

11TH Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 13 July 31, 2016

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday.
An opportunity to make the rhythms of the readings
become a part of the rhythms of your life.

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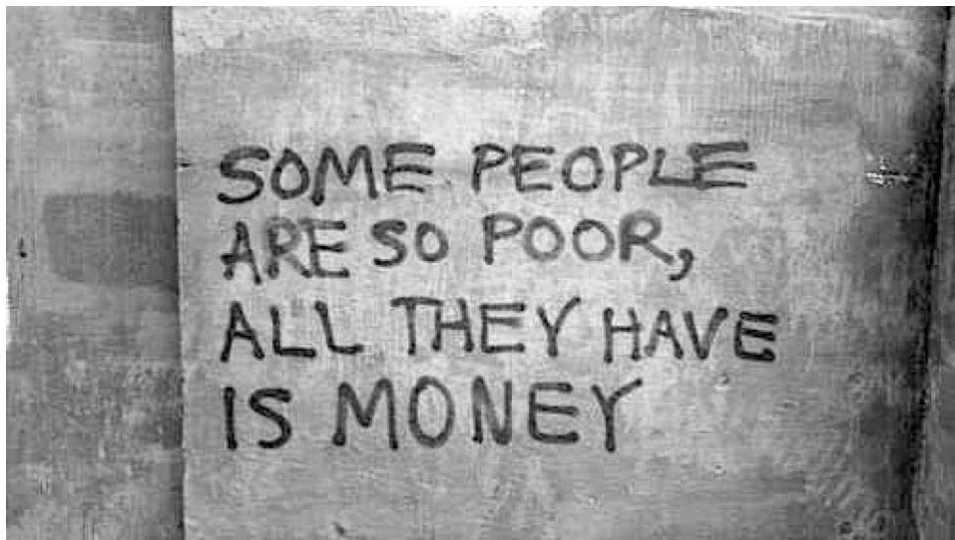
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**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

July 28, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship midweek service at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.)



<http://reformedbaptist.blogspot.com/2014/05/parable-of-rich-fool-luke-1213-21.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 782 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed

“Gracious God, You send great blessings”

“After 40 years of ordained service to the Lutheran church, including just over 24 years as the spiritual leader of Christ the King in Newtown, Conn., Pastor Greg Wismar (author of this hymn) retired on Sunday, June 12, 2011.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akm4aJUyWwQ>

The tune, “Holy Manna” Holy is an American Folk Hymn arranged by John Carter. The hymn is from Southern Harmony, a shaped note hymn and tune book compiled by William "Singin' Billy" Walker in 1835. The first three links will introduce you to this melody in contrasting styles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSxaO9cz3V8> Melody on a dulcimer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6EUgURCyYA> sung by gospel singer Jeanie Mummert - Church of the Brethren

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21tEzZVK0Vo> Canaan's Crossing Bluegrass Gospel

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyxMUMz_RkA Hymn introduction on Holy Manna by Kevin Hildebrand. Hymn of the day for the Eleventh Sunday of Pentecost (Proper 13). Mark Peters playing the Lauck pipe organ, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Leland MI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07yq_tytQio Full orchestra and choir

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

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26; RCL, Hosea 11:1-11 or Psalm 1-7:1-9, 43 (*Next Week: Genesis 15:1-6; RCL, Isaiah 1:1, 10-20 or Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23*)

All Is Vanity

1 The words of the Preacher,^[a] the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

² Vanity^[b] of vanities, says the Preacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity....

The Vanity of Wisdom

¹² I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³ And I applied my heart^[f] to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹⁴ I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity^[g] and a striving after wind...^[h]

- a. [Ecclesiastes 1:1](#) Or *Convener*, or *Collector*; Hebrew *Qoheleth* (so throughout Ecclesiastes)
- b. [Ecclesiastes 1:2](#) The Hebrew term *hebel*, translated *vanity* or *vain*, refers concretely to a “mist,” “vapor,” or “mere breath,” and metaphorically to

something that is fleeting or elusive (with different nuances depending on the context). It appears five times in this verse and in 29 other verses in Ecclesiastes

- c. [Ecclesiastes 1:5](#) Or *and returns panting*
- d. [Ecclesiastes 1:11](#) Or *former people*
- e. [Ecclesiastes 1:11](#) Or *later people*
- f. [Ecclesiastes 1:13](#) The Hebrew term denotes the center of one's inner life, including mind, will, and emotions
- g. [Ecclesiastes 1:14](#) The Hebrew term *hebel* can refer to a “vapor” or “mere breath” (see note on [1:2](#))
- h. [Ecclesiastes 1:14](#) Or *a feeding on wind*; compare [Hosea 12:1](#) (also in [Ecclesiastes 1:17](#); [2:11](#), [17](#), [26](#); [4:4](#), [6](#), [16](#); [6:9](#))

The Vanity of Self-Indulgence...

The Vanity of Living Wisely...

The Vanity of Toil

¹⁸ I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹ because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? ²³ For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

²⁴ There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment^[c] in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for apart from him^[d] who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

- a. [Ecclesiastes 2:1](#) The Hebrew term *hebel* can refer to a “vapor” or “mere breath”; also verses [11](#), [15](#), [17](#), [19](#), [21](#), [23](#), [26](#) (see note on [1:2](#))
- b. [Ecclesiastes 2:8](#) The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain
- c. [Ecclesiastes 2:24](#) Or *and make his soul see good*
- d. [Ecclesiastes 2:25](#) Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *apart from me*

“It is the beginning of August. You are two-and-a-half months into Pentecost with three-and-a-half months to go. Perhaps you are need of a little adrenaline rush.

Enter stage right: Qoheleth, the Hebrew name of the book which has come to be known as *Ecclesiastes*. Qoheleth made the canonical cut against all odds. He is honest, he is cynical, and he appears to be the pre-Thomas doubter. *Ecclesiastes* is truly the bungee jump of Hebrew Scripture's wisdom literature. Is your congregation ready? I leave that to you. Are you ready? If so, read on.

Some of you may be thinking there just is not enough substance in this pericope for a sermon. Others of you may be concerned that *Ecclesiastes* will only invite deeper suspicion from your congregation's cynics. Still, others of you may think the only value in this biblical book is its famous sound bites, "Eat, Drink, and be Merry," or "For everything there is a season," to name a couple. To these suspicious views (How Qoheleth of you!), I have this response, "*Hevel! Hevel! All is Hevel!*" Or, as the NRSV puts it, "Vanity of vanities! All is Vanity!" In other words, I am suspicious of these views and invite you to consider this pericope's homiletical fodder.

Qoheleth is the Hebrew word for someone who speaks to an assembly. That's you. (Interestingly, Luther translated this book, *Der Prediger*, or, *The Preacher*.) Somehow, some folks saw fit to hand this one the microphone, so to speak. The following elements suggest why I am thankful they did and serve to spark your engagement with this text (if not for the sole focus of your sermon, at least for a cameo).

First, the way in which Qoheleth speaks can serve as a model for laying bare our claims for the sake of conversation. His honesty is a breath of fresh air. While his stark speech takes some getting used to, once given a hearing, one notices he is on to something. Here is one who has tried and tried again to legitimize and/or justify his life through reason. In the end he cannot do it. No wonder he is frustrated. Perhaps he airs his frustration to help those who have done the same, and concluded the same. Qoheleth does what some are asking of the church. He "keeps it real!" His honesty is an access point for the doubters in your congregation and those faithful ones who inevitably have moments of doubt.

Second, one of the things Qoheleth admits is a sense of meaningless and despair regarding those things which one would have expected to provide a sense of meaningfulness and joy; namely, wisdom or reasoning and work. Of course, Qoheleth was not privy to Luther's doctrine of vocation; that is, recognizing that the work we do is not simply work, but actually a calling from God which God desires us to fulfill. Perhaps the reason this vocational view of work is so attractive is precisely because in and of itself, our toil is, as Qoheleth calls it, "hevel" (vanity). *Hevel*, to be clear, is that which is fleeting, like an ephemeral puff of wind which cannot be grasped, concretized, or hung on the wall. (By the way, this word is repeated 9 times in this pericope. In other words, it is not to be missed.)

Set alongside the "Parable of the Rich Fool," one cannot help imagine that Qoheleth would say that even storing up treasure and using one's reason to solve the conundrum of what to do with such treasure, is "*hevel*." According to Qoheleth, one cannot win. Doing as the rich fool does and building larger storage bins is "*hevel*." Even doing so for the enjoyment of future generations is "*hevel*." ("I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to those who come after me and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish? Yet they will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun.") So much for "leaving a legacy." (You were warned that this would get the adrenaline pumping.)

A challenge for the preacher will be to take the seemingly foolish action of the rich man to relax, drink, eat, and be merry (now that he has ample goods stored up) and square that with Qoheleth's overall contention (not explicitly addressed in this Sunday's pericope but certainly evident when *Ecclesiastes* is read as a whole) that the only thing we are left to do is to eat, drink, and be merry. It is this contention by Qoheleth that is the third reason I am grateful that he has had his say. For Qoheleth, to eat, drink, and be merry is an act of faith toward God. Ultimately, try as he might, Qoheleth cannot not (*sic*) believe. Ultimately, he is faithful. This is the difference between Qoheleth and the rich one in Luke 12. The latter is a fool because he stores up treasures for himself and not for God.

Allowing this text to speak through your sermon might create a space for your hearers to face their own skepticism and/or cynicism. But first, it will likely have to create space for you to do the same. Perhaps such honesty may lead you and/or your hearers to affirm faith in God as it did for Qoheleth.

What began as a much-needed jumpstart in the middle of the long season of Pentecost continues with a welcomed invitation in the middle of summer to worship God through enjoyment of all life's joys and pleasures.”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=647 Shauna Hannan

Associate Professor of Homiletics, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA

Psalm 100; RCL, the Ecclesiastes reading or Psalm 49:1-12 (*Psalm 33:12-22; RCL, Genesis 15:1-6 or Psalm 33:12-22*)

“May the Spirit of God, by whose inspiration David penned these Psalms, bless them to us as we read them! This is entitled “a Psalm of Praise.” Note here that this is the only Psalm which bears that title; there are others which have titles very much like it, but this one is singled out from all the rest to be, in a very special sense, “a Psalm of Praise.” Martin Luther was very fond of it, and it has even been said that he composed the tune which are have just sung, and which is commonly called “the Old Hundredth”; though others attribute it to a German named Franc.”
<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/spe/psalms-100.html> Spurgeon

His Steadfast Love Endures Forever A Psalm for giving thanks.

100 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

² Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

³ Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;^[a]

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

⁵ For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

- a. [Psalm 100:3](#) Or *and not we ourselves*

Colossians 3:1-11 (*Hebrews 11:1-16; RCL, Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16*) *The readings for August all come from Hebrews.*

“Your best life now...is hidden.

Not inside of you—like some dormant seed that, once found, can be watered, nurtured, and coaxed into maximum fruit-production—but hidden. Your Hidden Life Now; perhaps this could be the subtitle of the letter to the Colossians.

The third chapter of Colossians describes what may seem like a bit of a paradox. The life of the Christian is. And (but?) it is hidden with Christ. This is not something that has to be earned, but it is both encouraged and expected. It is something that is a reality—if a reality that can be hard to recognize, realize, and really show forth every day.

In The Letter to the Colossians: Your Hidden Life Now, and in particular in these eleven verses from chapter three, Paul confronts ideologies that stand in opposition to the word of truth, which is the gospel (Colossians 1:5). And the reality is that the message to the Colossians, and if we preachers echo it our own message, is pointedly counter-cultural...”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=718 **Karl Jacobson Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn.**

Put On the New Self

3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your^[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:^[b] sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming.^[c] ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self^[d] with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,^[e] free; but Christ is all, and in all.

- a. [Colossians 3:4](#) Some manuscripts *our*
b. [Colossians 3:5](#) Greek *therefore your members that are on the earth*
c. [Colossians 3:6](#) Some manuscripts add *upon the sons of disobedience*

- d. [Colossians 3:9](#) Greek *man*; also as supplied in verse [10](#)
- e. [Colossians 3:11](#) Greek *bondservant*

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12th Chapter

“Glory to You, O Lord”

Luke 12:13-21 (*Luke 12:22-34 (35-40); RCL Luke 12:22-40*)

“I remember seeing the musical “The Fiddler on the Roof” some years ago, in which the main character, Tevye, sang a song called “If I Were a Rich Man.” In that song he prayed, “Dear God, you made many, many poor people. I realize, of course, that it's no shame to be poor. But it's no great honor either! So, what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?”

When his friend Perchik reminded him that “Money is the world's curse,” Tevye responded, “May the Lord smite me with it. And may I never recover.”

<http://reformedbaptist.blogspot.com/2014/05/parable-of-rich-fool-luke-1213-21.html>

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” ²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

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

“Sometimes we may think that money and wealth should not be discussed in church, that we should use this time for more important, more spiritual subjects. We may even remember the incident where Jesus chased the money changers from the temple, overturning their tables of coins and lashing them with a whip.

Yet Jesus often preached on the subject of money. He told the parables about the treasure hidden in a field, the pearl of great price, the tenants who would not pay their rent, the talents or sums of money that were loaned to three servants, the parable of two men who were forgiven great debts, one great and one small.

He told the parable of the lost coin, the prodigal son who wasted his inheritance, and this parable of the rich fool. One time Jesus was concerned enough to send a disciple to pay his taxes with a coin that was provided in a fish's mouth. At worship he pointed out the woman

who gave her last two coins for an offering. He also said, "No man can serve two masters. You cannot love both God and money."

In fact, of the 40 some parables of Jesus recorded in the Bible, just under half of them refer to proper use of money and riches. You can see that Jesus really did have much to say about money. He taught us that all riches really belong to God and warned us about the consequences about not being rich toward God...

What does it mean to be rich toward God? We can learn several truths here about money and property.

Being Rich toward God is to believe that God is the giver of all good things, including life and salvation...

Being rich toward God means you measure your own worth by who you are, not by what you own. A person's wealth tells us nothing about who they are on the inside. It doesn't matter to God what you are worth. He considers a person to be wealthy when they are at peace with him, when they have the certainty that nothing can separate them from his love. Christians are rich toward God when they depend on him to supply their every need, when they are certain of God's unconditional love.

We are rich toward God when the thing we value most in this life is what Jesus gave us on the cross. We know that we are totally undeserving of what he did for us. There Jesus made us acceptable to God and gave us a life of peace and joy that will never end.

Being rich toward God is the gift of finding the joy of using the good things God gives to be a blessing to others...

With these and the many other examples in Holy Scripture, why are we unable to do the same today? Why is it so easy to sign a hundred and fifty thousand dollar home mortgage, to buy a thirty thousand dollar automobile, but so hard to sign a pledge card to the church, or put in a check for ten percent of our income into the offering basket? ...

We forget that God does not need our money. He only wants our heart. But our heart cannot be divided. We cannot build a partition inside it and say, "this part belongs to God, but this part is for me." Everything belongs to God. He only loans us what we need so we can live in his world...

What matters most in life is not how rich you are for your own purposes, but how rich you are toward God. In the person of Jesus God gives you all the riches of heaven. God is trying to teach you this is true that you may demonstrate it in your life...."

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