

19th Sunday after Pentecost, October 15, 2017

18th Sunday after Trinity, Proper 23(28)

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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

Available on line at:

www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies

or

**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

October 12, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

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

Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (First Sunday of the month at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa.



<http://www.marturia.net/blog/mandi-preaches-a-difficult-parable-matthew-221-14/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 510 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 415

“A multitude comes from the east and the west”

“Magnus Brostrup Landstad (born 7 October 1802 in Måsøy, Norway and died 8 October 1880 in Kristiania) was a Norwegian minister, psalmist and poet who published the first collection of authentic Norwegian traditional ballads in 1853. This work was criticized for unscientific methods, but today it is commonly accepted that he contributed significantly to the preservation of the traditional ballads...”
https://hymnary.org/person/Landstad_MB

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Q2SWJx0hG8> “Organist is Mark Peters. The prelude for hymn 510 in Lutheran Service Book is from Six Hymn Improvisations Set 6.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT2lo9XfkMQ> A Karaoke version – be prepared to sing quickly.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

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

Isaiah 25:6-9; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Exodus 32:1-14 or Isaiah 25:1-9
(Next Week: Isaiah 45:1-7; RCL, Exodus 33:12-33 or Isaiah 45:1-7)

*“If you’re going to have an event, there’s one thing I can virtually guarantee that you’ll need: **Food!** A few weeks ago, there was a Monday Night football gathering at a member’s house, and of course, we ate pizza. Last Sunday, we had a small gathering at the parsonage to celebrate Julia’s first birthday, complete with lunch and a birthday cake. A couple of weeks ago I attended the symposium at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and after the first day’s agenda was complete, there were appetizers galore provided for us in the cafeteria. Fifty-one Sundays each year, we have coffee hour after the service; today’s the only Sunday we’re not having coffee hour, because we’re having the picnic instead! It’s nearly a universal phenomenon that if you’re going to have an event or a celebration or a gathering of any sort, you need food.*

It shouldn’t surprise us, then, that God uses the image of a banquet, an elaborate meal, to give us an idea of the mother of all gatherings, the greatest celebration that will ever take place, the gathering of God’s people for all eternity in heaven. That’s a picture to which we can relate. That’s a picture that will make us hungry for heaven! That’s the picture that God presents to us through the prophet Isaiah in the First Lesson for the Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost. Isaiah shows us the magnificent feast that God prepares for his people, and he proudly announces that the feast is ready! The table is set. The celebration is prepared...” (continued after the reading)

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
 a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
 of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain
 the covering that is cast over all peoples,
 the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

“...Isaiah paints a picture of heaven for his readers in the opening verse of the First Lesson for today. That picture includes a menu that sounds a lot more like Christmas dinner than a football party. **“On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine- the best of meats and the finest of wines.”** This is a celebratory meal. This is a high-class event: black ties for the gentlemen and evening gowns for the ladies. This is special. This is a celebration. But why? Read on, and you will find out.

“On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.” People don’t host a big meal for no reason. If you’re going to invite people to a classy banquet, you probably have an important and exciting reason. That’s why Isaiah pictures the Lord setting the table for this banquet in the way he describes. God has set the table in the banquet hall so that his people could celebrate a stunning victory.

So what is this victory celebration? Something had trapped the entire human race. Something weighed us down and covered us up from God’s loving presence. The something was sin, and all those sins and failures to follow God’s will brought about one result: death. Death is no reason to celebrate. But our Lord’s defeat over death is! That’s why Isaiah says that the **“LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces.”** There’s no reason to be sad at this banquet, because the Lord **“will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth.”** That disgrace was our sin, but that disgrace is gone, covered and cleansed in the blood that Jesus, the Son of God, shed for us on Calvary’s cross two thousand years ago. The banquet hall of heaven will not be stained by sin or made glum with guilt, because sin and guilt will be a thing of the past for God’s people. The table is set with the perfect happiness and holiness that Jesus won...”
<https://pastorstrey.wordpress.com/2008/10/04/sermon-on-isaiah-256-9/> Pastor Johnold J. Strey...serves as the pastor of worship and education at [Crown of Life Lutheran Church](#) in Hubertus, Wisconsin. Pastor Strey and Crown of Life are affiliated with the [Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod](#) (WELS).

Psalm 23; RCL, Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 or Psalm 23 (Psalm 96: 1-9, (10-13); RCL; Psalm 99 or Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13))

““Every passage of Scripture,” (Luther) said at his table in 1532, “is impossible to be interpreted without knowledge of Christ.” Still, he gladly included grammar, history and culture as handmaidens to a Christocentric reading of the Bible. In this explanation of Psalm 23, Luther through his own knowledge of

and experience with sheep unpacks the beloved biblical metaphor of human beings as sheep and Jesus of Nazareth as their Shepherd:..." (continued after the reading)

23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

[King James Version \(KJV\)](#)
[Public Domain](#)

"...This metaphor is one of the most beautiful and comforting and yet most common of all in Scripture, when it compares his divine Majesty with a pious, faithful or—as Christ says—“good Shepherd,” and compares us poor, weak, miserable sinners with sheep. We can, however, understand this comforting and beautiful picture best when we consider the creature itself—out of which the Prophets have taken this and similar images—and diligently learn from it the traits and characteristics of a natural sheep and the office, work, and diligence of a pious shepherd. Whoever does this carefully will not only readily understand this comparison and others in Scripture concerning the shepherd and the sheep but also will find the comparisons exceedingly sweet and comforting.

A sheep must live entirely by its shepherd’s help, protection, and care. As soon as it loses him, it is surrounded by all kinds of dangers and must perish, for it is quite unable to help itself. The reason? It is a poor, weak, simple little beast that can neither feed nor rule itself, nor find the right way, nor protect itself against any kind of danger or misfortune. Moreover, it is by nature timid, shy, and likely to go astray. When it does go a bit astray and leaves its shepherd, it is unable to find its way back to him; indeed, it merely runs farther away from him. Though it may find other shepherds and sheep, that does not help it, for it does not know the voices of strange shepherds. Therefore it flees them and strays about until the wolf seizes it or it perishes some other way. . . .

This Shepherd, however, whom the prophet foretold so long before, is Christ our dear Lord, who is a shepherd much different from Moses. Moses is harsh and unfriendly toward his sheep. He drives them away into the desert, where they will find neither pasture nor water but only want. Christ, however, is the good, friendly Shepherd who goes after a famished and lost

sheep in the wilderness, seeks it there and, when he has found it, lays it on his shoulder rejoicing. He even “gives his life for his sheep.” He is a friendly Shepherd. Who would not be happy to be his sheep?” <http://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2015/11/luther-psalm-23/> *Psalms 1-72*, ed. Herman Selderhuis, *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, OT Vol. VII, pp. 187-88.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RlA27HJE5Q> Listen to a contemporary presentation of the 23rd Psalm. "Psalm 23" Ted Pearce & Miqedem LIVE at Messiah 2017

Listen to a rabbi speak of the 23rd Psalm: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z_1dING_ul "Psalm 23 explained by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi"



Tim Tebow is one of many famous Christians to use Philippians 4:13 as an inspiration for winning. - Image courtesy of StefanRalle (<http://bit.ly/1kEozPJ>)

Philippians 4:4-13; RCL, Philippians 4:1-9 (*I Thessalonians 1:1-10; RCL, the same reading*)

“...Tebow’s highly churched Southern fan base didn’t need to look up *the passage*. No, most of them knew it by heart: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:13 is one of the most popular verses in any of the 66 books of the Christian Bible, having been printed on millions of key chains and t-shirts, cellphone cases and coffee mugs. (If one wanted to argue the trinketization of Christianity, this Bible verse would be a good starting point.)

But it also one of the misunderstood, misused, and misinterpreted...” (continued after the reading)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness^[a] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned^[b] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

God's Provision

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

- a. [Philippians 4:5](#) Or *gentleness*
- b. [Philippians 4:9](#) Or *these things*—⁹*which things you have also learned*

“...Like Tebow, Philippians 4:13 functions as a kind of mystical incantation for many Christians. They recite the passage when they need to draw power from another place to defeat an enemy or conquer a difficult task. It’s a talisman like Green Lantern’s ring or He-Man’s sword...

“Do you want that job promotion? To find your soul mate? Have better sex with your spouse? Make more money? No problem. You can accomplish “all things through Christ.”

Unfortunately, this way of interpreting and applying Philippians 4:13 couldn’t be further from its actual meaning. To understand what Paul, the author of Philippians, actually meant, we have to read the verse *in context*.

Philippians is one of the “prison epistles,” which is to say, it was written during one of the many times Paul was a jailbird. So it isn’t surprising that the book draws heavily on the themes of humility and self-sacrifice...

But more than the setting, we must recognize that Philippians 4:13 is part of a larger idea. When we look at **verses 11 and 12**, the thought begins to take shape:

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Paul isn't telling Christians that they should dream bigger dreams; he is reminding them that they can endure the crushing feeling of defeat if those dreams aren't realized. He's not encouraging Christians to go out and conquer the world; he's reminding them that they can press on when the world conquers them.

As Dr. Eric Bargerhuff writes in *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible*, "[Philippians 4:13 is] not really about who has the strength to play to the best of their abilities in a sporting contest.... This verse is about having strength to be content when we are facing those moments in life when physical resources are minimal."

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible does not teach "God will give you the strength to do whatever you set your mind to." (Actually, anytime a foundational view in your theology begins with, "God will give you", stop and do a double-check.) [tweetable]God is not a heavenly bellhop or divine sugar daddy or cosmic power plant to fuel your dream-quest.[/tweetable] Instead, the Bible teaches, God is a sustainer when life feels unsustainable...

The God of the Bible—Jesus—is **better than we've imagined** because he gives us what we *actually* need: strength to survive our moments of weakness and a sense of freedom even in life's prisons.

Go write that under your eyes." <http://religionnews.com/2014/01/16/philippians-413-many-christians-misuse-iconic-verse/> Jonathan Merritt

Keeping with a theme for the week would be to start with commentary on the first verse, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."

"Cinnamon rolls are one of my favorite desserts.

I'm not talking about those out-of-the-can jobs we feed our children before we race out the door to make it to Sunday school in time. I'm talking about those delectable works of art you can only purchase at a bakery.

There's something heavenly about the way the cream cheese frosting seeps down into the sugary, cinnamon-y crevices to produce that perfect blend of spice, tang, and sweetness; it brings a "hallelujah" to my taste buds.

There's no *wrong* way to eat a cinnamon roll, but for my money there is a *right* way to eat one. Cinnamon rolls are made to be unfurled. You didn't buy a cinnamon doughnut or a cinnamon cake -- you bought a *roll*, so *unroll* it! When you start at the outside and slowly, lovingly work your way to that inner sanctum, that succulent holy-of-holies that is the center of the cinnamon roll it feels like Jesus has finally returned and decided to throw a parousia party in your mouth. Okay, maybe that's a bit much; but you cannot deny that the best bite of a cinnamon roll is without doubt that culminating center bite.

What in the world, you may be wondering, does this have to do with Philippians 4:4-7? I believe that the editors of the Revised Common Lectionary, in choosing separate the lection the way they have, have given us the center bite of the Philippian cinnamon roll.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Yes. Rejoicing in light of the Lord's goodness is good and right. "Amen," we say.

Let your gentleness be evident to all. Who among us does not wish we could embody this instruction, leading lives that reflect the tender kindness of Jesus? Again we say, "Let it be so!"

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Oh that these words were tattooed on our hearts!.. https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1505 **Jacob Myers** Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Ga.



“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 21st Chapter”

“Glory to You, O Lord”

Matthew 22:1-14; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 22:15-22; RCL, the same reading)

“Matthew’s parable about a wedding banquet gone wrong is a challenge for preaching. We are rightly mystified by the behavior of the characters in this bizarre little story. An initial invitation to come to a feast in honor of the king’s son is met with rejection (verse 3). That’s odd (nobody turns down a royal summons), but not deeply troubling. A second invitation sweetens the deal with descriptions of the elaborate preparations (verse 4) -- it’s going to be delicious! Who wouldn’t come to this party? But those invited are apparently unimpressed, and return to business as usual (verse 5). Again, this is unusual behavior -- but it’s the kind of strangeness we have learned to expect in a parable.

But then things go completely off the rails. We watch in horror as the servants sent by the king to announce the party are seized, abused, and murdered (verse 6). We didn’t see that coming! How did the stakes suddenly get so high? And the weirdness and violence are just getting started. In retaliation, the king goes to war against his own people. Enraged by their actions he unleashes an army. Before we know it, the murderers themselves are murdered, and a city (presumably the king’s own city!) is a pile of smoldering ash (verse 7).

But it gets weirder still. With our heads still spinning, we learn that the dinner is still on (verse 8)! Now the invitations go out again, this time to commoners on the “main streets” of the

(destroyed?) city (verse 9). Apparently, while soldiers pillaged and slashed -- all the while as great flames devoured the buildings outside the palace walls -- little Sterno burners toiled away silently under the sumptuous dishes in the great hall, keeping the meal hot for the eventual guests!...)
(continued after the reading)

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³ and sent his servants^[a] to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’” ⁵ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷ The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ¹² And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

a. [Matthew 22:3](#) Or *bondservants*; also verses [4](#), [6](#), [8](#), [10](#)

“...we should read the story to the end: a denouement is coming, and it’s a doozy.

With the party in full swing, the king enters the banquet hall and moves among the guests. To his dismay, he finds that one of them is not dressed properly. “Friend,” he says, “how did you get in here without a wedding robe” (verse 12)? And receiving no satisfactory answer, he has the poor guy bound and thrown out -- not just outside the hall, but into “the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (verse 13). With “friends” like that, who needs enemies?

Again, we find credulity strained to the breaking point: of course the guy isn’t dressed properly -- he was pulled in off the street at the last minute! But again, allegory, and not realism, is calling the shots here. Matthew warns his community against self-satisfaction. This king is no pushover, and if the new guests are beneficiaries of an unexpectedly generous invitation, they must nevertheless be on guard against the complacency shown by the first invitees. The doors of the kingdom community are thrown wide open, and the invitation extends literally to all. But once you come in, there are standards. You can’t go on acting like you are not at an extraordinary party.

But even if appropriate clothing is a metaphor for the need for appropriate behavior in the new, inclusive community, the parable may be saying more here than anybody expected -- and the surplus will preach. Maybe Matthew originally intended this as a stern warning to live up to the rigorous standards of a higher righteousness (5:20, 48), but the story, pushed down and contorted by allegorical demands for too long, rises at the last to assert its own delightful possibility.

Within the world of the story as told, the problem with this guy is not that he is not taking things seriously enough. No, his problem is a failure to party. The kingdom of heaven (verse 2) is a banquet, after all, and you've got to put on your party dress and get with the program. The kingdom music is playing, and it's time to get up on the dance floor. Or, as the slightly more sober, but no less theologically astute Barth put the matter: "In the last resort, it all boils down to the fact that the invitation is to a feast, and that he who does not obey and come accordingly, and therefore *festively*, declines and spurns the invitation no less than those who are unwilling to obey and appear at all..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2204 [Lance Pape](#)
Granville and Erlene Walker Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas

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



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