Jeffrey E. Miller, Trinity Bible Church in Richardson, Texas.

<sup>17</sup> **By faith** Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>19</sup> He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. <sup>20</sup> **By faith** Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. <sup>21</sup> **By faith** Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. <sup>22</sup> **By faith** Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

<sup>23</sup> **By faith** Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the

king's edict. <sup>24</sup> **By faith** Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup> **By faith** he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup> **By faith** he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

<sup>29</sup> **By faith** the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. <sup>30</sup> **By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup> **By faith** Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

<sup>32</sup> *And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—<sup>33</sup> who **through faith** conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. <sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two,<sup>[a]</sup> they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—<sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

<sup>39</sup> *And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. **Bold added***

- a. [Hebrews 11:37](#) Some manuscripts add *they were tempted*

## Jesus, Founder and Perfecter of Our Faith

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

## Do Not Grow Weary

<sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

“...The readings from Hebrews for today and next Sunday will sweep through an “honors list” of those that make up the “great cloud of witnesses” (12:1). This list stretches from Abel (11:4) to the Maccabean martyrs (11:36ff). The list is tightly packed with succinct but fascinating descriptions of these pilgrims of old who -- as do all of us -- seek a homeland (11:14), a city prepared for them by God (11:16). They are commended for their faith in the promises of God, yet as the two final RCL Hebrews’ texts (Propers 16 and 17) also note, it is only by means of the work of Christ crucified and risen that these saints of old too can enter the City of God along with those who profess faith in Christ...”

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1748](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1748) Erik Heen

John H.P. Reumann Professor in Biblical Studies, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia



## “The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12th Chapter

### “Glory to You, O Lord”

**Luke 12:49-53 (54-56); RCL, Luke 12:49-56 (Luke 13:22-30; RCL, Luke 13:10-17)**

*“Verses 41-48 ought be read for a better understanding of the text. On the day of Judgment Jesus will find faithful and wise stewards, 42-44. He will also find those who are the very opposite and will destroy them, 45-46. There will be degrees of punishment, depending on the knowledge of the wrong-doer, 47-48.*

*Now comes our text which speaks of the imminent crucifixion and death of Our Lord and how the message of this will affect people. It is not a pretty picture. Human beings would like the Gospel to give us a world in which there is constant peace among men. But it will never be so. It is a grim picture which Jesus gives us... [http://pericope.org/buls-notes/luke/luke\\_12\\_49\\_53.htm](http://pericope.org/buls-notes/luke/luke_12_49_53.htm)*

### **Not Peace, but Division**

<sup>49</sup> “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup> I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! <sup>51</sup> Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup> They will be divided, father

against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

### *Interpreting the Time*

<sup>54</sup> He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. <sup>55</sup> And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. <sup>56</sup> You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

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

“If we find these words difficult and harsh, we are not alone. Jesus’ original audience would also have been disturbed by them. Even more importantly, Jesus himself was upset and overwhelmed by his message: “How I wish it were already kindled! What stress I am under until it is completed!” (12:49-50)

This difficulty of this passage often leads to its neglect. You will not hear *Focus on the Family* speak on Luke 12:49-53 anytime in the near future. Preaching on this passage in “family-friendly” environments can be risky. I have personally experienced this: the most negative response I ever received in my preaching career came when I preached this passage in a former church.

In order to truly understand Jesus’ words, we must refrain from extremes. There are ditches on both sides of this passage...” <http://www.theocentric.com/?p=292>

“As if the themes of this Gospel weren’t challenge enough, two significant exegetical/translational questions must also be addressed.

Luke 12:49b is “a passage of well-known difficulty, the translation of which remains doubtful...”

A detailed discussion of these verses is addressed at  
<http://concordiatheology.org/2016/08/proper-15-%E2%80%A2-luke-1249-53-54-56-%E2%80%A2-august-14-2016/>



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