

13th Sunday after Pentecost September 8, 2019

Proper 18(23) or 12th Sunday after Trinity

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran

Living the ^ Lectionary

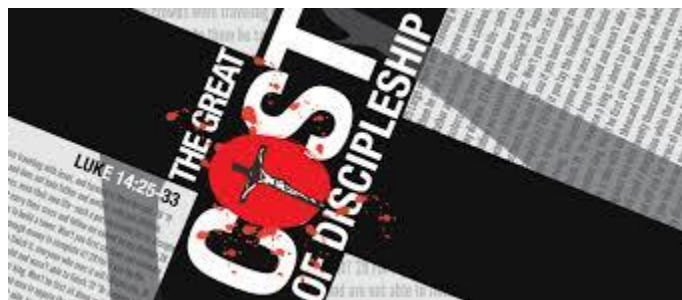
*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
- ✦ Through www.Facebook.com at “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”, “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”, or “Harold Weseloh”
- ✦ All links in this on-line copy are active and can be reached using Ctrl+Click

Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at Noon (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



<https://iahbread.com/cost-discipleship-willing-pay-fare-luke-1425-33/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 853 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed

“How clear is our vocation, Lord”

“The name of the Rev. F. Pratt Green is one of the best-known of the contemporary school of hymnwriters in the British Isles. His name and writings appear in practically every new hymnal and "hymn supplement" wherever English is spoken and sung. And now they are appearing in American hymnals, poetry magazines, and anthologies.

Mr. Green was born in Liverpool, England, in 1903 (*died in 2000*). Ordained in the British Methodist ministry, he has been pastor and district superintendent in Brighton and York, and now served in Norwich. There he continued to write new hymns "that fill the gap between the hymns of the first part of this century and the 'far-out' compositions that have crowded into some churches in the last decade or more."--[Seven New Hymns of Hope](#) , 1971. Used by permission.”

- https://hymnary.org/person/Green_FP
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7Tji0GrZM4>
Background introduction included by [Robert Morehead](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mB4N4Wgsk> Trinity United Methodist Church Choir's anthem during Sunday's worship
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RekzagMPCnk&list=PLTPkKKiORCocoDDy7qV1CyBeF4r3QHYtJ&index=5&t=0s> “How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord from A Thousand Voices - 7 Hymn Tune Preludes, Volume 4 (Organ)” 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 have set before you today life and good, death and evil.”

Psalms – “ the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

Epistle – “I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective”

Gospel – *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*”

Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Jeremiah 18:1-11 or Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (Next week: Ezekiel 34:11-24; RCL, Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 or Exodus 32:7-14)

“This Pentecost text has commonly been considered the conclusion to the farewell speech of Moses to the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20).

This text is a part of the announcement of a new covenant of God with the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 29-32; see 29:1, 10-15), sometimes called the Moab covenant. This word from Moses looks into the future and urges the people to love the Lord their God and to keep the commandments, for in so doing they will choose life for that future and not death...

“Choose life.” This is the only use of the verb “choose” (behar) with human beings as subject in the Old Testament (usually God “chooses”). Israel is to choose to receive what God has promised. To choose life is to love the Lord your God, obey him, and to hold fast to him. Human beings must make choices and the choosing of life will make a significant difference in the shape that life takes. The call is for Israel to take a stand on behalf of the word of God as it relates to life...

Deuteronomy does not state how Israel responded to this word of Moses. The effect of this word to the people is open-ended. This absence suggests that this question is an open-ended question for “today” as well, that is, for all audiences to which the book is written... “

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2942 **Terence E. Fretheim** Elva B. Lovell, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

¹⁵“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God^[a] that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,^[b] then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

- a. [Deuteronomy 30:16](#) Septuagint; Hebrew lacks *If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God*
- b. [Deuteronomy 30:16](#) Or *his just decrees*

After what is surely one of the longest sermons in history -- all of Deuteronomy! -- Moses makes his final appeal to Israel in this passage.

Two long poetic passages follow in chapters 31–34, “The Song of Moses” and “The Blessing of Moses,” along with narratives recounting Moses’ death and the transfer of leadership to Joshua.

Just prior to our text, Moses announces wonderful blessings for an obedient Israel and blood-curdling curses for an apostate Israel (chapter 28). These benedictions and maledictions are followed by a prediction of eventual exile (29:18–29) and return (30:1–10), predictions sufficiently prescient that most scholars deem the words of post-exilic origin.

In the four verses immediately preceding 30:15–20, Moses assures the people that the commandments of the LORD are neither too hard nor too remote: “No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe” (verses 11–14. See Rom 10:5–8). God’s commandments do not exceed the human capacity to understand and perform them.

Moses’ Final Appeal

Having assured the people that what God commands they can do, Moses launches into his final call for a decision. He reiterates the essence of God’s covenant, focusing especially on the promise of blessing for obedience and the threat of a cursed existence in exile for failure to obey. With these words, Moses concludes and descends from his pulpit. The terms of the covenant are clear; the community must now decide...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1758 **Brian C. Jones** Professor Emeritus of Religion, Wartburg College

Psalm 1; RCL, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 or Psalm 1 (Psalm 119:169-176; RCL, Psalm 14 or Psalm 51:1-10)

“The poets and compilers of the Book of Psalms were clearly in touch with a perennial human issue -- happiness.

“Happy” (Blessed) is the very first word in the Psalter, and the repetition of “happy” in Psalm 2:12 provides an envelope-structure for the two psalms that introduce the book. Given this introductory function, it is not surprising that “happy” will occur over twenty more times in the Psalter; and indeed, it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the whole Book of Psalms offers a commentary on the single word “happy.”...

The choice is ours

In the final analysis, Psalm 1 invites a choice -- our choice. There are clearly two ways. Note the repetition of “way” in verse 6, and see also “path” in verse 1 and “way” in Psalm 2:12. The contrasting ways yield sharply different consequences that are emphasized by the first and last words of the psalm -- “Happy” and “perish.” “Happy” begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and “perish” begins with the final letter. The rhetorical style emphasizes the comprehensiveness of the choice. Will we choose God’s way, which promises life? Or will we choose to go our own way, which promises death?...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2452 **J. Clinton McCann** Evangelical Professor of Biblical Interpretation, Eden Seminary, Saint Louis, MO

Book One The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked

1 Blessed is the man^[a]
 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
 nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
 2 but his delight is in the law^[b] of the LORD,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
 that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.
 In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

- a. [Psalm 1:1](#) The singular Hebrew word for *man* (*ish*) is used here to portray a representative example of a godly person; see Preface
- b. [Psalm 1:2](#) Or *instruction*

"The familiar opening phrase of Psalm 1, "Blessed is the man," (King James Version, Revised Standard Version, New International Version), rendered "Happy are those" in the New Revised Standard Version, prompts similar questions. While there may be little difference between the two translations in contemporary English, there are sound reasons for translating *ashre* with "happy" rather than "blessed." Most importantly, "Blessed is/be . . ." (using the Hebrew word *baruk*) is a benediction, that is, a request, prayer, or wish that God would bless that individual. "Happy is . . ." on the other hand, is a beatitude, that is, a statement, a declaration that someone is fortunate because of something they possess or because of something they have done. As my teacher, Patrick Miller, was fond of saying, *ashre* celebrates "a life that takes real pleasure in living according to God's will."...

Structurally, the Psalm clearly falls into two sections contrasting the righteous (verses 1-3) with the wicked (verses 4-5), followed by a summarizing coda (verse 6). A and A' are linked by the repetition of "wicked" and "sinners." B and B' are linked by the repetition of the comparative *kaph*, "like," as well as the adversative "but" (*ki im*). This leaves the stark contrast of C and C' with its dramatic "Not so, the wicked!" (verse 4a, NIV) as a central hinge or pivot, as the following schematic reveals:

Structural Analysis of Psalm One:

A Description: the righteous (1)

B Comparison: the righteous is like (2-3a)

C Result: Prosperity for the righteous (3b)

C' Result: Not so for the wicked (4a)

B' Comparison: the wicked are like (4b)

A' Description: the wicked (5)

CODA The two ways summarized (6)

Essentially, the psalm serves as an extended metaphor and explanation of the antithetical proverb expressed as a chiasm in the Coda (verse 6):

A For Yahweh knows

B the way of the righteous

B' but the way of the wicked

A' will perish

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1231 Mark Throntveit Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Philemon 1-21; RCL, the same reading (1 Timothy 1:(5-11) 12-17; RCL, 1 Timothy 1:12-17)

Proper 18C: when your slave messes up big time

It would probably be safe to say that the typical Christian in today's world doesn't read an entire book of the Bible in a day. And even safer to say this usually doesn't happen before lunch

But, on this Sunday, that exactly what our congregations will be treated to - or just about anyway. Our epistle lesson is from the Paul's Letter to Philemon - or should I say that It's the entire epistle, save 4 verses.

If I may offer a word of advise: read the other four verses this Sunday. The authors of the lectionary allow for clergy to shorten or lengthen the readings as appropriate, and what the heck? It's only four verses. It will take an extra 17 second to read..." (Verses 22-25 are included to complete the entire book.) Continued after the reading.

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The brief and practical book of Philemon has long been a favorite of Christians... in light of its theological purpose and its setting in the Greco-Roman world...

The apostle Paul addresses a crisis: Onesimus has robbed and fled from Philemon, whose house was the place of worship for a Christian church in Colossae. Paul's letter has both a private and a public cast. He speaks to the relationships within a congregation through all the problems and sorrows—yet also adventures and joys—that attend faithful pastoral ministry. Christ himself serves as the pattern for how Christians relate to one another in forgiving and reconciling love... ‘

➤ <https://www.cph.org/p-692-Philemon-Concordia-Commentary.aspx> Dr. John G. Nordling

Greeting

¹ Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ² and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.^[a] ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus,^[b] whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. ¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant^[c] but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

²¹ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²² *At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.*

Final Greetings

²³ *Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, ²⁴ and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.*

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

- a. [Philemon 1:6](#) Or for Christ's service
- b. [Philemon 1:10](#) *Onesimus* means *useful* (see verse [11](#)) or *beneficial* (see verse [20](#))
- c. [Philemon 1:16](#) For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface; twice in this verse

Cross references:

1. [Philemon 1:23](#) : Colossians 1:7
2. [Philemon 1:24](#) : Colossians 4:7-17

“(Philemon) A citizen of Colossæ, to whom St. Paul addressed a private letter, unique in the New Testament, which bears his name. As appears from this epistle, Philemon was his dear and intimate friend (verses 1, 13, 17, 22), and had been converted most probably by him (verse 19) during his long residence at Ephesus (Acts 19:26; cf. 18:19), as St. Paul himself had not visited Colossæ (Colossians 2:1). Rich and noble, he possessed slaves; his house was a place of meeting and worship for the Colossian converts (verse 2); he was kind, helpful, and charitable (verses 5,7), providing hospitality for his fellow Christians (verse 22). St. Paul calls him his fellow labourer (*synergos*, verse 1), so that he must have been earnest in his work for the Gospel, perhaps first at Ephesus and afterwards at Colossæ. It is not plain whether he was ordained or not. Tradition represents him as Bishop of Colossæ (Const. Apost., VI, 46), and the Menaia of 22 November speak of him as a holy apostle who, in company with Appia, Archippus, and Onesimus had been martyred at Colossæ during the first general persecution in the reign of Nero. In the address of the letter two other Christian converts, Appia and Archippus (Colossians 4:17) are mentioned; it is generally believed that Appia was Philemon's wife and Archippus their son. St. Paul, dealing exclusively in his letter with the domestic matter of a fugitive slave, Onesimus, regarded them both as deeply interested. Archippus, according to Colossians 4:17, was a minister in the Lord, and held a sacred office in the Church of Colossæ or in the neighbouring Church of Laodicea...The epilogue(verses 23-25) contains (1) salutations from all persons named in Colossians 4 (verses 23-24), and (2) a final benediction (verse 25).”

➤ <http://catholicencyclopedia.newadvent.com/cathen/11797b.htm> The editor of New Advent is Kevin Knight.

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“Philemon isn't the theological treatise that Romans or Galatians is. No weighty doctrines find their origin here. Honestly, most people don't even know that it exists.

But, it gives a very human face to Paul and a few other early Christians. It also sheds light on a culture that is so very different from ours.

The Epistle to Philemon is a letter not written to an entire congregation or cluster of congregations - it's a letter to one man: Philemon. And Paul is writing to him for one purpose: to get Philemon to forgive his slave, Onesimus - and maybe even grant him freedom to travel with Paul.

Onesimus was a slave. Onesimus was a Christian. Philemon was a Christian. Onesimus the Christian slave did something against his Philemon the Christian slave master's wishes. And Onesimus ran away to Paul.

Paul is thus writing a very diplomatic letter to a Christian slave owner to try and get him to forgive his Christian slave. Paul, if nothing else, has great diplomatic skills. In fact, he's pretty amazing at it. Notice how in the beginning of the letter he's totally buttering up Philemon. Notice how he appeals to Philemon's faith. Notice how Paul says to transfer Onesimus' debt to Paul.

How could Philemon refuse?

At first glance, this is an obscure letter buried deep in the New Testament that is largely forgotten by the average Christian. And, **at second glance** it's an obscure letter set in a context that is so totally and completely different than ours.

Unless your owning some slaves that your not owning up to.

But, if you dare to **take a third glance** at this passage what you'll find is faith hitting the road in the lives of real people dealing with real difficult issues and relationships. It's the story of three people (Paul, Onesimus and Philemon) struggling to live out their faith, and being challenged by it over and over again. It's the story of Paul appealing on the basis of faith for Philemon to live differently. And, it's the story of Onesimus who was maybe the most unlikely of Christian evangelists and apostles - but who seems to have a call to join the ministry of Paul as he proclaimed God's love in Christ.

What could be better?

This is a good week not only to read an entire book of the Bible, but also a week to look at what faith looks like when it hits the road. What issues and relationships try your faith? If someone were to appeal to us on the basis of faith to change something in our lives, what would it be?"

➤ <https://rmcmorley.typepad.com/a-garden-path/2010/08/proper-18c-when-your-slave-messes-up-big-time.html> Rick Morley

Luke 14:25-35; RCL, Luke 14:25-33 (Luke 15:1-10; RCL, the same reading)

"Last week's pericope from Luke was set inside, namely, in the home of a Pharisee where Jesus had been having relatively intimate mealtime conversations and interactions.

Here, the setting shifts outside and goes public. Jesus is now on the road, and traveling with large crowds. More than this, there is also a shift of topic. If many are thronging Jesus coming along on his journey and following, the focus should rightly be on discipleship. The change in tone and location in this latter part of Luke 14 is striking. But then we recall that Jesus is not travelling just any old journey. He is going to Jerusalem and has been heading toward a cross since Luke 9:51. Perhaps this is why the time is ripe to help persons in the thronging crowd make assessments..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2958 **David Schnasa Jacobsen** Professor of the Practice of Homiletics and Director of the Homiletical Theology Project, Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Mass.

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 14th Chapter”

The Cost of Discipleship

²⁵ Now great crowds accompanied him, and he (*Jesus*) turned and said to them,
²⁶ *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”*
²⁷ *Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.*
²⁸ *For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?
²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,
³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’
³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?
³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.
³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”*

Salt Without Taste Is Worthless

³⁴ *“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?
³⁵ It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

Cross references:

1. [Luke 14:26](#) : [ver. 33](#); [Matt. 10:37](#); [[Deut. 33:9](#)]
2. [Luke 14:27](#) : [ch. 9:23](#); [Matt. 10:38](#); [16:24](#); [Mark 8:34](#)
3. [Luke 14:34](#) : [Matt. 5:13](#)
4. [Luke 14:35](#) : [See Matt. 11:15](#)

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

Note the phrase “cannot be my disciple”. Pastor Brian Stoffregen has some detailed comments on this phrase:

“As I noted above, three times the phrase: "not able to be my disciple" is stated in these verses. The phrase is exactly the same in all three verses in Greek, but not translated that way in NRSV.

The word for "able" (*dynamai*) with the negative generally carries with it the meaning of "not being able" to do something. That is, it refers to something that is impossible for one to do; e.g., Zechariah is **unable** to speak (Lu 1:20 & 22). He may want to speak, but he can't.

However, Luke also uses this phrase to refer to something the person is able to do but chooses not to do: the man who **cannot** get up and give his neighbor some bread (11:7) and the man who has just gotten married and **cannot** come to the great dinner to which he had been invited (14:20). In both cases it was possible for them to do the task, but they just didn't want to do it.

How should the phrase be understood in our verses? On one hand, with the the invited guest being able to come, but choosing not to just a few verses before our text (14:20), *ou dynamai* in our verses could refer to something that is within the abilities of the crowd, but they can choose to do it or not. That is, it is within their abilities to hate their family members and carry their crosses and to give up all their possessions. They can choose to do this or choose not to do it.

On the other hand, which I prefer theologically, *ou dynamai* can refer to something that is impossible for the crowd to do. That is, it is impossible for humans to meet the demands of discipleship even if they wanted to choose it. A related word, *dynatos* is used in v. 31b to refer to the **ability** of the king's army to defeat the more numerous enemy. If the king believes that it is possible to defeat them, he chooses to go to battle. If he believes that it is impossible to defeat them in battle, he chooses a diplomatic way to peace -- which would be dependent upon the more powerful king's willingness not to destroy the inferior forces.

In addition, Luke has told us near the beginning of this gospel that "nothing will be impossible (*adynateo*) with God" -- an old couple and a young virgin will give birth to sons! Later, in Luke, after Jesus makes impossible demands on a wealthy ruler, he is asked, "Who can (*dynamai*) be saved." He answers, "What is impossible (*adynatos*) for mortals is possible (*dynatos*) for God" [18:26-27]."...

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BE SALTY

This section is concluded with the salt analogy. Pure salt, sodium chloride, can't become unsalty; but the sodium chloride of impure salt can be leached out, especially in humid weather, and the remaining substance can be tasteless.

The word for "lose its taste" is *moraino*, which, more literally, means "become foolish". (It's related to our word "moron".) Salt that isn't salty is foolish or moronic or useless salt, which could be the similar to saying Christians who aren't disciples of Jesus are foolish or moronic or useless Christians. Tannehill (*Luke*) phrases it: "...if strangely it [salt] loses its saltiness, it is worthless. The same would be true of a discipleship involving no commitment or sacrifice." [p. 236]"

- <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/luke14x25.htm> Pastor Brian Stoffregen, of Faith Lutheran church in Marysville, CA

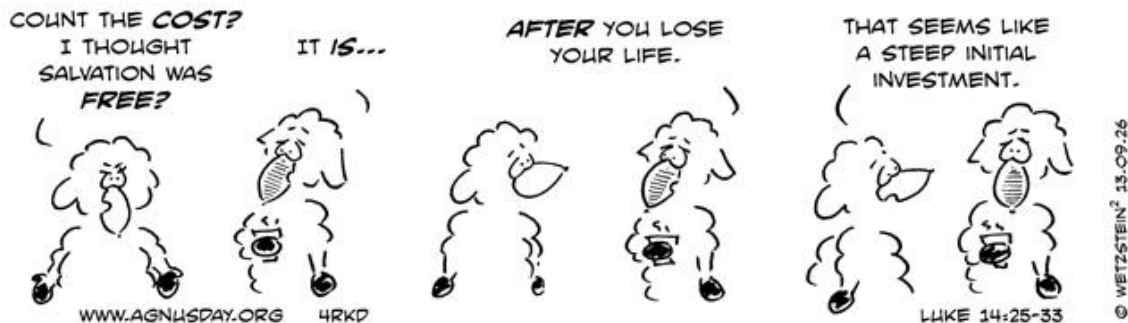
Jesus' first discipleship saying is framed in stark language: "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple" (14:25). This saying fits thematically with Luke 12:51-53, where Jesus warns of

families being divided over his message. Because Jesus in his person and message requires those who would follow him to answer the ultimate allegiance question, it is not surprising that he may inherently bring family strife.

The language of this particular saying, however, raises concern for many. Does Jesus really call us to hate our biological families and our very lives? Two observations are helpful in this regard. First, Jesus is using hyperbolic language here as he does frequently in his teachings (e.g., Matthew 18:8-9). This becomes clear when we compare this saying in Luke with its parallel in Matthew (10:37): "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." Matthew, drawing on the same Jesus tradition as Luke, seems to have interpreted the more stark language of "hate" to refer to primary allegiance. For Matthew, this saying indicates that our primary allegiance must be to Jesus rather than to family.

A second helpful observation: the use of "hate" in Luke might reflect an idiom that comes from Hebrew. In Genesis 29:30-31, we hear that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah and that Leah was "hated" by Jacob. A similar use of the Hebrew word for "hate" occurs in Deuteronomy 21:15-17 where it is also clear that the issue is one of preference or allegiance.² This coheres with what we have seen in Luke and Matthew. Jesus is not calling his followers to hate their families in terms of emotional response; instead, he calls for undivided loyalty to himself above family loyalties.

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=667 **Jeannine K. Brown** Professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, MN



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“Count the Cost

Christian preachers may be tempted to soften the demand of Moses’ final call for decision as they draw out the implications for their flocks. After all, Christians live under the New Covenant, a covenant of grace embraced by faith. But Jesus states his call and demands in terms as uncompromising as Moses,’ and those who would follow him must consider carefully the cost of discipleship. Today’s gospel reading leaves no doubt that disciples must make a sharp break with their past, sell all, and do as the Lord commands. Grace is free, but it is not cheap.”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1758 **Brian C. Jones** Professor Emeritus of Religion, Wartburg College