

22th Sunday after Pentecost October 21, 2018

21th Sunday after the Trinity Proper 24 (29)

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
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<http://carolinasnalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/mark10-27.jpg>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 690 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not listed

“Hope of the World, Thou Christ of great compassion“

“Georgia Elma Harkness (1891-1974), first woman to teach theology in an American seminary, was once a household name, but few today know who she is—and all of her writings are out of print...

She was born in Harkness, NY, a town in the Adirondacks named for her grandfather. A Methodist, she was personally converted in a revival as a teenager, and sensed a calling to serve the church. Her family was upper middle class and progressive, thereby giving her opportunities for education beyond what was available to most girls and women of her era. Avoiding the women’s colleges, she earned a B.A. (philosophy) from Cornell University in 1912...

Harkness wrote over 30 books in her lifetime. She dealt with numerous theological subjects: Christian ethics, social concern in global contexts, equality of the sexes, racial equality and integration, ...the nature of the church, a study from her own Wesleyan Methodist perspective of Calvin’s ethics, prayer and the life of devotion, mysticism, the Holy Spirit, eschatology (partially anticipating themes later made more prominent by Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann), the relation of religion to philosophy and to science, secularism (which she saw as more of a challenge than a reason to celebrate, contrasting with the early work of Harvey Cox), and apologetics...

She characterized her theological perspective as that of a “chastened liberalism.”... On the eve of the Second World War, Harkness called on liberal Protestantism to recall the meaning of the cross and the power of the resurrection... Not surrendering her pacifism, she stated that although she remained committed to liberalism, “it was a chastened and deepened liberalism.” Human moral progress was possible, but did not follow an evolutionary certainty, and was dependant always on the grace of God. She still considered traditional formulations of original sin to be problematic, but recognized anew the power of sin in both individuals and social structures...”

--pilgrimpathways.wordpress.com/2010/02/20/

- https://hymnary.org/person/Harkness_GE
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Be2SV9YqpY> Andrew Remillard, piano A different tune than LSB
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W52Y9vc7ryM> Organist is Mark Peters. The prelude for hymn 690 in Lutheran Service Book is from Hymn Prelude Library Vol. 3 (tunes D, E).

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.](#)

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20; Revised Common Lectionary, (RCL), Isaiah 53:4-12 or Job 38:1-7, (34-41) (Next week: Reformation Day: Revelation 14:6-7; RCL, 23rd Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 25 (30), Jeremiah 31:7-9 or Job 42:1-6, 10-17)

“Ecclesiastes, like the other Wisdom books, has much to say about practical issues in life. As such, Solomon, being the richest man in the world at the time, had much to say about money. Here,

in this section, we see seven realities about God and money. The first five realities deal with my relationship to money itself. The last realities deal with our relationship between God and money...”
(continued after the reading)

¹⁰ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. ¹¹ When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? ¹² Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

¹³ There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, ¹⁴ and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶ This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? ¹⁷ Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.

¹⁸ Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment^[a] in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. ¹⁹ Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. ²⁰ For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

- a. [Ecclesiastes 5:18](#) Or and see good

“SEVEN REALITIES ABOUT MONEY AND GOD”

“1. The more money I have, the more money I want.

“The one who loves money is never satisfied with money, and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10, HCSB) {Holman Christian Standard Bible}...

2. The more money I have, the more money I spend.

“When good things increase, the ones who consume them multiply; what, then, is the profit to the owner, except to gaze at them with his eyes?” (Ecclesiastes 5:11, HCSB)...

3. The more money I have, the more I worry.

“The sleep of the worker is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of the rich permits him no sleep.” (Ecclesiastes 5:12, HCSB)...

4. The more money I have, the more money I lose.

“There is a sickening tragedy I have seen under the sun: wealth kept by its owner to his harm. That wealth was lost in a bad venture...” (Ecclesiastes 5:13–14, HCSB)

Let me be clear on this point, because it’s easy to misunderstand what Solomon is saying. The essence of his message is this: You can’t lose what you don’t have.⁷...

5. The more money I have, the more money I leave behind.

"...so when he fathered a son, he was empty-handed. As he came from his mother's womb, so he will go again, naked as he came; he will take nothing for his efforts that he can carry in his hands. This too is a sickening tragedy: exactly as he comes, so he will go. What does the one gain who struggles for the wind? What is more, he eats in darkness all his days, with much sorrow, sickness, and anger." (Ecclesiastes 5:14–17, HCSB)...

6. My ability to earn money is a gift from God.

"Here is what I have seen to be good: it is appropriate to eat, drink, and experience good in all the labor one does under the sun during the few days of his life God has given him, because that is his reward." (Ecclesiastes 5:18, HCSB)...

7. My ability to enjoy money is also a gift from God.

"God has also given riches and wealth to every man, and He has allowed him to enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. This is a gift of God, for he does not often consider the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with the joy of his heart." (Ecclesiastes 5:19–20, HCSB)...

Contentment is finding pleasure and fulfillment in what God has chosen to give. God gave the blessing, the suffering, the toil, the days, the food, the drink. God also gives the gift of joy, the ability to enjoy the simple life. It is one thing to have a simple life; it is another thing to be content with it.¹¹ Contentment is the key to living with dollars and sense."

➤ <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jimerwin/2017/04/07/ecclesiastes-510-20-dollars-sense/>

My name is Jim Erwin. Welcome to my site patheos.com/blogs/jimerwin. You can look around this site and find out more about me. I am a country postmodern pastor in the digital world.

Psalm 119:9-16; RCL, Psalm 91:9-16 or Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c (Psalm 46; RCL, Psalm 126 or Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22))

"As mentioned many times, Psalm 119 is an acrostic psalm, which means that each line within the 22 sections commences with the sequential letters of the Hebrew alphabet – and amazing feat of sheer inspiration! Today's section starts with a question and answer: "...How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word..." Why are young people highlighted in this verse? Is it because they are probably the most vulnerable of age groups?... (continued after the reading)

Beth

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰ With my whole heart **I** seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

¹¹ **I** have stored up your word in my heart,

that **I** might not sin against you.

¹² Blessed are you, O LORD;

teach me your statutes!

¹³ With my lips **I** declare

all the rules^[a] of your mouth.

¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies **I** delight

as much as in all riches.

¹⁵ **I** will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶ **I** will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

a. [Psalm 119:13](#) Or *all the just decrees*

"I have rearranged the verses according to the three tenses, past, present and future as a response to that question.

The present tense statement is a continuous song and prayer of praise! "...I praise you, O LORD..." followed by a request: "...teach me your decrees..." As we have reflected on Psalm 119 over the years in these pages, we could learn much from verse 12 - by continuously praising God and learning more about God...

The past tense section of these verses can also teach us more about reflecting on and confessing our sin; and praying for God's help to overcome these temptations. "...I have tried hard to find you - don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us. I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches..." The psalmist sounds so very human as we, too, struggle to live godly lives, but often we search for God in the wrong places, or else we listen to the wrong advice. "...I have tried hard to find you..." followed by another request: "...don't let me wander from your commands..."

The future tense section of verses is about the various commitments we make to God—but do we keep them? "...I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word..." The important words here are "I will"; "reflect" "delight" and "not forget". "I will" – this is something for which only you are accountable; and it is only you who has to take responsibility for those promised actions. The other highlighted words: "reflect" "delight" and "not forget" – each of which are to do with our will and our mind; and are actions that we deliberately choose to do. Yet, "delight" is something quite different to a disciplined approach of reflection and study. When we "delight" in something, we have an intense feeling of joy, pleasure, satisfaction, even of enchantment or glee – a lovely old fashioned word that is so appropriate for our responses to God! Finding delight in God is a lifetime adventure, to which God encourages and empowers us to enter into. Have you ever consciously "delighted" in God's presence?"

http://www.thetimelesspsalms.net/w_resources/lent5b_2018.htm Joan Stott

Hebrews 4:1-13 (14-16); RCL, Hebrews 5:1-10 (Romans 3:19-28; RCL, Hebrews 7:23-28)

"If you've ever had to work and work and work, if you've ever been worn out and exhausted, when you feel like you can't go on but you have to, when you're drained and tired and spent—at times like those, you know how refreshing it is, and what a relief it is, to finally get a rest..."

And so our Epistle reading for today, from Hebrews 4, is about being able to get that kind of a rest. In fact, it's about an even greater kind of rest. God's rest. The rest that he has for us, in Christ. And so our theme this morning: "Entering His Rest."

Now being from the Book of Hebrews, it should be no surprise that our text today has plenty of Old Testament references. And it does. It presumes the readers would be able to pick up on the Old Testament imagery it employs. But maybe we're not as conversant with that background as we might be. So I think first it would be helpful to explain some of that Old Testament background.

And really, it's talking about several things here. One is the institution of the Sabbath as a day of rest for the people of Israel. Another is the rest that the people would have when they came into the Promised Land. But, still another, there was a problem, because not all the people would enter that rest. And so the writer to the Hebrews is recalling these points to make application to us Christians..."

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2015/10/entering-his-rest-sermon-on-hebrews-41-13-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Pastor Charles Henrickson, St Matthew Lutheran Church in Bonne Terre, Missouri

4 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. ² For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.^[a] ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest,’” *Cited from Ps. 95:11*

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” ⁵ And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

⁶ Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷ again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.” *See ch. 3:7, 8, Cited from Ps. 95:7-11*

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God^[b] would not have spoken of another day later on. ⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from

his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- a. [Hebrews 4:2](#) Some manuscripts *it did not meet with faith in the hearers*
- b. [Hebrews 4:8](#) Greek *he*

"Hebrews 4:12-16 falls into two parts. Verses 12-13 in their context form a postscript to the argument of 3:7 - 4:11, providing extra motivation for the exhortation of 4:11. However, they also make sense on their own, and verse 12 is widely quoted by itself. Verses 14-16 begin a section that spans all the way through chapter 10, focusing on Jesus as high priest. The verses here can well be termed a thesis for the larger section, presenting the key ideas about Jesus as high priest and stating the exhortation the author sees resulting from these ideas...

The metaphor of God's word as a sword is by no means unique to this passage, though it perhaps pushes the metaphor further than anywhere else. Ephesians 6:17 includes the "sword of the Spirit" as the word of God among the armor Christians are to wear. Revelation pictures the glorified Christ with a sword coming out of his mouth (1:16; 2:12; 19:15, 21), and the connection to judgment there is even stronger than it is in Hebrews. At the forefront of the image in our passage is the penetrating action of the sword, action making known to God the deepest parts of our beings...

Hebrews 2:17 first introduced the idea of Christ being a high priest, but it is here in 4:14 that this role begins to be explained. Our passage focuses on the implications of the high priest designation, its justification as a role not being given until chapter 5...

Hebrews 4:15 emphasizes Jesus' ability to identify with human weakness, an ability resulting from his own human status. This ties in the argument of chapter 2 that it is Jesus' human status, including his having experienced suffering and death, that enables him to save humankind. Thus while it is important that Jesus is at God's right hand in heaven, it is equally important that Jesus is human. Since he has himself faced the full spectrum of temptations, he does not judge us harshly.

This is the conclusion drawn out in verse 16. We may approach him "with boldness," expecting to receive mercy and grace. Indeed, his very throne is described as a "throne of grace." Here we may tie in verses 12-13, for while our whole beings are exposed to God -- we can hide nothing -- this is cause not for despair but for hope...

The ultimate encouragement we are to receive from all this is stated at the end of verse 14: "Let us hold fast to our confession." There should be no greater encouragement to us as Christians than that of the mercy and grace God promises to us, mercy and grace that are based on Christ having loved us enough to identify with us to the point of suffering and death.

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1413 *Scott Shauf*
Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina

Mark 10:23-31; RCL, Mark 10:35-45 (John 8:31-36 or Matthew 11:12-19: RCL, Mark 10:46-52)

“...Let’s go back to the rich man’s question that initiated this whole incident: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” His question already hints at a deeper answer. What can anyone do in order to inherit anything? Inheritance is more about belonging to a family than earning something, and this explains what is going on in vv. 28-30. Leaving everything and following Jesus, as Peter says the disciples have done, brings them into a new family. This household of God is an incredibly rich present reality, but one that is marked with persecutions. It is also a future reality characterized by fullness of life where first and last will no longer have any relevance.

Finally, keep in mind that for an inheritance to be given and experienced, someone has to die. How can this be? Thanks be to Jesus, the good teacher, that all things are possible with God!”
(continued after the reading)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 10th Chapter”

²³ And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”** ²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, **“Children, how difficult it is^[a] to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”** ²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, ^[b] “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, **“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”** ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” ²⁹ Jesus said, **“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”**

- a. [Mark 10:24](#) Some manuscripts add *for those who trust in riches*
- b. [Mark 10:26](#) Some manuscripts to *one another*

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

“What will this man whom Jesus loves do? The text says he became dismayed, and he went away (the opposite of following) grieving. Doubtless Jesus commanded a hard thing, but why this overly sad reaction? Only now are we told, “For he was having many possessions.” (If we had been told this detail from the outset, would it have skewed our perceptions of him?)

Verses 23-31 expand upon the implications of Jesus’ statement. The first observation Jesus makes pertains to the difficulty that those with wealth have in entering God’s dominion. The disciples -- who were among the lower class and whose perspective had been shaped by a culture that associated wealth with honor, status, and divine favor -- are confused. If those who appear

most blessed have more difficulty getting into the kingdom than a camel going through the eye of a needle, then, as they ask, "Who can be saved?"

It's a question we -- who most likely are among the world's most privileged -- must also ask. Wealth is clearly a problem. The case of the well-behaved, socially-responsible, apparently-blessed rich man demonstrates how possessions can interfere with the more important need to follow Jesus as a disciple along the way that will lead to a cross. With respect to salvation, however, the rich only have a bigger challenge than that faced by anyone else. Note the general declaration Jesus makes in v. 24: "Children, how difficult it is to enter into the dominion of God!"

Ultimately we all have the same problem of earning our way into salvation. It can't be done. What, then, is the answer? Gazing at his disciples, just as he gazed at the rich man, and loving them just as much, Jesus says, "With humans it is impossible but not with God, for everything is possible with God." (v. 27) This is not a cheap grace solution that allows us to carry on with business as usual. Something still has to change for God's impossible possibility to be realized.

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2640 **Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman** Glatfelter Professor of Biblical Studies, United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg, Penn

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Nearly irresistible is the urge to soften this passage's demands.

That urge has been around a long time. For example:

An ancient scribe added words to make 10:24 read "how hard it is *for those who trust in riches* to enter the kingdom of God" (see the King James Version), as if the problem highlighted by the rich man is not being rich but putting faith in the wealth a person has or craves. This solution ignores the overall thrust of 10:23-25, where Jesus speaks quite plainly about the real obstacle that wealth presents.

A ninth-century interpreter made up the idea of a low gate into Jerusalem called "the eye of the needle," through which camels could pass only if stooped and unladen. Presumably, then, Jesus criticizes only the proud rich, or only the rich who are not extremely determined to enter the kingdom. Unfortunately, no such gate ever existed, and Jesus' words in 10:23-25 fail to recognize such distinctions about wealthy people's *attitudes*.

Countless preachers have told us Jesus omnisciently perceived that wealth was this particular man's special "weak spot," and so he zeroed in on it only to expose the man's distinctive shortcoming. This gives us permission to assume that Jesus would not ask us to part with our possessions, just those things that we *really* do not want to give up--only our aggressive driving or fried foods, for example.

Other preachers assert that Jesus only tests the man by issuing a demand meant to expose the futility of his supposedly self-striving piety. But such an interpretation makes a mockery of Jesus' love for the man (10:21) and the man's grief (10:22). If Jesus is not serious, why does he not chase after the crestfallen man, saying, "Wait! Here comes the good part! Let me show you grace now!"?...

Jesus' explanation is rather clear: just as large animals simply do not fit through tiny openings, so the wealthy do not fit in the kingdom of God. Even a rich man who has successfully kept all the Decalogue's laws governing social responsibilities, as this devout man has, cannot fit.¹

Instead of trying to measure Jesus' place among socioeconomic theorists or questioning his commitment to Protestant theology, we should note additional aspects of this passage, which beckon us to consider its nuances without denying its shocking message:

This is the only time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus makes such a demand about possessions. Although he calls everyone to radical renunciation (8:34-37; 10:28-31), the particularities of the call vary across the Gospel.

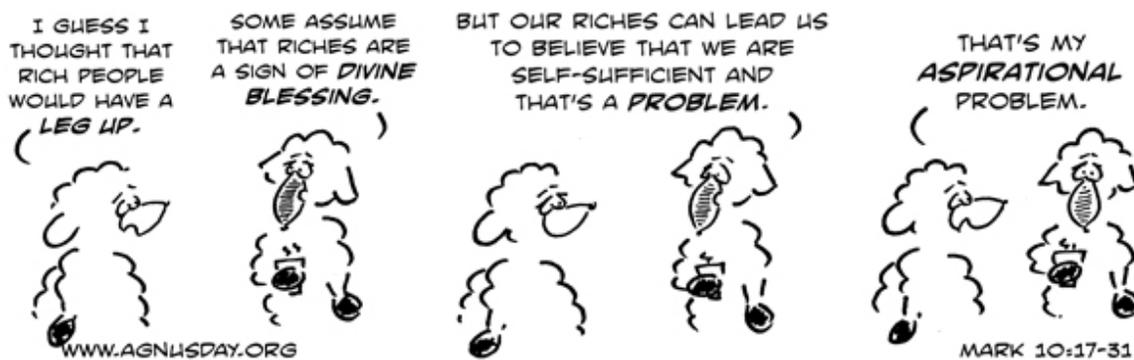
According to 4:19, wealth and its deceptions are not the only things capable of choking the word of God. Being rich is not the unforgivable sin; perhaps neither is it an entirely unscalable obstacle.

Jesus' *primary* call is a call to a life of discipleship, not to a life of poverty. His words *come* and *follow* in 10:21 recall other calls to discipleship (1:16-20; 2:14; 8:34; 15:41), and they stem from his love for the man.

In Jesus' context, despite the legacy of the biblical prophets, many people viewed the wealthy as specially blessed by God. The disciples call attention to this in 10:26 when they gasp, "Then who can be saved?" If Jesus has categorically ruled out the rich, then can *anyone* make it into God's kingdom? When we consider all that commends the rich man in this passage, Jesus stuns us by putting the kingdom of God so far out of reach. But, by contrast, this emphasizes his subsequent promise that all things are possible for God (10:27..

In 10:21, Jesus does not tell the man merely to separate himself from his possessions, to burn them or to walk away from them. He goes a step further by instructing him to redistribute his wealth among the poor. Jesus calls for more than a change in the man's bottom line and more than a permanent relinquishment of his acquisitions; he tells him to change his relationship to the poor--to help them, to identify with them... "

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=402 **Matt Skinner** Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn



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