

## 19th Sunday after Pentecost October 11, 2020

18th Sunday after Trinity Proper 23 (28)  
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.*

### Available on line at:

- ✦ [www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)
- ✦ Through [www.Facebook.com](http://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 (5pm Kenya/Uganda):** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
- ✦ **Wednesdays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com)
- ✦ **Thursdays at 1:00 PM (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://www.slideshare.net/codybrian/sermon-092213>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 510 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 415**

**“A multitude comes from the east and the west”**

This hymn is appointed for three different Sundays in the church year. While the Gospel Readings for each of these Sundays are different, the three also bear similarities. Read Matt. 22:1–14 (for Proper 23A). In the banquet parable Jesus urges His listeners to repent... Read Luke 13:22–30 (for Proper 16C). In this banquet parable Jesus speaks of the struggle of repentance. .. Read Luke 14:15–24 (for Trinity 2). This is a banquet parable that begins with a blessing (v. 15) and ends with a warning (v. 24)...

Magnus Brostrup Landstad (1802–80) knew human suffering and the trials of life by personal experience. He grew up in the far north of Norway, a place of solitude, storm and darkness. War, hunger and inflation added to the trials of his childhood. Not surprisingly, Landstad could long for heaven, as he writes in this hymn, when “all trials shall be like a dream that is past” (st. 3)... Called a “penitential hymn poet,” Landstad could plumb the depths of repentance in a hymn such as “To Thee, Omniscient Lord of All” (LSB 613). Yet this hymn of repentance does not dwell so much on the sorrow of the repentant as on the joy that comes in Christ to the penitent. It is because of Christ’s lavish grace that Landstad wrote how he was always eager to sing a penitential hymn with joy... Landstad’s portrayal of the pilgrim way is one of an eager longing and a hopeful expectation for that which lies ahead...” study by Marion Lars Hendrickson.

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OPPHkruIEA> Piano accompaniment. Minister of Music Mark Johanson, “Ascension Lutheran Church is a safe haven where all people are wanted, welcomed, and accepted in Christ.”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9MS57osWel> Andrew Hayes An all male chorus sings the hymn.
- <https://www.cph.org/p-33663-let-all-creation-join-twelve-brief-hymn-preludes.aspx?REName=Music%20%26%20Worship&plk=2762&Lk=0&rlk=0> “Let All Creation Join: Twelve Brief Hymn Preludes” by John Eggert, 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  
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**O. T.** - “This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice...”

**Psalm** – “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”

**Epistle** – “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ”

**Gospel** – “*The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast...*”

**Isaiah 25:6-9; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Exodus 32:1-14 or Isaiah 25:1-9 (Next week: Isaiah 45:1-7; RCL, Exodus 33:12-23 or Isaiah 45:1-7)**

*There's a big feast coming, and Bob is invited! In fact, his seat is already guaranteed. There's a big feast coming, and you are invited too. That's what I want to tell you about today, that we have been "Invited to the Feast."*

*What is this feast I'm referring to? It's the one spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. You heard this prophecy in the reading from Isaiah 25. It begins: "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined."...*

*Bob ... is one of those who have been invited. And now we can say his seat is guaranteed. For the good Lord kept him in the saving faith until he died."*

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2017/10/invited-to-the-feast-funeral-sermon-on-isaiah-256-9-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> Pr. Charles Henrickson

## **God Will Swallow Up Death Forever Verses 1-12**

**25** *O LORD, you are my God;*

*I will exalt you; I will praise your name,  
for you have done wonderful things,  
plans formed of old, faithful and sure...*

**6** On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,  
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

**7** And he will swallow up on this mountain  
the covering that is cast over all peoples,  
the veil that is spread over all nations.

**8** He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.

**9** It will be said on that day,  
"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.  
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."...

- a. [Isaiah 25:10](#) The Hebrew words for *dunghill* and for the Moabite town *Madmen* ([Jeremiah 48:2](#)) sound alike
- b. [Isaiah 25:11](#) Or *in spite of the skill*

“Isaiah 25 celebrates divine faithfulness in soaring, lofty words, words too lofty for everyday reality.

Yet they inspire hope. Hymns of thanksgiving stand on either side of a prophetic description of a universal banquet hosted by God “on this mountain,” that is, on Mount Zion, where the temple stood.

The chapter begins with a communal hymn of thanksgiving for God’s deliverance from tyrants. The hymn gathers themes and language well known from the rest of Isaiah. The wording “plans formed of old, faithful and sure” recalls the divine plan, a frequent theme in Isaiah (see for instance Isa 5:19; 14:26; 19:17; 28:29; 30:1): the prophet claims that God’s plans, not those of political humans, will come to fruition.

The hymn also recalls language of faithful steadfastness that is found especially in prophecies surrounding the international crises faced by Ahaz and Hezekiah (see 1:21, 26, 7:9, 11:5, 28:16). The term “tyrant” is repeated three times in three verses (3, 4, 5). In Isaiah 13:11 and 49:25, Babylon was the tyrant. Here the lack of specific referents conveys the cycle of threat and deliverance recurring frequently in history, though the players may change. Hope is expressed here of final, decisive deliverance from tyranny.

Another theme prominent in this hymn that is familiar from earlier parts of Isaiah is the imagery of refuge found in verses 4-5. Here God acts, as in the Psalms, as “shelter” and “refuge” for the poor and needy (Psalms 14:6; 27:1; 28:8; 37:9; 46:1, etc.)...”

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2104](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2104) Patricia Tull  
A.B. Rhodes Professor Emerita of Old Testament, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, Jeffersonville, Ind.

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“The text pictures for us the Gospel. It has no cross, and does not use the word, "resurrection", but it is all there anyhow. What is pictured for us in this prophecy is heaven. The trouble is, I can't point to anything that says it cannot be right now, with the possible exception of **wiping tears away from all faces**. That is why I say that this is the Gospel, pictured for us in terms of the results, and when we face those results, we will proudly say, "See, this is our God!"

This prophecy rests on the understanding of the truth that our religion is something that might well be described as, "already / not yet". Already we know, but not yet do we perceive these things with our senses. Already we possess these treasures, but not yet do we fully enjoy that possession. There is nothing about our salvation which is unfinished, or which we do not possess already. Nevertheless, there is much about it that is not yet within our experience. We have resurrection already. We have eternal life already. We have life with God in His presence already. The not yet part is our sense and personal experience of these things. We don't see it. We don't feel it. So it seems to us to be "not yet".

But it is! He is Risen!"

- <http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=2815> Pastor Robin Fish Shaped by the Cross Lutheran Church  
Laurie, MO

**Psalm 23; RCL, Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 or Psalm 23 (Psalm 96:1-9 (10-13); RCL, Psalm 99 or Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13)**

*“Martin Luther (1483–1546) was adamant that Christ as the Lord of Scripture must also be the Lord of our exegesis.*

*“Every passage of Scripture,” he said at his table in 1532, “is impossible to be interpreted without knowledge of Christ.” Still, he gladly included grammar, history and culture as handmaidens to a Christocentric reading of the Bible. In this explanation of Psalm 23, Luther through his own knowledge of and experience with sheep unpacks the beloved biblical metaphor of human beings as sheep and Jesus of Nazareth as their Shepherd:...” (continued after the reading)*

## **The LORD Is My Shepherd                      A Psalm of David.**

**23** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**2** He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

**3** He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

**4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

**5** You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

**6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

forever.

- a. [Psalm 23:2](#) Hebrew *beside waters of rest*
- b. [Psalm 23:3](#) Or *in right paths*
- c. [Psalm 23:4](#) Or *the valley of deep darkness*
- d. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *Only*
- e. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *steadfast love*
- f. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *shall return to dwell*
- g. [Psalm 23:6](#) Hebrew *for length of days*

:This metaphor is one of the most beautiful and comforting and yet most common of all in Scripture, when it compares his divine Majesty with a pious, faithful or—as Christ says—“good Shepherd,” and compares us poor, weak, miserable sinners with sheep. We can, however, understand this comforting and beautiful picture best when we consider the creature itself—out of which the Prophets have taken this and similar images—and diligently learn from it the traits and characteristics of a natural sheep and the office, work, and diligence of a pious shepherd. Whoever does this carefully will not only readily understand this comparison and others in Scripture concerning the shepherd and the sheep but also will find the comparisons exceedingly sweet and comforting...”

- <https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2015/11/luther-psalm-23/> *Psalms 1-72*, ed. Herman Selderhuis, Reformation Commentary on Scripture, OT Vol. VII, pp. 187-88.

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 “If you have never preached on Psalm 23 -- or if you haven’t preached on it recently -- this is the week.<sup>1</sup>

Why? Glad that you asked.

Psalm 23 is one of the cannot-miss texts for living the Christian life Monday through Saturday. Simply put, the psalm is one of a small set essential texts for the daily living-out of the Christian faith...

Psalm 23 is usually described as a psalm of trust. Trust psalms presume a particular type of life setting and regularly include two types of language.

**The Situation.** Similar to the Psalter’s prayers for help (also called laments), trust psalms are spoken *in the midst of dire crisis*. Most prayers for help include expressions of trust, but these expressions are not usually the main emphasis of those psalms. In prayers for help the emphasis is usually on crying out in complaint and requesting help. As the name indicates, in the psalm of trust the emphasis is on trust.

**The Language, Part 1.** The psalms of trust regularly include metaphorical descriptions of the crisis in which the psalmist is stuck. In Psalm 23, the crisis is described as “the darkest valley” and “a table ... in the presence of my enemies.” Other psalms describe crises as “an army [en]camped against me,” or “the foundations are destroyed,” or “the waters have come up to my neck,” and so on (Psalms 27:3; 11:3; 69:1).

Part of the power of Psalm 23 is the dynamic power of these metaphors for crisis -- they can apply to many different situations...

**The Language, Part 2.** In addition to metaphorical depictions of a situation of crisis, the psalms of trust also include language that expresses trust in God’s presence and deliverance. In Psalm 23, the person in crisis confesses: “the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,” “he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul; he leads me in right paths for his name’s sake” (more on God’s name momentarily), and “You prepare a table before me ... my cup overflows.” Other psalms confess that God is “my light and my salvation,” “the Lord is in his holy temple ... his eyes behold, his gaze examines humankind,” and “the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge” (Psalms 27:1; 11:4; 46:7, 11).

The main aim of a sermon on Psalm 23 might be to make this language of trust available to God’s people, so that these or other words that confess trust in God might be words that they can speak in the midst of their daily lives -- especially when they are in crisis.

One more word needs to be said. In order to make the language of Psalm 23 available to God's people, the preacher also needs to address the theology of Psalm 23 -- and more generally the Psalter's theology of trust.

In a word, the theology of Psalm 23 assumes a divine promise..."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3185](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3185) [Rolf Jacobson](#) Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

### **Philippians 4:4-13; RCL, Philippians 4:1-9 (1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; RCL, the same reading)**

*It's an exclamation we've heard time and time again, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).*

*But why? Today's epistle passage is an intriguing composition of seven sentences ranging from two to twenty Greek words long. The sentences have no connecting words except "but" (alla) in 4:6 and "and" (kai) in 4:7. As I said, an intriguing series of exhortations.*

*The two-fold expression to rejoice echoes what the apostle said in 3:1, "Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord." Rejoicing is a keynote of this letter. The inclusion of the pantote, translated in the NRSV as "always," can also be rendered "at all times." The statement calls for an ongoing activity, one not based upon the particular circumstances of the apostle's readers. In one way, this adverb points to the future and its possible trials. The idea then is to keep on rejoicing in the Lord at all times, regardless of what may come upon you...*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=470](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=470)  
[Michael Joseph Brown](#) President, Payne Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

*4 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved...*

### **Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer Verses 2-9**

**4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. **9** What you have

learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

### God's Provision Verses 10-20

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me...

### Final Greetings Verses 21-23

<sup>23</sup> *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

- a. [Philippians 4:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*; also verses [8](#), [21](#)
- b. [Philippians 4:3](#) Or *loyal Syzygus*; Greek *true yokefellow*
- c. [Philippians 4:3](#) Or *strived* (see [1:27](#))
- d. [Philippians 4:5](#) Or *gentleness*
- e. [Philippians 4:9](#) Or *these things*—<sup>9</sup>*which things you have also learned*
- f. [Philippians 4:14](#) Or *have fellowship in*
- g. [Philippians 4:17](#) Or *I seek the profit that accrues to your account*

““I think I can . . . I think I can . . . I think I can.” Author Watty Piper geared the book *The Little Engine That Could* for children. First released for publication in the United States in 1930, the classic’s optimistic message has climbed its way into a mountain of self-help books, motivational speeches, and personal mission statements.

Similarly, so has the Philippians passage. PHIL 4:13 appears on the eye-strips of athletes, and it’s inked on arms, engraved in rings, and printed on posters to motivate people. The reference is a visible reminder to never give up and to aim for success. To many, Piper and the apostle Paul were working with the same concept: “I think I can” = “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”...

How does the context of the original passage compare to the way it is often applied?

Example of Philippians 4:13 is often used by athletes, politicians or in the medical field. Philippians 4:10-12 shows that this is more about contentment and strength to endure all situations and not the ability to do all things...”

- <https://wels.net/philippians-413-part-10/> Pastor Joel S. Heckendorf Immanuel Lutheran Church, Greenville, Wisconsin Copyrighted by WELS *Forward in Christ* © 2019

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Tim Tebow is one of many famous Christians to use Philippians 4:13 as an inspiration for winning. - Image courtesy of StefanRalle (<http://bit.ly/1kEozPJ>) Tebow's highly churched Southern fan base didn't need to look up [the passage](#). No, most of them knew it by heart:  
**"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."**

"Philippians 4:13 is one of the most popular verses in any of the 66 books of the Christian Bible, having been printed on millions of key chains and t-shirts, cellphone cases and coffee mugs. (If one wanted to argue the trinketization of Christianity, this Bible verse would be a good starting point.)

But it also one of the misunderstood, misused, and misinterpreted...

As Dr. Eric Bargerhuff writes in [The Most Misused Verses in the Bible](#), "[Philippians 4:13 is] not really about who has the strength to play to the best of their abilities in a sporting contest.... This verse is about having strength to be content when we are facing those moments in life when physical resources are minimal."

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible does not teach "God will give you the strength to do whatever you set your mind to." (Actually, anytime a foundational view in your theology begins with, "God will give you", stop and do a double-check.) [tweetable]God is not a heavenly bellhop or divine sugar daddy or cosmic power plant to fuel your dream-quest.[/tweetable] Instead, the Bible teaches, God is a sustainer when life feels unsustainable...

The God of the Bible—Jesus—is [better than we've imagined](#) because he gives us what we *actually* need: strength to survive our moments of weakness and a sense of freedom even in life's prisons.

Go write that under your eyes."

- <https://religionnews.com/2014/01/16/philippians-413-many-christians-misuse-iconic-verse/>  
[Jonathan Merritt](#), Religious News Service

### **Matthew 22:1-14; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 22: 15-22; RCL, the same reading)**

*In a seminar on Matthew's gospel, Tom Long pointed out that in Matthew, it's never a good thing to be addressed as "friend." Every time someone is called a friend in Matthew, what follows is not pleasant! Jesus himself was referred to as a "friend" by the religious authorities in Matthew 11 but it was no compliment: they accused Jesus of being "a friend of tax collectors and sinners." In the previous chapter from last week's lection, the master of the vineyard overhears the grumbling and grouching of the 12-hour workers over being paid the same as the 1-hour folks. "I am not being unfair to you, friend" the master says. But there is an edge to that—the grumblers were no friends of the owner! Later in Matthew we find the single most*

*poignant such instance when, having been kissed by the traitor Judas, Jesus asks him, "Friend, what have you come for?"*

*But a close second to that final devastating use of "friend" may well be here in Matthew 22 when a hapless wedding guest is addressed as "Friend" right before being most definitively thrown out on his ear!*

*When you preach on Matthew, don't choose "What A Friend We Have in Jesus" for the service!... (continued after the reading)*

**"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 22nd Chapter of St. Matthew"**

### **The Parable of the Wedding Feast Verses 1-14**

**22** And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ***2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants<sup>4</sup> to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast."*** ***5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.'*** ***10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.***

***11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*** ***14 For many are called, but few are chosen."***

**Paying Taxes to Caesar Verses 15-22 (Proper 24)**  
**Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection Verses 23-33**  
**The Great Commandment Verses 34-40 (Proper 25)**  
**Whose Son Is the Christ? Verses 41-46 (Proper 25 continued)**

- a. [Matthew 22:3](#) Or *bondservants*; also verses [4](#), [6](#), [8](#), [10](#)
- b. [Matthew 22:16](#) Greek *for you do not look at people's faces*
- c. [Matthew 22:19](#) A *denarius* was a day's wage for a laborer

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

“The concluding incident in this parable is the second shock of the narrative, the first having come when the king orders the complete annihilation of those who spurned his invitation to dinner. All in all, then, the king of this parable is not someone to be trifled with! Whatever is going on as symbolized by this parable, the stakes are clearly on the high side.

Because the center of this parable displays the reach of God’s gospel to the least likely of people—a theme Matthew has been hammering away at since his opening genealogy and then the appearance of also the Magi—it is fairly easy to see how and why this is finally a parable full of grace. But that grace is nestled in pretty closely to judgment as well. And just here is a tension for us preachers...”

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-23a/?type=the\\_lectionary\\_gospel](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-23a/?type=the_lectionary_gospel) Scott Hoezee

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“This is one parable you won't find in your child's Sunday school curriculum.

It is intended for theologically mature audiences only. In fact, without proper attention to the narrative context, I'm not sure this parable is conducive to a Christian sermon at all.

The narrative context reveals that Jesus directs the parable to the chief priests and elders of Jerusalem (Matthew 21:23), the very people who will arrest Jesus and hand him over for execution (the Pharisees are also mentioned at Matthew 21:45). The preceding parable (Matthew 21:33-46) has already gone some way toward explaining their opposition to Jesus. Recall that the tenants (chief priests and elders) appointed by the landowner (God) to oversee his vineyard (Israel) attempted to usurp the vineyard itself, going even so far as to kill the landowner's servants (the prophets) and, eventually, his own son (Jesus). The story ended, however, with the vindication of the son, the destruction of the tenants, and the handing over of the vineyard "to a nation that produces the fruits of the kingdom" (Matthew 21:43).

Thus last week's parable served to explain how the authority of Israel's traditional leaders was no longer valid in light of their rejection of Jesus. With their call to serve God poisoned by a sense of entitlement, they can no longer discern God's will, even when it is presented by God's own Son. Because this week's parable is also directed "to them" (*autois*, v. 1), we must not make the mistake of reading into it a judgment against the nation of Israel a whole. As with all the Gospels, much of Israel has in fact been drawn to the Jesus. Here Jesus simply continues the indictment of his opponents, but now through the analogy of a wedding banquet...”

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=172](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=172) [Ira Brent Driggers](#)  
Professor of New Testament Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Columbia, S.C.

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“This parable comes across as a difficult text about judgement. Yet, it has some important and useful aspects that commend itself to preaching

**First**, the language of sending and inviting is used repeatedly. Working with the common notion that the King in the parable is God, it always amazes me how much God continues to reach out to humanity. In this and many other parables, the King sends out his messengers with the good news again and again. This is a God who will not give up on us, and that is great news indeed!

**Second**, there is the delightful surprise that the king invites everyone to the wedding banquet, both good and bad. In a world so willing to throw blame and shame around, this can be good news indeed. **Third**, there is some thought that this is actually two separate parables, and may be trying to heighten the sense that this parable is about grace and mercy rather than judgement and punishment.

Looking at today’s gospel of Matthew 22, the first 10 verses have a Lucan parallel, but the remaining 5 do not. Starting in verse 11, there is a second parable that is added onto the first.<sup>1</sup> This second continues the themes of judgement and ends with a potentially difficult verse for preaching, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” One commentator suggests that the themes of inclusion and exclusion that suddenly arise here are related to those of whether the guests show mercy to others.<sup>2</sup> So, it is indeed a judgmental verse with regards to whether or not those who come to the wedding feast are willing to show mercy, or, in my interpretation, whether they are willing to have mercy shown to them...”

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3443](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3443) [Erick J. Thompson](#) Senior Pastor, St. John Lutheran, Fargo, North Dakota



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### The Matthew Challenge How about watching it?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjVckoWDHq4&list=PLwnG0SuJ1uNlmnYYYsObgx6CXf1zHNQXD&index=3&t=0s> The Visual Bible The Gospel Of Matthew

Past week review thoughts



“The 23rd Psalm is a perennial favorite.<sup>1</sup>

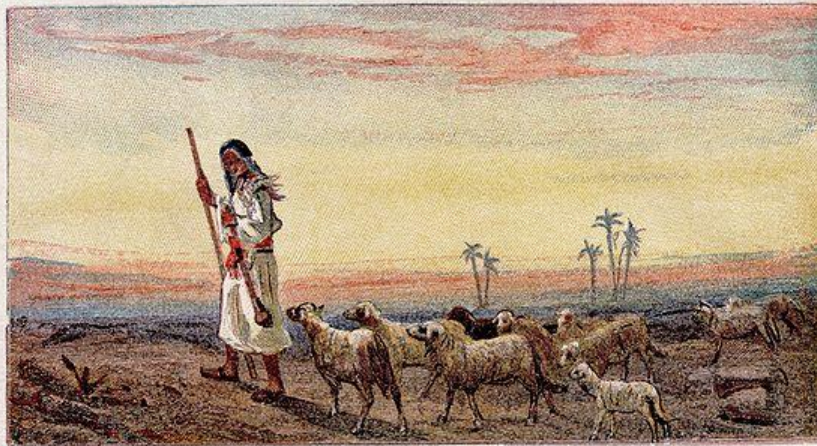
And yet for all its familiarity, there may be some nuances to the Psalm we have missed, some reflections scholars might share to deepen our sense of the most comforting words ever composed.

Consider one four letter word in verse four: *thou*. The second-person pronoun "thou" is old English, a relic from the 1611 King James Version. The vast majority of the time we prefer modern translations of the Bible—but Christians cling to a 400-year-old translation of Psalm 23. Why is this? Could it be that elevated language, words with some lineage and dignity, are appropriate to the grandeur, the majesty, the immeasurable grace of God who is indeed our shepherd?

And here is a fascinating item: James Limburg points out that, in the original Hebrew of Psalm 23, there are exactly twenty six words before and after, "Thou art with me."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the poet was boldly declaring that God being with us is at the very center of our lives..."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4385](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4385) James Howell Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C.





**T**he Lord is my Shepherd ;—I shall not want.  
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
 He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
 He restoreth my soul :  
 He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
 I will fear no evil :  
 For thou art with me ;—thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
 Thou anointest my head with oil ;—my cup runneth over.  
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life :  
 And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm XXIII.

