

13th Sunday after Pentecost, September 3, 2017

12th Sunday after Trinity, Proper 17(22)

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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

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

August 31, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

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

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

E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Matthew/16/24>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 531 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 367

“Hail, Thou once despised Jesus”

Author, "**Bakewell, John**, born at Brailsford, Derbyshire, 1721. At about the age of eighteen his mind was turned towards religious truths by reading Boston's *Fourfold State*. From that date he became an ardent evangelist, and in 1744 (the year of the first Methodist Conference) he began to preach. Removing to London some short time after, he became acquainted with the Wesleys, M. Madan, **A. M. Toplady**, J. Fletcher, and other earnest evangelical men. Mr. Bakewell was the author of a few hymns, the best known being, "Hail Thou once despised Jesus," the abbreviations of the same, "Paschal Lamb, by God appointed," and "Jesus, hail, enthroned in glory."... - John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907)

Alterer, "**Toplady, Augustus Montague**, M.A. ...he was born at Farnham, in Surrey, on November 4, 1740. His father, Richard Toplady, was a Major in the British army, and was killed at the siege of Carthage (1741) soon after the birth of his son. His widowed mother placed him at the renowned Westminster school, London...

He was a strong and partizan Calvinist, and not well-informed theologically outside of Calvinism. We willingly and with sense of relief leave unstirred the small thick dust of oblivion that has gathered on his controversial writings, especially his scurrilous language to John Wesley because of his Arminianism, as we do John Wesley's deplorable misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Calvinism.

Regarded critically, it must be stated that the affectionateness with which Toplady is named, and the glow and passion of his faith and life, and yearning after holiness, have led to an over-exaltation of him as a hymnwriter. Many of his hymns have been widely used, and especially in America, and in the Evangelical hymnbooks of the Church of England. Year by year, however, the number in use is becoming less. The reason is soon found. He is no poet or inspired singer. He climbs no heights. He sounds no depths. He has mere vanishing gleams of imaginative light. His greatness is the greatness of goodness. He is a fervent preacher, not a bard. [Rev. A. B. Grosart, D.D., LL.D.]... "[http://hymnary.org/person/Toplady Augustus](http://hymnary.org/person/Toplady_Augustus) Only a few comments on the person who wrote "Rock of Ages".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xn2rkvaMVXk> The melody – "O Durchbrecher"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z3KpGO1zkQ> "The prelude... is from Master Organ Works of Jan Bender Volume 1. Organist is Mark Peters."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtmTetC7uak> Can also be sung to the tune, HYFRYDOL. Congregational singing Metropolitan Tabernacle, London

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.

Jeremiah 15:15-21; RCL, Exodus 3:1-15 or Jeremiah 15:15-21 (Next Week: Ezekiel 33:7-9; RCL, Exodus 112:1-14 or Ezekiel 33:7-11)

"...Jeremiah has sometimes been called the "crying prophet." Indeed, his was not a happy life. God had given him a hard job to do, sending him to speak a critical word to people who were very resistant to his message. He became alienated from most of the people. At first, he is thought of as a crank, an unhappy prophet of doom, "crazy old Jeremiah," whom nice people would never invite to their dinner party. Later, when his predictions of disaster can no longer be dismissed, when destruction by Babylon seems certain and imminent, then the coming disaster is somehow Jeremiah's fault. The messenger is blamed for the content of the message..."

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

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

¹⁵ O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and take vengeance for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance take me not away;
know that for your sake I bear reproach.

¹⁶ Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart,

for I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

¹⁷ I did not sit in the company of revelers,
nor did I rejoice;

I sat alone, because your hand was upon me,
for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸ Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?

Will you be to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail?

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the LORD:

"If you return, I will restore you,
and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall be as my mouth.

They shall turn to you,
but you shall not turn to them.

²⁰ And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;

they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you

to save you and deliver you,
declares the LORD.

²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.”

“As I write this commentary, I am only 2 weeks removed from the events of June 5, 2014.

On that day a gunman with a history of mental illness, stepped onto the campus of the university where I teach, and began a shooting spree that left one student dead and two students injured. Were it not for the actions of a brave student who disarmed him, the death toll would have been much higher since the gunman intended to replicate the 1999 Columbine shooting.

Because we are a Church-related university, our response to this tragedy was to gather within hours of the shooting to pray. It was there a colleague of mine, Frank Spina, opened his homily with these remarks, “One of the things that I love about being a Christian, is that I’m required to be honest. I’m angry, I’m upset. This act has been an act of madness, insanity, and evil. And so it’s a day for lament. It’s a day to scream. It’s a day not to go too soon to comfort because that makes it false. One of the things I love about the Bible is its deep, almost brutal honesty.”

One need not look much further than the book of Jeremiah for brutal honesty. Jeremiah is often cast as the “weeping prophet” since no other prophetic book contains as much description of the prophet’s woes...

Jeremiah 15:15 begins with the prophet addressing God with unusual candor and directness, “You! O LORD you know” (translation mine). The lament that follows contains the following three elements: the petition (15b), an argument for the prophet’s deliverance (15c-17), and complaint (18)...

The message is clear: Jeremiah pleads with God to act immediately and decisively on his behalf. The prophet can approach God with such confidence because he has demonstrated fidelity to his God... Whereas Jeremiah approached service to God with an attitude of delight (verse 16), he has only received indignation, anger, and bitterness in return (verse 17). For this reason the prophet can accuse God of deceiving him in verse 18. Like a brook that has run dry, so too the promise of God’s blessing has come up empty. The prophet assumed that God would support him should he obey the call to ministry, yet instead he has only experienced abandonment.

In Jeremiah 15:19-21 God offers a response to the prophet’s complaint. As is often the case in Scripture, God answers the prayers of the people not with the response they want to hear...

God reminds Jeremiah that the suffering he has experienced is as advertised. Jeremiah then, is not to crumble in the face of adversity but rather redouble his commitment to his prophetic vocation...

Jeremiah 15:15-21 teaches that honesty and faithfulness in the midst of suffering are the hallmarks of prophetic ministry. The prophet’s recommitment to his initial calling is the means by which God effects redemption in the world and reaffirms the promises of deliverance. The recent shooting at my university has prompted me to be more honest, and it has convinced me

that the world desperately needs theologians and pastors. Today, I am ever more committed to my ministerial vocation. May suffering manifest the same result in you.”

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2189 **Bo Lim** Associate Professor, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA

Psalm 26; RCL, Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b or Psalm 26:1-8 (Psalm 32:1-7; RCL, Psalm 149 or Psalm 119:33-40)

“Psalm 26 is a sturdy prayer that can be prayed by any individual at any time.

The morally upright citizen can echo the psalm's claims of integrity with confidence. The hopelessly accused sinner can voice the psalm's willingness to be probed by Yahweh and found innocent. The words of this psalm can be spoken aloud before worship, yet they are equally valid when whispered in the marketplace. No matter who prays this psalm, how they pray it, or where they pray it, its words convey an immensely active desire to act with integrity and enjoy a covenantal relationship with Yahweh...” (continued after the reading)

I Will Bless the LORD Of David.

26 Vindicate me, O LORD,
for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

² Prove me, O LORD, and try me;
test my heart and my mind.^[a]

³ For your steadfast love is before my eyes,
and I walk in your faithfulness.

⁴ I do not sit with men of falsehood,
nor do I consort with hypocrites.

⁵ I hate the assembly of evildoers,
and I will not sit with the wicked.

⁶ I wash my hands in innocence
and go around your altar, O LORD,

⁷ proclaiming thanksgiving aloud,
and telling all your wondrous deeds.

⁸ O LORD, I love the habitation of your house
and the place where your glory dwells.

⁹ Do not sweep my soul away with sinners,
nor my life with bloodthirsty men,

¹⁰ in whose hands are evil devices,
and whose right hands are full of bribes.

¹¹ But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity;
redeem me, and be gracious to me.

¹² My foot stands on level ground;
in the great assembly I will bless the LORD.

- a. [Psalm 26:2](#) Hebrew *test my kidneys and my heart*

“...Psalm 26 focuses attention away from the everyday world and on our covenant relationship with God. Through this prayer, we are confronted with the reality that we bear responsibility for our moral and religious integrity, and we are challenged to extend God an invitation to test that integrity. Although anyone can pray to God, this Psalm gently cautions that trusting God is an easier exercise when one can claim integrity.

This week's lectionary texts call us extend God's love to the faithless while simultaneously walking, sitting, and acting differently. The tension already stated is that we cannot follow the ways of humanity and claim to serve God fully. However, Psalm 26 reminds us that we can follow the ways of God and serve humanity confidently, with moral and religious integrity. May this be our prayer, and may we learn to pray it with the humility and conviction it requires...”

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1021 [Eric Mathis](#)
Assistant Professor of Music and Worship, Samford University, Birmingham, AL

Romans 12:9-21; RCL, the same reading (*Romans 13:1-10; RCL, Romans 13:8-14*)
The readings from Romans will continue through September 17.

“...In **chapter 12**, St. Paul teaches the true liturgy and makes all Christians priests, so that they may offer, not money or cattle, as priests do in the Law, but their own bodies, by putting their desires to death. Next he describes the outward conduct of Christians whose lives are governed by the Spirit; he tells how they teach, preach, rule, serve, give, suffer, love, live and act toward friend, foe and everyone. These are the works that a Christian does, for, as I have said, faith is not idle...” <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/luther/romans/12.html> Martin Luther

“It can be challenging to preach from this lectionary passage.

It's not that it lacks substance. It's that it touches on so many aspects of life in Christ that it's not possible to cover them all in one sermon. The passage -- or portions of it -- might work best for retreats or as a devotional source for a year of monthly meetings. If one seeks to cover this in one sermon, it might help ahead of time to survey a worship committee, board, or whole congregation to see what people most want or need to hear about...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3378 [Frank L. Crouch](#)
Dean and Vice President, Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Marks of the True Christian

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, ^[a] serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.^[b] Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it^[c] to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- a. [Romans 12:11](#) Or *fervent in the Spirit*
- b. [Romans 12:16](#) Or *give yourselves to humble tasks*
- c. [Romans 12:19](#) Greek *give place*

Just as Paul cannot help breaking out in poetic tribute to love in his famous love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, after beginning the subject of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, so also he does the same in Romans 12.

After discussing how God has gifted various church members with faith appropriate for different roles in the church, Paul offers a poetic composition on how love reaches for the common good in the church. Our translations do not catch all the words that have love in the opening verses of this section. The section begins with the heading, Let love be genuine. This is as if to say, Love others authentically and genuinely! The next verse, Romans 12:10, literally begins by saying, In brotherly/sisterly love be lovingly affectionate. Of course many of the specific commands give practical, detailed ways for loving others. Verse 13 ends with the phrase pursuing hospitality, but Paul's word for hospitality is literally love of stranger. So there is a lot of love language here!..

In the following chapter, there is a parenthetical explanation of how God can use government to repay evil for evil. But the idea of genuine love that Paul begins with in 12:9 continues to operate through Paul's emphasis on the love commandment in 13:8-10. It even extends into how Paul emphasizes love within the church divisions he addresses (14:15; 15:1-2, 7). So often we think that the letter of Romans is all about doctrine, or justification by faith. Here, though, as Paul is beginning to head toward the conclusion of the letter, we see once again that the Christian life for him is all about faith working through love (Galatians 5:6). Let love be genuine!"

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=128 [Mark Reasoner](#) , Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 16th Chapter”

“Glory to You, O Lord”

Matthew 16:21-38; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 18:1-20; RCL, Matthew 18:15-20)

“...The text occurs in the midst of scenes in Matthew where the identity of Jesus as the Christ is revealed and considered. Preceding the lesson are several miracles: the healings of the Canaanite woman's daughter and others at the Sea of Galilee and the feeding of the four thousand. There follow demands by the Pharisees and Sadducees for a sign as to who Jesus is. Immediately before our lesson, we find Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Messiah. Directly following this text are the stories of the Transfiguration and another healing. Clearly, Matthew's intention here is to emphasize the person and divinity of Jesus of Nazareth and to relate him to the Jewish expectation of the Messiah.

But here the Jewish expectation is turned on its ear in two ways...” (continued after the reading)

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord!^[a] This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “**Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance^[b] to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**”

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “**If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** ²⁵ For whoever would save his life^[c] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. ²⁸ Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

- a. [Matthew 16:22](#) Or “[May God be] merciful to you, Lord!”
- b. [Matthew 16:23](#) Greek *stumbling block*
- c. [Matthew 16:25](#) The same Greek word can mean either *soul* or *life*, depending on the context; twice in this verse and twice in verse [26](#)

“...**First**, a Messiah, yes; but one that will suffer and be killed. Nothing could be more contrary to the hope and expectation of Israel than for its long awaited leader to go directly to the place where he would be in the most danger and there be tortured and killed. For the careful listener, Jesus includes a strong word of hope: “...and on the third day be raised.” But, this is so far beyond human comprehension that the listeners miss it, and Peter jumps in to stay Jesus' contrary plan. One minute Peter is praised and promised to be the “rock” upon which Jesus will build his church (16:17-18), then chastised in the next. Peter was on a roller coaster ride which seemed to be headed for disaster. He was a Jew and could not fathom a Messiah who would give up his life just at the moment when he should be seizing the leadership of Israel. Peter spoke for all the disciples. He still speaks for us, because we too have our minds “set not on divine things but on human things.” (16:23)...

The **second** expectation overturned here is being a disciple of the Messiah should be a stroll through the halls of power and prestige. The human way of thinking is represented by our national leadership. To know the President personally, to visit one's Senator and be called by name, to be invited to important events in Washington: these are the expectations of the acolytes of the powerful... Human expectations surrounding the Messiah would not have been much different. The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted a clear sign (16:1-4). If they had gotten one, they would have gladly fallen in line and prepared themselves to parade in the excess glory left in the Messiah's wake. No sign was given. He was not that kind of leader. And, he did not seek that kind of follower. His followers were "to deny themselves and take up their cross." (16:24)...

The problem is we are pretty poor at cross bearing. The disciples wouldn't have thought themselves any better. They had seen crosses and knew how life-crushing they were. For them, the thought of carrying a cross was a life and death matter. In the end, many of them did die because they followed the Messiah. For us, to bear a cross is a metaphorical idea. No one really expects to die in the process. But, even to deny ourselves seems too much to ask. We aren't much good at that either. Here is both the challenge and the good news in this text: If we follow Jesus, we will be seriously called to bear certain crosses and lose hold of our lifestyle, if not our life. Yet, in all our weakness and human mindedness, it is Jesus' own death on the cross that enables us to do what we cannot..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=132 **Clayton Schmit**
Provost, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC

Clayton Schmit's commentary attracted quite a few comments. [Sample some here and read the entire commentary for his expanded thoughts.](#)

[A Working Preacher User](#) (August 29, 2008 at 09:27 AM)

"Great comments. It seems to me that Jesus chose the cross he bore. There were times when he could have died for his faith, but it was not yet time. A wise pastor once told me after my call to ministry, "There will be many times when the world/church will try to crucify you on a hill, just make sure you choose the hill." Jesus is not asking the disciples to bear every cross, but to choose the cross that is worth dying on."

[A Working Preacher User](#) (August 28, 2008 at 09:58 AM)

"I wish to thank Clay for this commentary. He has once again assisted me, a student of the Word, with homiletical turns in sermon preparation that can sometimes become stale and static in week to week sermon preparation. ..we need constant stirring by the layers of meaning found in the Scripture but we also need stirring by divine revelation which flows through those whose studies have led them into scholarship. For that I am grateful."

[A Working Preacher User](#) (August 28, 2008 at 07:04 AM)

“Good comments...I think it's important to remember that the cross is something we pick up. It's not something foisted upon us in this passage. Jesus agreed to pick up that cross. It was not laid upon him without his agreement or willingness... Also, crosses redeem in the end. It's a redemptive suffering that we're looking for and not suffering for suffering's sake. Thanks for all the good comments.”

[A Working Preacher User](#) (August 27, 2008 at 09:56 AM)

“... It's one thing to preach the cost of discipleship and quite another to live it. Visiting homes, meeting with those burdened by sickness and disease, chasing the boredom out of meetings, paying attention to who is standing next to me at the check out line...these are the places where this text will ultimately be preached by the average joe/jane in our congregational context.”

[A Working Preacher User](#) (August 26, 2008 at 08:15 PM)

“I think it is a challenge when writing a column rather than addressing a specific context; for instance, a phrase like "we are pretty poor cross-bearers." It makes perfect sense in some contexts and in others might be a bit insulting or even wrong. In my congregation there are many immigrant survivors of oppressive governments. Some of them faced death for their faith. So, I have to come at it from a different direction. I plan to use this idea of taking up the cross in the context of taking risks; these risks may entail suffering and death, but ought not be taken as an exercise in masochism and martyrdom...”



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The reach of Living the Lutheran Lectionary has expanded. The header each week tells of where the lessons are used on a regular basis. In addition to the Thursday class, they are part of study and worship in an assisted living facility and a house church. It reaches people in Kenya and Uganda and now a new contact – Burma. Pastor Suh Pi works among people of a country that is 90% Buddhist. As we meet last Thursday he was asking God to bless our study. Read about his ministry and need for support to purchase Bibles at <https://www.gofundme.com/bibles-for-myanmar>.