

## 4th Sunday after Pentecost June 28, 2020

3rd Sunday after Trinity Proper 8 (13)  
Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

# Living the Lutheran 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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- <https://lutheran-church-regina.com/blogs/post/sermon-pr-ted-giese-season-of-pentecost-proper-8-sunday-july-2nd-2017-matthew-1034-42-who-is-above-jesus>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 685 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 409**

**“Let us ever walk with Jesus”**

“This hymn by Sigismund von Birken (1626–1681) was first published in his “Sacred Grains of Incense or Hymns of Devotion” (Nuremberg, 1652). He was a pastor’s son who had studied theology but gave it up and found his place as a writer of poetry. As a child Birken experienced the trauma of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648), which included exile, severe illness and being orphaned by age sixteen...

Text In LSB the hymn is placed under the heading “Sanctification.” It is placed there because the hymn speaks to the response of the baptized to the new life received through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The new life is a regenerated life born anew, as John’s Gospel reminds us, by water and the Spirit. The Small Catechism states that baptizing with water “indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever” (LSB, p. 325)... study by Charles Gustafson”

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQqPLU9YIF4> Lutheran Quartet Acapella version from TLH with onscreen lyrics.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-aBUXgplOE> 2GuitarGirls Text: Sigismund von Birken; translation Lutheran Book of Worship, alt.
- <https://danforrest.com/music-catalog/let-us-ever-walk-with-jesus/> Choral presentation by Dan Forrest . A new arrangement of this ancient, endearing German hymn which was part of Bach’s Chorale harmonizations

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® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**O. T. - “*But Jeremiah the prophet went his way...*”**

**Psalm – “I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word”**

**Epistle – “What then shall we say?”**

**Gospel – “*Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.*”**

**Jeremiah 28:5-9; Revised Common Lectionary, (RCL), Genesis 22:1-14 or the same reading from Jeremiah (Next week: Zechariah 9:9-12; RCL, Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 or Zechariah 9:9-12)**

*The opening of the Jeremiah book indicates that the materials in the book are associated with the prophet’s work in Jerusalem from the time of Kings Josiah (640-609 BCE) through the administrations of his sons Jehoiakim (609-598) and Zedekiah (597-587). Josiah was a good and godly king who achieved religious reform and a measure of political independence for Judah.*

After he was tragically killed at the pass at Megiddo in 609, Judah's downhill slide into Babylonian domination and finally exile (597, 587) began.

Jeremiah tried to call his nation back to faithful covenant living (Jeremiah 7, 26) but was opposed and persecuted. Banned from speaking in public, the prophet had dictated his message to his secretary Baruch, who passed it on to Jehudi, one of the king's people. While Jehudi read Jeremiah's words from the scroll, the king sliced them off, a few lines at a time, and arrogantly tossed them into the fire (Jeremiah 36). Another incident: At one point Jeremiah delivered a scathing woe-speech to Jehoiakim, contrasting his oppressive and evil policies with those of his father Josiah and announcing that the king would be buried with all the honor of the jackass he was! (Jer 22:13-19). Clearly the prophet and the day's leading politicians did not get along!

Today's text is a part of a narrative in chapters 27 and 28, set in the fourth year of Judah's last king, King Zedekiah, that is, 594/3 BCE. Fulfilling a command of the LORD, Jeremiah goes about wearing a wooden ox yoke to dramatize his message: submit to the yoke of Babylon! Jeremiah appeared before an international conference in Jerusalem, which included representatives from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon. Apparently they were trying to decide what to do about the Babylonian problem (27:1-3). The prophet's message (from the LORD!) to them was clear: Don't rebel! (27:5-11). He delivered the same message to King Zedekiah (27:12-15) and to the priests and his own people (27:16-22).

Chapter 28 introduces the prophet Hananiah who delivers a private message to Jeremiah. He claims the message is from the same LORD Jeremiah represents and promises that the king and the exiles will be back home in two years (28:1-4)...”

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=91](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=91)  
[James Limburg](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

## Hananiah the False Prophet Verses 1-17

### 28

<sup>5</sup> Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, <sup>6</sup> and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. <sup>7</sup> Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. <sup>8</sup> The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. <sup>9</sup> As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”

*<sup>10</sup> Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke them. <sup>11</sup> And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years." But Jeremiah the prophet went his way...*

*<sup>17</sup> In that same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hananiah died.*

The world of Jeremiah has been turned upside down. Jeremiah himself has been partly responsible for this upside-down-world since his very call as a prophet is "to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow" (Jeremiah 1:10). The world as God's people knew it was collapsing before their very eyes because they had broken the covenant with their God. It was Jeremiah's vocation to bring to an end to the covenant Israel made with God at Sinai and codified in the book of Deuteronomy.

Whereas normally the role of a prophet was to pray and intercede on behalf of the people, in Jeremiah 7:16 God instructs Jeremiah to no longer do so. Mt. Zion was considered the mighty fortress of God and impenetrable because of the presence of Yahweh (cf. Psalm 46; 48), yet in Jeremiah 21:1-10 Jeremiah calls upon Zedekiah to surrender Jerusalem over to the Babylonians.

According to the book of Deuteronomy, exile was deemed the curse of the covenant (cf. Deuteronomy 28:49); yet in 24:1-10, God deems exiles as good and those remaining in Jerusalem as worthless and rotten. The Judean king was considered God's anointed, the Messiah, who was to rule over the nations with an iron rod (cf. Psalm 2); yet in Jeremiah 27:12-13, Jeremiah calls upon King Zedekiah to submit to, and serve the king of Babylon.

In Jeremiah 27 Jeremiah places a yoke on his neck as a sign of the impending yoke of Nebuchadnezzar's rule upon the region. Jeremiah calls upon King Zedekiah and the people not to resist the rule of the Babylon since it is Yahweh who has given him rule over the nations and creation. Whereas previously the role of the prophets was to call upon Israel's kings to resist allegiances to foreign kings or powers (e.g., Hosea 5:13; 8:9-11), according to Jeremiah it would now be false prophets who say such words (27:14-15).

Jeremiah warns the people that it will be the false prophets who will announce a quick end to Babylonian rule (27:16-17). So when Hananiah announces, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, which King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon" (Jeremiah 28:2-3), these words are in direct opposition to the message of Jeremiah. In dramatic fashion, Hananiah goes on to take the yoke from Jeremiah's neck and breaks it as a sign that the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar's rule will come to an end within two years (28:10-11)...

The form of Hananiah's speech and his prophetic actions are no different than that of Jeremiah and are consistent with that of biblical prophets. Hananiah employs the traditional messenger formula, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel," announces a salvation

promise in the form of “I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon” (28:2), performs a prophetic sign by breaking Jeremiah’s yoke, and concludes his speech with the formula, “says the LORD” in 28:4...

In 28:8 Jeremiah accuses Hananiah of ignoring the prophetic tradition that warned of judgment due to covenant disobedience and announced that exile would not be short-lived (e.g. Hosea 3:4). Jeremiah, possibly in a sarcastic tone, wishes Hananiah’s announcement to come to pass in 28:6.

Yet because he is a truth teller, Jeremiah provides a counterargument in 28:7-8, however unpopular that may have been to his audience. He rests his ultimate trust in the providence of God to affirm true prophecy (28:9; cf. Deuteronomy 18:21-22). Not only does the death of Hananiah demonstrate his prophecy to be false (28:15-17; Deuteronomy 18:19-20), but final form of the book demonstrates Jeremiah’s prophecy to be true. Discernment is required from God’s people to determine the true word of the LORD...

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2100](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2100)  
Bo Lim Associate Professor of Old Testament, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, Wash.  
<https://spu.edu/about-spu/statement-of-faith>

**Psalm 119:1-10 (11-16); RCL, Psalm 13 or Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 (Psalm 145:1-14; RCL, Psalm 45:10-17 /Song of Solomon 2:8-13 or Psalm 145:8-14)**

*“This long psalm deserves a long introduction. The author is unnamed; older commentators almost universally said it is a psalm of David, composed throughout his entire life. More modern commentators sometimes conclude that it is post-exilic, coming from the days of Nehemiah or Ezra. It may be that David was the author, but we can’t say this with certainty, and it is not necessary to know; if it were important, God would have preserved the name of David to this psalm. No matter who the author was, it was likely written over some period of time and later compiled, because there is not a definite flow of thought from the beginning of the psalm to the end. The sections and verses are not like a chain, where one link is connected to the other, but like a string of pearls where each pearl has equal, but independent value.*

*Psalm 119 is arranged in an acrostic pattern. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and this psalm contains 22 units of 8 verses each. Each of the 22 sections is given a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each line in that section begins with that letter. The closest parallel to this pattern in Scripture is found in Lamentations 3, which is also divided into 22 sections, and a few other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures use an acrostic pattern.*

*Since this is a psalm glorifying God and His word, it refers to Scripture over and over again. Psalm 119 is remarkable for how often it refers to God’s written revelation, His word. It is referred to in almost every verse. The Masoretes (a group of Jewish scholars between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) said that the word of God is mentioned in every verse except Psalm 119:122. Other people analyze this differently (with disagreement about verses 84, 90, 121, and 132). But Scripture is mentioned in at least 171 of the 176 verses...”*

- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-119/>  
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## Your Word Is a Lamp to My Feet

### Aleph

- 119** <sup>[a]</sup> Blessed are those whose way is blameless,  
who walk in the law of the LORD!
- 2** Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,  
who seek him with their whole heart,
- 3** who also do no wrong,  
but walk in his ways!
- 4** You have commanded your precepts  
to be kept diligently.
- 5** Oh that my ways may be steadfast  
in keeping your statutes!
- 6** Then I shall not be put to shame,  
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.
- 7** I will praise you with an upright heart,  
when I learn your righteous rules.<sup>[b]</sup>
- 8** I will keep your statutes;  
do not utterly forsake me!

### **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<sup>[c]</sup> 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.

“Christians generally have not been in love with Psalm 119.

It is too long: 187 verses, the longest chapter in the Bible. It has the "law" as its major interest or theme, repeatedly using synonyms to make the point. If taken seriously, it might undo all our efforts to set people free from the burdens which a law-oriented life might impose on its unfortunate victims. Besides, Ephesians 2:15 clearly says that, "we who are in Christ," are set free from such obligations.

But the "law" was not an alien subject years ago when we old-timers went to seminary. Especially in homiletics class we were urged to preach both law and Gospel. Preferably, one should prepare the hearers for the Gospel by using the law to convict them of their sins. Then they would gladly hear the good news of God's forgiveness. Perhaps that is why the catechism begins with an explanation of the Ten Commandments rather than with Baptism where our life of faith began...

Here we find one who was so in love with God, so full of joy and thankfulness, that the law is received as a special gift. It is as if a bride has been given a diamond ring from her groom. It is a sure sign of promises made and love freely given.

So, holding it up to the light is a continual source of joy and assurance. Even in times of sadness or tension, it is something to admire. The psalmist sees God as the Creator of all that exists, including the psalmist's own life. Yahweh is the one who rescued Israel from slavery and has all human history in his hand. The covenant at Sinai was a special event when Israel became the chosen and covenanted people of God. The gift of a land, and the choosing of Zion as the Lord's dwelling place on earth, combine with everything else to make the psalmist's heart overfull of praise and thankfulness. No wonder those who put together Israel's hymnal, the Psalter, included this outpouring of one person's heart to be used by generations of worshipers since...

Psalm 119 does not fit any one type of psalm such as individual lament, praise or thanksgiving. While the law is a continuing theological focus, using eight synonyms to express this, there are other foci as well: creation, sacred history, personal lament over persecution, praise for God's presence and deliverance,

To gain these perspectives one must move beyond verses 1-8. But then, every pericope needs to be understood in its larger context. All writers emphasize the Temple worship led by musicians, priests and choruses as the place where this great piece found its home."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=464](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=464)

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### **Romans 7:1-13; RCL, Romans 6:12-23 (Romans 7:14-25a; RCL, Romans 7:15-25a)**

*"The Apostle Paul tells about a person who was married to a demanding perfectionist. He laid the law down to her day after day. He made insistent demands on her behavior. There was no escaping his cruel guilt trips. No matter how hard she tried nothing she ever did was good enough to please him. It was impossible to live up to his standards of behavior and conduct. No matter how hard she tried, she was a failure.*

*Because of his persistent attitudes her feelings altered between fear of his exacting demands and judgment to a sense of complete failure, guilt, resentment and hostility. Her situation was hopeless. He was perfect and she was just the opposite. Living with him was impossible.*

*How long could she go on in this situation? Secretly she wished he were dead. Nevertheless, he was in perfect health and strict moralist. He wasn't going to go away. He wasn't going to die and, of course, divorce was out of the picture.*

*Then would you know it, she met another man. This man was everything she ever wanted. Yes, he was perfect, but his perfection was balanced with love...*

*In time, he asked her to be his. Oh, yes, he was aware of her present state. She belonged to another man. She was married. Moreover, the law was very clear about adultery. "The law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives." When a person dies that is the end of the authority of the law. However, after he dies she is free to marry anyone she pleases.*

*Remember, this old man was not going to die, and he would never consent to divorce so there was only one alternative. She would have to die! Then the law could have no effect on her. She could marry whomever she pleased and be innocent.*

*I know. You are asking the question, "But if she were dead, how could she possibly marry her suitor?"*

*There is only one way. She would have to die and rise from the dead! (Illustration by Hal Lindsey adapted from Liberation of the Planet Earth, p.179)... " (continued after the reading)*

### **Released from the Law Verses 1-6**

**7** Or do you not know, brothers<sup>[a]</sup>—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? **2** For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage.<sup>[b]</sup> **3** Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

**4** Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

**5** For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

**6** But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.<sup>[c]</sup>

### **The Law and Sin Verses 7-25**

**7** What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I

would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." <sup>8</sup> But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. <sup>9</sup> I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. <sup>10</sup> The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. <sup>11</sup> For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. <sup>12</sup> So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure...

- a. [Romans 7:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*; also verse [4](#)
- b. [Romans 7:2](#) Greek *law concerning the husband*
- c. [Romans 7:6](#) Greek *of the letter*

Please keep in mind the context of Romans chapters five and six. The apostle Paul has stressed "the believer has died to sin (6:2) and to law (7:4). He is free from sin (6:18) and from law (7:3). He is 'justified from sin' (6:7) and discharged 'from law' (7:6). He walks in newness of life (6:4) and serves in newness of Spirit (7:6)" (Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 270).

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).

### **OUR POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE LAW (7:1–6)**

#### ***The principle (v. 1)***

Death settles all scores. You cannot prosecute a dead man. "Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?" When life ceases, law no longer has power over that person.

Paul's use of the word "law" refers to a standard of conduct that is generally agreed to and expected of men in society. We are expected to live up to the laws of the land which is a standard of conduct for our behavior. The Law of Moses in the Old Testament expresses this kind of law. In a much wider sense it is that unspoken standard of behavior that people hold universally. In every society there is an unspoken standard of conduct to which is referred to. No matter what his background, every person in a society accepts a standard of conduct. Romans chapter two describes such a standard of behavior. All laws lose their power when a person dies.

#### ***The illustration (vv. 2–3)***

Paul uses an illustration on marriage to declare a general principle about our spiritual marriage to Christ. The law only has authority over a man for as long as he lives. Death of either spouse ends a marriage and the hold of the law over that relationship. A second marriage is

legitimate only if death has terminated the first. If the husband dies, then she is free to marry again. See Matthew 5:32; I Corinthians 7:15, 39...

What is the purpose of the law? It is to hold the person guilty who breaks it. It condemns the lawbreaker. The law never says, "Hey, you are doing a great job. Keep it up!" It does not come along side and give you the power to obey it. All it can do is point its finger and say, "You are guilty!"...The purpose of the law is to set a standard and bring condemnation and guilt to those who do not live up to it. Moreover, it proves to us that we cannot please God by fulfilling the law. No one is capable.

Now that is just where the good news comes in. What we could not do, God does in His marvelous grace.

***The application (vv. 4–6)***

Don't get side tracked with the woman in this illustration. Marriage is just the explanation. The point of Paul's illustration is not that the woman has two husbands. The point Paul is making is what the death of the first husband does to the woman's relationship to the law...

"Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God" (v. 4).

Who died? Paul changes characters in his illustration. "You" died. We believers in Jesus Christ are portrayed in the woman. When did you die? When you believed on Christ...

***Verses 5 and 6 contrasts two marriages.***

***Pre-conversion life (v. 5)***

Our life before Christ is described with the words "flesh," "sin," "law," "death." I was married to Adam and all that relationship produced was death. My human nature as it is controlled and directed by sin stood guilty and condemned. "Flesh" here signifies man in his ruined condition or the total corruption in which all the children of Adam's race are born. The law exposes our solidarity with Adam...

***The new life married to Christ (v. 6)***

...The death is the believer's death through union with Christ. We died to the law through the death of our first husband. When Christ was crucified the first husband died. Now we are tied to Jesus. He is our life and we are now acting according to our true nature...

**THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW (7:7–13)**

***The law defines sin for us (v. 7b).***

The law cannot deliver the sinner. It is powerless to do so. It only makes the bondage bitterer. Does that make the law sinful? No, it merely exposes sin wherever it finds it...

***The law exposes our depraved sinful nature (v. 8).***

We want to do what is forbidden. Our real problem is indwelling sin, not the law (vv. 5, 8–9)... The law has a way of exposing us like when we see the signs that say: "Speed Limit 55," or "No fishing," "No walking on grass." The law brings out the worst in us. It seems to dare us to do it. It exposes our sinful nature. We learn what the law is and we want what is forbidden...

The law doesn't cause sin; it discovers it and reveals our sinful nature to us. It strips away our disguises and deceit and brings it to light. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:9).

***The law brings condemnation for sin (vv. 8b–13; 6:23).***

...The power of the Law brings conviction of sin. We see ourselves for what we really are and we die. It kills our arrogant pride. It exposes the seriousness of our sin and unbelief. It is my sin, not someone else's. "Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned." "Oh God woe is me!" is the cry of the sinner exposed to the Law of God. The purpose of the law is to reveal my desperate need for God's abundant grace in Jesus Christ. It cannot save. It was never intended to save us..."

- <https://www.abideinchrist.com/messages/rom7v1.html> Read more about this Baptist based ministry at <https://www.abideinchrist.com/missions/brochurewil.html>

**Matthew 10:34-42; RCL, Matthew 10: 40-42 (Matthew 11:25-30; RCL, Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30)**

*"Today Jesus tells us that he came to bring us three things: "A Sword, a Cross, and a Life." Are you sure you want these things? Let's find out.*

*Our text is the Holy Gospel for today, from Matthew chapter 10. Jesus has been instructing his disciples in this chapter, preparing them for what they're getting themselves in for. And it's not going to be a bed of roses. Because some of these roses are going to have thorns. Are you ready for this?*

*Yes, are you ready for this? Because what Jesus tells his disciples here, about the conflict and suffering that following him will bring—that still applies to us. It will apply to you. If you follow Jesus as his disciple, there will be conflict, there will be suffering, that you will encounter precisely because you are Christ's follower..."*

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2017/07/a-sword-a-cross-and-a-life-sermon-on-matthew-1034-42-by-pr-charles-henrickson/>

Rev. Charles Henrickson St Matthew Lutheran Church in Bonne Terre, Missouri

**"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter of St. Matthew"**

**The Twelve Apostles Verses 1-4**

**Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles Verses 5-15**

**Persecution Will Come Verses 16-25**

**Have No Fear Verses 26- 33**

**Not Peace, but a Sword Verses 34-39**

***34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.***

## Rewards Verses 40-42

***40 "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41 The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."***

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

## Not Peace, but a Sword Verses 34-39

"Jesus says, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." This doesn't square up with what we expect from Jesus, or does it? It is Jesus speaking of Himself. He Should know, shouldn't He? - It's important to note that our Gospel text this morning starts in the middle of something; And if you've ever walked into the middle of something, you'll know that things aren't always exactly what they appear to be at first glance. Today's Gospel lesson starts in the middle of Jesus sending out His twelve handpicked disciples to do 'a kind of' mission work, this is well before Jesus' Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection, which means it's before His ascension which the Gospel of Matthew likewise details in its last chapter, Chapter 28.

*What does this mean?* Well at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, at the Ascension, Jesus - like He does in Matthew chapter 10 - sends out His disciples - that would be 11 of the very same 12 men, this time minus Judas Iscariot, only it's a bit different - in Matthew 28 Jesus sends them out with these familiar words "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."[\[1\]](#) In Chapter 10 of the Gospel of Matthew Jesus doesn't send them out to *All Nations* rather He is sending the twelve only to the Jewish people. In the part leading up to our Gospel reading this morning it says that Jesus instructed these twelve in Chapter 10 saying, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[\[2\]](#) That would be just Jewish people. Is the picture starting to get a bit clearer?

At the end of the Gospel of Matthew they are sent out by a Jesus who had conquered Sin, Death and the Devil, these men, by that time, had become witnesses to His crucifixion, death and resurrection, in Chapter 10 as Jesus sends them out to their Jewish brothers and sisters all of this remained to be seen, and was not super clear yet. So what you've walked into the middle of is Jesus preparing them, in a very honest way, for the work of introducing the people to who Jesus is, and how such an introduction might be expected to go. When the

twelve go out to the Jewish people to proclaim that the long awaited Messiah, the promised Christ had come, Jesus wants them to be prepared for the fact that some will embrace this and others will not, that there will be conflict, even conflict inside families. That like a sword divides limbs from a body so too Jesus, by His very presence, can cause divisions within the community and within a family...

Jesus says to the twelve, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword... Let's look at what Jesus says right before He says "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword," the thing Jesus says right before this is... "everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven." This is a line in the sand, do you acknowledge Jesus, do you confess Him before the world or do you keep silent?... Because of all this we publicly accept the fact that speaking of Jesus may bring conflict, that confessing Him as LORD brings a sword of division, confessing Jesus is drawing a line in the sand. We accept that Jesus' words from today's Gospel are true when He says, "Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

- <https://lutheran-church-regina.com/blogs/post/jesus-is-being-honest-with-you-third-sunday-after-pentecost-matthew-1034-42-pastor-ted-giese> Pastor Ted Giese Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Regina, SK, S4R 0T5

## Rewards Verses 40-42

This passage continues the trajectory of the mission directives at the start of Matthew 10. Preceding our passage are practical instructions on how to conduct the mission (verses 5-10), how to deal with mixed reception (verses 11-15), the promise of rejection and suffering (verses 16-23), the security of discipleship (verses 24-31), and the nature of the division which obedience to Jesus entails (verses 32-39).

Today's little passage, verses 40-42, circles back around to the question of reception.

Where there is a parallel with this passage, in verse 40, we notice that Mark (9:37) and Luke (9:48) both refer to welcoming a child in Jesus' name as equivalent to welcoming Jesus. But Matthew is unique, leaving out a reference to "little one" until verse 42. Here instead, Jesus says "whoever welcomes *you* welcomes me." The tight connection between Jesus and his apostles, established at the very beginning of the mission instructions (10:5-8), appears once more. To welcome Jesus, is to welcome the one whom he has sent, and to welcome the one he has sent is to welcome the Messiah himself.

But our passage takes the question of reception further: How does reception of the apostles by others relate to the reception of Jesus whom they preach? To what degree is hospitality itself an indication of discipleship?

Jesus answers these questions with a string of clauses beginning "the one who..." (loves, verse 37; does not take up a cross, verse 38; finds, loses, verse 39). In our passage, the phrasing continues with "the one who receives..." (verses 40-41). Verbs of hospitality -- "receive" is used six times, "take" is used twice -- dominate these three verses...

By verse 42, however, we encounter a stronger conditional statement: "whoever would give even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple ... none of

these will lose their reward." The emphasis in this final verse falls on the potential concrete action of a disciple, not merely on going out and proclaiming. The passage cannot help but recall the more famous words in Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it [fed, quenched, clothed, nursed, visited] to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

The rawness of Jesus' words here should not be lost on us--simply a cup of water *in the name of a disciple*--and one's reward is vouchsafed forever. The reward is not simply for the preachers and prophets among us but also for those whose calling is simply to pour the drinks and play the host(ess)...

The divine mission is as much about the unnamed people who provide a thirsty servant a cold drink of water as the familiar names that dot the pages of church histories. In fact, within the New Testament, we only have one narrative account of the church's mission -- the book of Acts -- and in it we encounter many such "minor" characters. They are minor only in the sense that their contributions to God's mission surely surpass the "air time" they receive: people like Ananias (the good one!), Simon the Tanner, Cornelius, Lydia, Prisca/Aquila, Sergius Paulus, and so on. Their hospitality and social connections were decisive for the spread of the Christian "Way."...

Jesus concludes his mission instructions with an implied invitation to all those "anonymous" saints who occupy our churches: you may not be the ones going, but never forget you too are sent."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3333](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3333)  
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### The Matthew Challenge? Can you go back and read your copy of Chapter 10??

