

7th Sunday after the Epiphany February 19, 2017

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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

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“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

February 16, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.

E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<http://02aa9c2.netsolhost.com/blog/category/matthew-538-48/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 820 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 34

“My soul, now praise (bless) your maker”

"Poliander, Johann was the pen-name of Johann Graumann who was b. July 5, 1487..., He attended the Disputation in 1519 between Dr. Eck, Luther, and Oarlstadt, as the amanuensis of Eck; with the ultimate result that he espoused the cause of the Reformation and left Leipzig in 1522. In 1523 he became Evangelical preacher at Wurzburg, but left on the outbreak of the Peasants' War in 1525, and went to Nürnberg, where, about Lent, he was appointed preacher to the nunnery of St. Clara. He then, at the recommendation of Luther, received from the Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg an invitation to assist in furthering the Reformation in Prussia, and began his work as pastor of the Altstadt Church in Königsberg, in Oct., 1525. Here he laboured with much zeal and success, interesting himself specially in organising the evangelical schools of the province, and in combating the errors of the Anabaptists and the followers of Schwenckfeldt..." http://www.hymnary.org/person/Poliander_Johann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p3Zgdoj3Ao> A prelude based on this hymn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuGumoZQfUU> "A Psalm Roar" Sung in a house! See: <https://www.facebook.com/Providence-Church-CREC-in-PensacolaFL-115696605118262/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKZGkf2mvjM> Brother Down, Old Paths New Feet

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

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next Week: Exodus 24:8-18; RCL, verses 12-18)

"The lectionary from Leviticus begins with the familiar Levitical refrain: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD am holy" (19:2b).

What follows in this chapter is a miscellaneous series of laws beginning with the commands, familiar from the Decalogue, to honor father and mother, keep the Sabbaths, and make no idols in verses 2b-4, while verses 5-8 consist of ritual laws that provide the guidelines for the proper consumption of the sacrifice of wellbeing. The second part of the lectionary reading, verses 9-18, focuses on the ethical behavior of the people..."
http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=890 [Callie Plunket-Brewton](#)
Instructor, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL

The LORD Is Holy

19 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. ³*Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.* ⁴*Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the LORD your God.*

⁵ *“When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted.* ⁶*It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire.*

⁷ If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, ⁸ and everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned what is holy to the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from his people.

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

⁹ “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

¹¹ “You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another.

¹² You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³ “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴ You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

¹⁵ “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life^[a] of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷ “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

- a. [Leviticus 19:16](#) Hebrew *blood*

Psalm 119:33-40; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 2:6-12; RCL, Psalm 2 or Psalm 99)

He “The letter Hei is the fifth letter in the Hebrew alphabet, as well as a number of other Semitic language’s alphabets. Through the ancient Phoenician language, the letter Hei actually became the modern letter “E” in the English and Latin alphabets. The original meaning of the letter Hei is shrouded in mystery as it has been interpreted as everything from “thread” to “fence” to “window” in ancient Semitic languages. Nonetheless, it has an extremely interesting story in terms of both its practical usage in the Hebrew language and its deeper numerical and spiritual meanings...”

<http://www.hebrewtoday.com/content/hebrew-alphabet-letter-hei-%D7%94>

“...Psalm 119:33-40 offers a word about that which the church's work is all about -- desiring God, God's ways, and God's Word.

The theological theme of the psalm is the Word of God. The psalm repetitively employs eight different synonyms for the Word of God: "law" (better, "instruction"), "commandments," "ordinances," "precepts," "decrees," "words," "promises," and "statutes." The poetic theme of this section is desire -- desiring, longing for the Word of God, to be more specific..." (continued after reading)

- ³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.^[a]
- ³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.
- ³⁵ Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.
- ³⁶ Incline my heart to your testimonies,
and not to selfish gain!
- ³⁷ Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;
and give me life in your ways.
- ³⁸ Confirm to your servant your promise,
that you may be feared.
- ³⁹ Turn away the reproach that I dread,
for your rules are good.
- ⁴⁰ Behold, I long for your precepts;
in your righteousness give me life!

a. [Psalm 119:33](#) *Or keep it as my reward*

But first, some notes on about Psalm 119 as a whole. This "wisdom" or "instructional" psalm is by far the longest psalm in the Psalter, and the longest chapter in the Bible...

One theory scholars propose about alphabetic acrostic poems is that such poems serve a fundamentally educational purpose--the alphabetic structure makes memorization easier, especially for children. While there is something to that theory, this explanation does not suit Psalm 119. The psalm is simply too long and too repetitive for memorization to be a primary goal.

Rather, the alphabetic, acrostic pattern in Psalm 119 is more likely trying to say something about the very nature of language and the nature of God's Word. Perhaps what the psalm is trying to say is that ultimate expression of human language is the divine word. As noted above, the psalm repetitively employs eight synonyms for the Word of God -- "law" (better, "instruction"), "commandments," "ordinances," "precepts," "decrees," "words," "promises," and "statutes."

Most of the stanzas of the psalm use all eight of these synonyms. And with the sole exception of verse 122, every single verse in the poem contains at least one of these eight terms. Thus, again, it seems that the poem is suggesting that the Word of God is the best use of the language, the ultimate expression of human meaning.

The section assigned for this Sunday is the he stanza. The first word in each verse begins with the letter *he* word -- which correlates with the English letter H. Because prefixing the consonant he ("H") to a verbal root is characteristic of the hiphil verbal stem in Hebrew -- especially in this imperative form -- it should not be surprising that seven of the eight verses begin with a hiphil, imperative verb: "teach me," "give me," "lead me," "turn my heart," "turn my eyes," "confirm," and "turn away." Only the last verse diverges from the pattern, as it brings the stanza to a fitting climax: "See, I have longed for your precepts."

Together, these seven imperatives along with the eighth, culminating verse, clearly identify the theme of the stanza: desiring God, God's ways, and the Word of God. God is the ultimate human desire, because God alone can satisfy true human longing. God's Word is that which is most to be desired by God's people (see Psalm 19:10) because it alone is truly worthwhile. God's way alone is the true way, therefore it is most to be desired.

To desire God, God's ways, and God's words, according to the psalm, includes both positive and negative longings. Positively, the life of faith means to learn to desire to seek God and God's ways through God's Word. It means to delight in studying God's Word and to seek understanding and knowledge there. Negatively, the life of faith means turning away from other desires -- the desire for selfish gain (verse 36), from vain pursuits (verse 37), from those things which only bring disgrace (verse 39).

Just as there are "sins of omission" and "sins of commission" so also there are "virtues of commission" and "virtues of omission." Desiring God, God's ways, and God's Word means to cultivate both the virtues of commission and the virtues of omission.

But how does one preach this message?

The challenge is to preach "love and desire for God, God's ways, and God's Word" as a promise, rather than as one more obligation to keep. This is always the challenge of preaching the good news -- to preach the promise, without turning the promise into a new law. To preach Christ, without turning the risen Lord into a new Moses. This sort of preaching requires "showing" rather than telling. It consists of offering a picture of what the promises of God look like when they are fulfilled. It requires giving examples of how Scripture satisfies the deepest desires and longings of human life, because Scripture is the means of grace that brings us Christ.

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1025 **Rolf Jacobson**
Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

1 Corinthians 3:10-23; RCL, verses 10-11, 16-23 (2 Peter 1:16-21; RCL, the same reading)

*"In 1 Corinthians 3, the Apostle Paul was calling the Christians in Corinth (and God is also calling us through His divinely inspired Word) to grow in our faith, maturity and Christian lives, remembering that we are **"Building For Eternity."***

Without "pulling any punches" and with great candor, Paul says, "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:1) He chides them for their jealousy and quarreling and encourages them, guided by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, to grow (build) their faith on the sure and firm foundation of Jesus Christ who was crucified, died, was buried and has now risen for the forgiveness of our sins and the sins of the whole world..." <http://holycrosslutheran.net/blog/2014/02/22/building-eternity-1-corinthians-3-10-15/> And as Pastor Snow always ends his online sermons – "See you in church..."

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled^[a] master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you^[b] are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

¹⁸ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," ²⁰ and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." ²¹ So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, ²³ and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

- a. [1 Corinthians 3:10](#) Or *wise*
- b. [1 Corinthians 3:16](#) The Greek for *you* is plural in verses [16](#) and [17](#)

"At the beginning of this text, Paul moves from the image of the church as a field (verses 6-9a) to explore more fully the image of the church as a building (verse 9b). Paul says that in his apostolic mission at Corinth, he worked as a "wise" master builder. The NRSV rendering of this as "skilled" misses the important echo of Paul's earlier discussion about wisdom and foolishness (1:18-2:16).

The point about Paul's work is not just that he had skill in managerial tasks or that he was clever and effective in dealing with people. Rather, God's wisdom is the cross of Christ, and Paul's work was aligned with that foundational reality. True wisdom does not lie in the power, eloquence, social standing, or cultural competition that seemed to enthrall the Corinthian church (or any similar things that enthrall us). A building must fit its foundation, supported by it and shaped to match it, and Paul wisely built the Corinthian church on Christ crucified as the church's one foundation (see 2:1-5).

Verses 16-17 continue to develop the metaphor of a building and make it more specific: the church is not just any building, but the temple of God, the place of God's presence. In the context of a large Roman city with plenty of impressive marble temples, and when the Jewish temple was still standing and functioning in Jerusalem, Paul's claim is bold and profound. It is not just that wherever God's people live has become holy ground (though that too is true), but that the shared life of the community is indwelt by God..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1951 [Brian Peterson](#)
Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC

<https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/1-corinthians-310-11-16-23> Again a good detailed study worth a read.

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 5th Chapter”
“Glory to You, O Lord”

Matthew 5:38-48; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 17:1-9; RCL, the same reading)

“Some texts seem too difficult to preach. Not difficult for us as interpreters, but rather too difficult for people to hear and to bear. This is one definitely of those texts.

I mean, here we are, at the pinnacle of the Sermon on the Mount (no pun intended), listening as Jesus commands his disciples -- then and now, I presume -- to do some of the most difficult things imaginable: turn the other cheek, don't retaliate, love your enemies, pray for those who attack you. I know this is what we're supposed to do. I also know that it's really, really hard for most of us to imagine, let alone carry out in any kind of consistent way. And then there's that last verse, the kicker: "Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect." (continued after reading)

Retaliation

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’

³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic,^[a] let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers,^[b] what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- a. [Matthew 5:40](#) Greek *chiton*, a long garment worn under the cloak next to the skin
- b. [Matthew 5:47](#) Or *brothers and sisters*. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, the plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”) may refer either to *brothers* or to *brothers and sisters*

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

"...Good night, but what's an honest, hardworking preacher to do? Duck and run? As tempting as that is, I actually think we should start right there, with the hardest of a slew of hard verses: "Be perfect." When we hear that command, most of us hear an injunction to a kind of moral perfectionism. But that's not actually what the original language implies. "Perfect," in this case, stems from telos, the Greek word for "goal," "end," or "purpose." The sense of the word is more about becoming what was intended, accomplishing one's God-given purpose in the same way that God constantly reflects God's own nature and purpose. Eugene Peterson's *The Message* gets closer to the mark, I think, when he translates it, "You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity."...

Given this, I wonder if you'd be willing to venture another zany idea? For instance, I've been wondering what it might be like, after naming some of the things we've just talked about, to give people an opportunity to think about just what it is that gets in their way of being the kind of people God created them to be. Further, what would it be like to invite our people to write down just one thing they believe is holding them back from living into their God-given identity....

Or perhaps we should remember what Augustine said to his congregants while presiding at the Lord's Supper: "Receive who you are. Become what you've received."...

I've wondered, too, about whether when people turn in their confessions they might pick up another card or piece of paper that simply says, "You are God's beloved child. Be what you have been called." They could carry it with them throughout the week, pulling it out when it seems particularly hard to follow Jesus in the way of love... "

<http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1523> David Lose *President, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Penn*

"In this passage, Jesus continues to explore the relevance of the Law for his followers and society.

The Law, even God's Law handed to Moses, **must be engaged and re-interpreted in light of contemporary realities.** Such engagement need not lessen the challenge of appropriating ancient biblical texts for modern society. Jesus' own teaching is an example of this struggle..."

[Give Professor Powery a reading for his approach to this reading.](#)

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=840 Emerson Powery *Professor of Biblical Studies, Messiah College, Grantham, PA*



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