

7th Sunday after Pentecost July 19, 2020

6th Sunday after Trinity Proper 11 (16)
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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Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
The Patient Farmer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZIQBauF1zk> Zion Reformed Church

Listen to Pastor Greg Bower's sermon

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 772 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not listed
“In holy conversation”

“This hymn text is a modern one written by LCMS hymn writer and pastor Gregory Wismar (b. 1946). Wismar is a talented hymn writer and translator, with two original hymn texts published in Lutheran Service Book, as well as stanza translations in five other hymns. Wismar wrote that the background of this hymn is his sense of the blessing that prayer brings. While much communication these days can be hurried texting or impersonal emails, Wismar writes, in an online devotion for Concordia University Chicago, that prayer “is a most special conversation, a holy and sanctified speaking with God.”¹ This hymn focuses our attention on prayer...

“We speak to God.” This is the simple definition of prayer given in the first stanza of the hymn. The holy conversation of prayer is simple talking to God. In simple phrases this first stanza outlines how that speaking to God comes about... The second stanza continues this theme of praying with quiet confidence and childlike trust. We can bring supplications because our Father listens with care to every thought expressed. Not only that, He answers in ways He knows are best... The basis for our confidence in prayer is brought forward in the last stanza, where we sing that we are heard through Jesus and from that, our joy and assurance spring. Jesus has cleared the way for us to pray by dying for our sin and rising and opening heaven for us. Because of this we can know and be sure that our Father hears every prayer we pray...”

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies> Study by Paul Gregory Alms
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rwno8EuBX4Y> From the organ book Three Preludes on Swedish Hymns by Christopher M. Wicks, Concordia Publishing House

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. - “I am the first and I am the last”

Psalm – “The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep your words.”

Epistle – “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.”

Gospel – “*The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.*”

Isaiah 44:6-8; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Genesis 28:10-19a or Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 or Isaiah 44:6-8 (Next week: Deuteronomy 7:6-9; RCL, Genesis 29:15-28 or 1 Kings 3:5-12)

“Several weeks ago, when I was looking through the texts for today, I saw a reprint of an old Peanuts comic strip. The cartoonist, Charles Schultz, was born into a Lutheran family, and some of his simple comics hold wonderful nuggets of truth. The cartoon in question had a simple instruction on it, simply saying “Trust God – when we trust God, the future always holds

hope.” This struck me when I was going through this Old Testament lesson from the book of Isaiah. Here we see Isaiah declaring the truth of God’s nature while prophesying the upcoming captivity of God’s people. In here, we learn that God is the only God, the eternal God, and the God who protects us from ourselves and our sin. When we trust in Him as the only God, our trust gives us hope for the future...”

- <https://www.redeemerdidsbury.com/posts/sermons/isaiah-44-6-8-god-is> Michael Mayer, Redeemer Lutheran Church, “located between Red Deer and Calgary in the town of Didsbury”, Canada

Israel the LORD's Chosen Verses 1-5

Besides Me There Is No God Verses 6-8

⁶ Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

“I am the first and I am the last;

besides me there is no god.

⁷ Who is like me? Let him proclaim it.^[a]

Let him declare and set it before me,
since I appointed an ancient people.

Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen.

⁸ Fear not, nor be afraid;

have I not told you from of old and declared it?

And you are my witnesses!

Is there a God besides me?

There is no Rock; I know not any.”

The Folly of Idolatry Verses 9-20

The LORD Redeems Israel Verses 21-28

The prophet’s preaching is focused on God’s being.

Who is this Yhwh in a world whose horizon is filled with so many possible objects of worship -- so many other gods? There are two complementary bits of this little text: the prophet’s witness (verse 6a) and Yhwh’s self-revelation (verses 6b-8).

The prophet introduces the divine utterance by drawing attention to who the speaker really is: “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 44:6a). The speaker being introduced is not playing second fiddle in the cosmic orchestra. Rather, Yhwh is introduced as both first chair and conductor -- the one and only. Yhwh is King, Redeemer, and Lord of hosts.

References to Yhwh as “King of Israel” are infrequent... Given that there are no gods over whom Yhwh might reign,² this kingship is directed at humanity and the cosmos as a whole. Yhwh is also redeemer of Israel. This is not so unique. The Lord Redeemer who speaks to the

exiles in Babylon is the same Lord who redeemed their ancestors from the grips of slavery in Egypt.³

Though the image of Yhwh as Redeemer is not so unique, the point is not diluted: Yhwh alone saves.⁴ And to boot, Yhwh is also Lord of hosts. In a chaotic world where evidence of Yhwh's place as King and/or Redeemer is in short supply save for the power of memory and promise, the promise that this one God is also Lord of hosts fuels a faithful imagination to see chaos and suffering against a alternative horizon where Yhwh is the final power and authority. Life's ultimate horizon is not the displacement and subjugation of the present. This is only penultimate. That Yhwh is Lord of hosts suggests that life's ultimate horizon is lived within the cosmos where Yhwh is King and Redeemer.

All of this introduces the plenary address⁵ -- a speech that is dense and to the point

Yhwh declares, "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no other god" (Isaiah 44:6b). The speech is summarized with these two phrases. In short, there is no other viable object of worship. There is no other source of life. There is no other King. There is no other Redeemer. There is no other Lord of hosts. "You shall have no other gods before me."

➤ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2111 Samuel Giere

Associate Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

Psalm 119:57-64; RCL, Psalm 139 1-22, 23-24 or Psalm 86:11-17 (Psalm 125, Psalm 105:1-11, 45b or Psalm 128 or Psalm 119:129-136)

In this section the Psalmist seems to take firm hold upon God himself; appropriating him (Psa 119:57), crying out for him (Psa 119:58), returning to him (Psa 119:59), solacing himself in him (Psa 119:61-62), associating with his people (Psa 119:63), and sighing for personal experience of his goodness (Psa 119:64). Note how the first verse of this octave is linked to the last of the former one, of which indeed it is an expanded repetition. "This I had because I kept thy precepts. Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words." ..."

➤ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps119_057-064.cfm

C. H. Spurgeon, Treasury of David

Your Word Is a Lamp to My Feet

⁵⁶ This has been my practice:

I obey your precepts.

Heth

⁵⁷ The LORD is my portion;

I promise to keep your words.

⁵⁸ I entreat your favor with all my heart;

be gracious to me according to your promise.

⁵⁹ When I think on my ways,

I turn my feet to your testimonies;

⁶⁰ I hasten and do not delay

to keep your commandments.

⁶¹ Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me,

I do not forget your law.

- 62 At midnight I rise to praise you,
because of your righteous rules.
- 63 I am a companion of all who fear you,
of those who keep your precepts.
- 64 The earth, O LORD, is full of your steadfast love;
teach me your statutes!

“...the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Heth (or Cheth) stands for the chesed (loving-kindness) of the Lord. It’s a concept often translated as “steadfast love” in the ESV (English Standard Version). It appears frequently in the psalms, including the conclusion of this section of Psalm 119. The section begins with a confession that highlights the covenantal promises of God’s steadfast love...”

- <https://glendafayemathes.com/2011/05/05/covenantal-promise-of-psalm-119-heth/> Glenda Mathes, author and speaker

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Many in our world see the Bible as merely a book of do’s and don’ts. But we as Christians see it as the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God and our love of God and our love for His Word should be inseparable. In this passage we are told how to keep the characteristics of a *godly* person.

Conviction “Thou are my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words...”

Person - “O Lord” (v. 57) Many times we find ourselves in a situation where all we have left is the Lord, and discover He was all we needed anyway.

Prayer - “Entreated” (v. 58) means to ask earnestly.

Commitment We live in a world where the lack of commitment is all around us. The Christian life requires commitment.

Reflection - “I thought on my ways...” (v. 59). When we read the Word of God it should compel us to think about the way we are living.

Response - “ I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments” (v. 60). When we have a commitment, we will do away with excuses and delays.

Contrast

Robbery - “The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law” (v. 61). When the world tries to take away our joy we need to spend time in His Word.

Remembrance - “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of the righteous judgments” (v. 62). When did we last get up at midnight to give Him thanks?

Companionship It is amazing how much of the Old Testament refers to companionship.

Worship - “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee; and of them that keep Thy precepts.” (v. 63). We will take on the characteristics of those we fellowship with.

Wonder - “The earth O Lord, is full of Thy mercy; teach me Thy statutes” (v. 64). The more we are in His Word the more we will see God in the wonders of His creation...”

- <https://www.family-times.net/commentary/psalms-11957/> Lou Nicholes
“We are a missionary family who have ministered with Word of Life Fellowship since 1962”

Romans 8:18-27; RCL, Romans 8:12-25 (Romans 8:28-39; RCL, Romans 8:26-39)

Wait for it. Wait for it. Have you ever heard someone say that before? It's a very popular phrase. It's a phrase that's found all over the place in modern TV shows and movies. It's a signal that something big is coming. It gives a person a sense of anticipation or suspense; you can hear it in the phrase itself, you can feel in the word wait!

But this phrase goes back away. It goes back to the old music hall days. It first appeared in print in the 1936 play called "Red Peppers."

Noel Coward, the writer and director, put the phrase, not in the dialogue, but in the direction to the actors right after a big punch line. Why, because he didn't want them to miss out on the applause and the laughter that was coming. He wanted them to let the punch line sit out among the people a bit, to trust the words, to trust the writer.

So, listen to the dialogue, here it comes, ready?

GEORGE: I saw a very strange thing the other day, Lily.

LILY: What was it, she said.

GEORGE: Twelve men standing under one umbrella and they didn't get wet.

LILY: How's that?

GEORGE: It wasn't raining. (Wait for it; wait for it.)

Let the line do its job; wait for the laughter to end before you resume the dialog.

Wait for it. Give that word, that line, that thought, time to settle in, to make its point, to deliver the goods. Anticipation, suspense, promise. Wait for it. Wait for it. Something big is coming!

Well, today, that phrase could actually sum up Paul's encouragement to the Romans. If you believe in Jesus Christ, no matter what's happening in your life right now; there is always hope, hope that things will change, hope that things will work out, hope that even struggles have purpose for this life now and for the world to come. Wait for it in hope, with confidence; for such hope gives us power to endure, to persevere, to conquer!..."

- <https://www.lutheranhour.org/sermon.asp?articleid=25104> "Presented on The Lutheran Hour on July 20, 2014 By Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Lutheran Hour Speaker"

Life in the Spirit Verses 1-12

Heirs with Christ Verses 12-17 (Proper 10)

Future Glory Verses 18-30 (Proper 11, verses 18-27)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the

whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because ^g the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. *²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^h for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

God's Everlasting Love Verses 31-39 (Proper 12 continued from verse 28)

a. [Romans 8:27](#) Or that

“So Paul writes to the Romans to help them stand in this painful moment looking forward to the final revealing of God’s Son. And his words come to us to help us stand here today. In Christ, we have been made into the children of God. This is sure. This is certain. His death has destroyed the power of sin for you and His resurrection has brought you the promise of a new creation. Yet what you are is not fully seen and experienced in this world. Take a deep close look at God’s people, Paul says, and you will see a people, just like you sitting here, imprisoned and suffering, groaning because they desire to be free.

So we stand, awkwardly positioned between the sufferings of this present world and the glory yet to be revealed. And in this place, the apostle Paul asks us to meditate on our situation and to trust in the work of the Holy Spirit...

St. Paul knew the suffering status of Christians in this world. In Rome, Christianity was not a legal established religion. It confronted barriers to the expression of its faith. Christians sought to worship one God in a city that had many gods. Christians sought to confess “Jesus is Lord” in a city that confessed “Caesar is Lord.” Christians worshipped a person who had been associated with insurrection, was publicly tried and condemned and crucified. This suffering Jesus ruled over a suffering people...”

<http://www.zionlutherannampa.com/posts/sermons/romans-8-18-27-suffering-and-glory>

Pastor Ross Shaver, “Zion Lutheran Church is located just 2 miles from downtown Nampa, ID. The church building is located a block east of 12th Ave, behind Wendy's and Chevron Gas station.”

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Romans 8 is perhaps the greatest chapter on the Spirit in the entire New Testament. It tells of how we become incorporated into the most important story told in scripture: God's salvation of the cosmos through the death and resurrection of Jesus...

The Spirit and story of Christ

The reception of the Spirit makes us capable of walking in a way that is pleasing to God (Romans 8:4-6)...At the heart of this union with Christ is the gift of a renewed identity: all who are led by the Spirit of God are God's beloved children (Romans 8:14-17). Here we should recall that the Spirit is inseparable from Jesus' own identity as God's son... But most importantly for understanding Romans 8, we see the Spirit being responsible for Jesus' sonship at his resurrection: "he was appointed son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4, my translation). Who are we who have received the Spirit? We share the Easter story, we participate in Christ's own sonship, we are God's beloved daughters and sons.

Resurrection and new creation

One more lens helps bring this week's reading into focus. The resurrection is the beginning of new creation, and the resurrected Jesus is the birth of renewed humanity at the heart of it. In Romans 8:29, Paul tells us we are conformed to Christ's image. The idea of "image bearing" echoes Genesis 1, where humanity is created in God's image and likeness, which is to say, as God's sons and daughters charged to rule the world on God's behalf (Genesis 1:26-28; 5:1-3).

Thus, while our vital experience of the Spirit often provides us with an intimate connection with God, we discover through ever-growing concentric circles that this personal experience is far from private. To walk with the Spirit is to walk in the way of the crucified Christ. To cry out "abba, Father," is to be part of a large family of sisters and brothers doing the same...

Salvation, hope, and the suffering God

Salvation, then, makes itself known in the present, but also remains a hope for our future. We have to take care never to think that salvation is fully resolved in the present, even as we have to avoid allowing its future fulfillment to keep us from seeking its realization here and now. It is we who are God's adopted children who await our adoption. It is we who are presenting our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God who looks for the resurrection of our body.

The groaning of creation and of humanity is matched by the groaning of the Spirit. The New Revised Standard Version says that the Spirit "sighs," in verse 26, but the Greek here is the noun form of the "groaning" that creation and humanity are said to do in verses 22 and 23. If the incarnation and cross of Christ show us that God boldly enters into the brokenness of the world, the presence of the groaning Spirit demonstrates that God stays with the broken world all the way through to the end. But the end, in fact, is the new beginning...

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3664 [J.R. Daniel Kirk](#)
Pastoral Director, Newbigin House of Studies Fellows Program, San Francisco, California

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 13: 44-52; RCL, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52)

“After explaining the parable of the seed and different types of ground, Matthew’s Jesus again employs an agricultural setting for the parable concerning weeds sown and growing among the wheat crop.

The audience seems to comprise both disciples, the audience for 13:18-23, and crowds (13:34, 36).

Jesus introduces the parable with a statement of comparison. The “empire of the heaven” is compared to the situation narrated in the parable (13:24). This introduction directs the audience to think about the following, unusual rather than familiar, agricultural situation as providing insight into the workings of God’s empire among human beings.

The parable’s scenario is initially similar to that of the previous parable in that it involves a sower sowing seed (13:3-9). The introduction stresses that this sower sows “good seed in his field.” We subsequently learn that this sower is a person of some wealth and status, a “householder” who owns slaves and land (13:27). That he would be sowing his own field rather than his slaves is unusual. This is the first of several atypical dimensions in the parable that function to gain the audience’s attention, to impart insight, and to prepare for the subsequent interpretation...” (continued after the reading)

“The Holy Gospel beginning in the 13th Chapter of St. Matthew”

The Parable of the Sower Verses 1-9 (Proper 10)

The Purpose of the Parables Verses 10-17

The Parable of the Sower Explained Verses 18-23 (Proper 10)

The Parable of the Weeds Verses 24-30 (Proper 11)

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds^[d] among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants^[d] of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds

first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”””

Prophecy and Parables Verses 34-35

The Parable of the Weeds Explained Verses 36-43 (Proper 11)

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷He answered, ***“The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*”**

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure Verse 44 (Proper 12)

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value Verses 45-46 (Proper 12)

The Parable of the Net Verses 47-50 (Proper 12)

New and Old Treasures Verses 51-52 (Proper 12)

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth Verses 53-58

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

“As with the previous parable, the seed experiences difficulties. This time, the difficulties involve not the types of ground on which it falls, but the actions of an enemy person. “While everyone was asleep,” this enemy sows different seed, namely weeds or literally the common and poisonous “darnel,” among the wheat (13:25). Just how such an action requiring much seed and during the night, is possible is not questioned. Slaves report to their owner or “Master” – the wealthy “householder” who owns land and slaves -- the presence of the weeds growing among the wheat (13:27).

Further unrealistic features appear in the story. The owner somehow knows that an enemy has sown the darnel among the wheat, rather than recognizing that darnel is a common plant that inevitably grows most places (13:28). And when the slaves propose removing the

darnel from the field (the usual practice), the owner tells them to leave the wheat and the weeds growing together until harvest time (13:29-30).

These unusual agricultural practices draw our attention to these dimensions of the parable and their subsequent interpretation about God's empire. At verses 30-31, Matthew's Jesus ends the parable and immediately begins another. In fact, he tells two more parables before offering an interpretation of the wheat and the weeds. He is prompted to do so by the disciples (13:36).

Jesus' interpretation treats most of the parable as an allegory. He draws one-on-one correspondences between aspects of the parable and dimensions of the empire of the heavens that he manifests among human beings. As in the parable of the sower, he identifies the sower as himself, the Son of Man. The activity of sowing depicts his ministry of proclaiming and demonstrating (in healings and exorcisms for example) the presence of God's empire or saving presence (1:21-23; 4:17). Jesus has also been identified previously as a householder or "master of the house" (10:25, the same word), as "Master" or Lord (8:2, 6, 8; 12:8), and as having slaves, an image for his disciples (10:24-25)...

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2073 Warren Carter Professor of New Testament, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas

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In the clearest of terms, Jesus tells his disciples what almost every element of the parable represents...Jesus does not, however, say whom the slaves represent.

Perhaps the slaves represent the disciples, or anyone who hears this parable and its interpretation. Who among us has not questioned why God allows evil to grow and thrive? Who among us has not wanted to take matters into our own hands and root out the evil in our midst? The master stops the slaves from doing anything of the sort. For one thing, it is not so easy to tell the weeds from the wheat, and for another, their roots are intertwined below the ground. Rooting out the weeds would uproot the wheat as well, doing more damage to the crop than leaving the weeds to grow.

Jesus says that the reapers -- not the slaves -- will take care of this at harvest time. "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (13:41-43). It is the angels -- not any human beings -- who are authorized to pluck out the weeds from the wheat...

Stumbling Blocks

We may find the dualism of this text troubling. It seems that there are two groups of people in the world -- children of the kingdom and children of the evil one, wheat and weeds -- and that their destinies are fixed from the beginning. Jesus says that at the end of the age, the angels will "collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin (*skandala*) and all evildoers, and will throw them into the furnace of fire" (13:41).

Elsewhere Jesus warns those who put a stumbling block (*skandalon*) before any of the "little ones" that it would be better for them to have a millstone put around their neck and to be drowned in the sea (18:6-7). Similarly he warns that if your hand or foot or eye causes you to sin (*skandalizo*), it is better to cut it off or pluck it out and enter life blind or maimed, than to be thrown into the "hell of fire" with body intact (18:8-9).

This is hyperbolic language, of course, meant to jar us into recognizing the seriousness of anything that leads us or others into sin. It seems to suggest that a *skandalon* may be something within a person rather than the whole person. We know that it is not really our hand or foot or eye that causes us to sin. Sin comes from the human heart (*kardia*) (15:18-20), which in Greek refers to the inner self, the mind and will. No human is able to pluck out the inner self. Perhaps when Jesus says that the angels will collect all *skandala* to burn in the fire, he means that everything within us that causes sin will be burned away. It doesn't quite fit the logic of the parable, which seems to be talking about two groups of people and speaks of throwing all evildoers into the furnace of fire. Yet it seems congruent with other texts in Matthew about stumbling blocks..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=979
[Elisabeth Johnson](#) Professor, Lutheran Institute of Theology, Meiganga, Cameroon

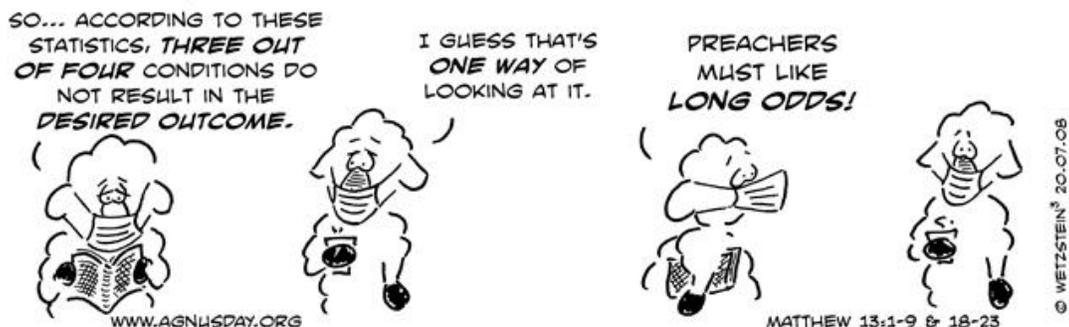


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The Matthew Challenge?

Have you tried the smaller challenge -Chapter 13 and the parables.?

Weekly review thoughts



50 Facts and Links for Psalm 119

1. It takes about 15 minutes to read aloud or recite the entire 176 verses of Psalm 119...
13. Eight Hebrew words are used to refer to God's Word in Psalm 119...

- <http://www.semicolonblog.com/?p=22735&cpge=1>