

16<sup>TH</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 18 September 4, 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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[www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)

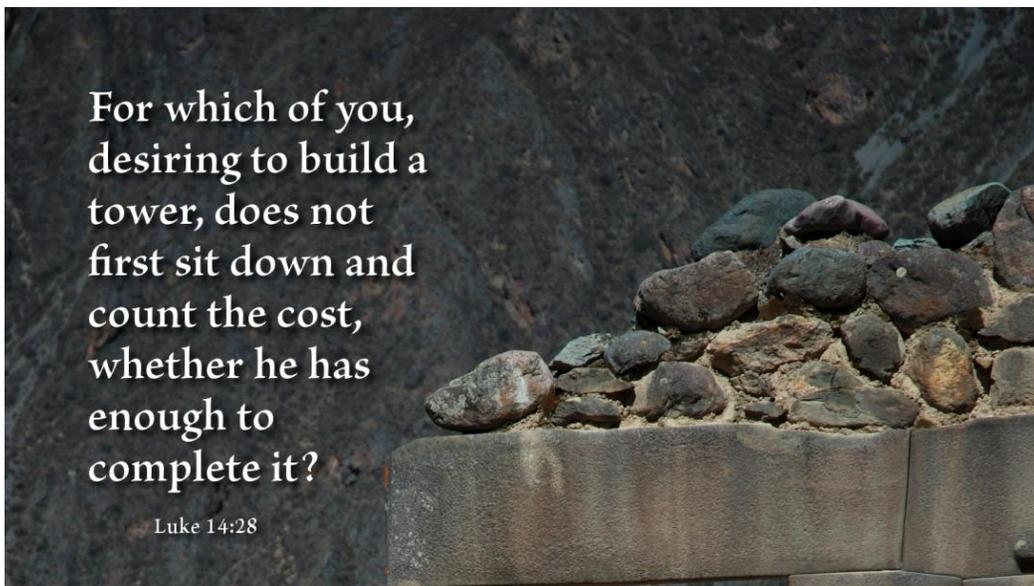
or

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

September 1, 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 (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.)*



<http://markryman.com/BLOG/category/lectionary/page/4/>

### 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, (1903-2000), 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. Ordained in the British Methodist ministry, he has been pastor and district superintendent in Brighton and York, and now serves in Norwich. Here he continues 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." [http://www.hymnary.org/person/Green\\_FP](http://www.hymnary.org/person/Green_FP)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiFPPihBtqM>, [One LSB Hymn a Week](#) - Hymn prelude on Repton by Henry Gerike.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4wTnrBbWrs> Hear the tune, "Repton", played by a Salvation Army band.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkTRgiMMMxw> Another orchestral presentation of "Repton" by the Box Hill City Band at the Australian National Brass Band Championships, Sydney 2015

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

## **Deuteronomy 30:15-20; RCL, Jeremiah 18:1-11 or Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18**

*(Next Week: Ezekiel 34:11-24; RCL, Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 or Psalm 14)*

“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...” (continued after reading)

<sup>15</sup>“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup>If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God<sup>[a]</sup> 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,<sup>[b]</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup>But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to

worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I 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. <sup>19</sup> I 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, <sup>20</sup> loving 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*

### “...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](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1758) [Brian C. Jones](#),  
Assistant Professor of Religion, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa

“...this reading actually requires the entire book of Deuteronomy as a background for presenting that choice since it stands as the literary and theological climax of the whole book. There is more to the text than just a call to God...Since Deuteronomy is one of the most deliberately structured books in the Torah, we need to take seriously how the community of faith shaped this call to God in order to hear its richness and the depth of its theological framework.” For a more complete treatment of the background of Deuteronomy try this article by Dennis Bratcher. <http://www.crivoice.org/lectionary/YearA/Aepiphany6ot.html>

**Psalm 1; RCL, Deuteronomy 30:15-20 or Psalm 1 (Psalm 119: 169-176; RCL, Exodus 32:7-14 or Psalm 51:1-10)**

“*BLESSED*”—see how this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, even as did the famous Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount! The word translated “blessed” is a very expressive one. The original word is plural, and it is a controverted matter whether it is an adjective or a substantive. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which shall rest upon the man whom God hath justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness he shall enjoy. We might read it, “Oh, the blessednesses!” and we may well regard it (as Ainsworth does) as a joyful acclamation of the gracious man’s felicity. May the like benediction rest on us!”  
<http://www.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps001.php>

Charles H. Spurgeon quotes Luther seven times in his sermon on Psalm 1.

## The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked

1 Blessed is the man<sup>[a]</sup>  
 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<sup>[b]</sup> 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*

This deceptively simple psalm serves as the introduction to the Psalter and sets before us, the readers, a vision of life as a journey marked by bifurcating paths: turn one way, happiness (1:1), another, destruction (1:6).

Our psalmist, to entice us to choose the happy trail, paints the happy life with images stolen from paradise -- verdant with plant life, nourished by gentle waters, seasonably fruitful, and unfailingly prosperous (1:3). The psalmist invites us to the royal garden, perhaps atop the Mountain of God, Eden-like. In contrast, he likens the fate of those who choose to turn at the forks of life's journey time and again toward destruction, not simply to chaff, but to chaff that the discerning wind drives out of the garden into judgment (1:4-5).

The choice would appear clear: reject the path that leads to destruction and choose the other path, the happy life. But where might we find this path to the garden? Dutifully, the psalmist announces:

Happy is the one ... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD,  
 and [who] on his law meditates day and night. (1:1, 2 *author's translation*)...

### Meditating on the Psalter

What does it mean to meditate on the psalms?

To meditate on the psalms means first and foremost to speak the human words of each psalm to God, that is, to lament, petition, give thanks, and to praise God day and night. John Calvin rightly called the Psalter “the anatomy of all the parts of the human soul.” What the meditation on the psalms requires, then, is the honest presentation of all the parts of our human soul before God. It requires us to give heartfelt thanksgiving and praise, joining the heavens, the earth, and even the sea. It also requires us to cry aloud from upon the ash heaps -- in complaint, in sorrow, in anger, in protest -- to God. To borrow words from Kierkegaard, to meditate on the psalms is to choose to will to be ourselves before God, to sing full throated songs of praise when that is appropriate and to give honest articulation to our despair when we are sad. To present our very ordinary selves, our daily selves, to God, that is the advice of the Psalm.

Happy is the one who meditates day and night on the law of the Lord!”

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2962](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2962) Paul K.-K. Cho  
Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

### **Philemon 1-21** (*I Timothy 1:5-11*) 12-17; RCL, verses 12-17 only)

"This is a notable Epistle, and full of worth; each word having its weight, each syllable its substance. From an abject subject, the receiving of a runaway servant, St. Paul soars like a heavenly eagle, and flies a high pitch of heavenly discourse." (John Trapp)

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david/studyguide\\_phm/phm\\_1.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/studyguide_phm/phm_1.cfm) Read a complete summary of this book at the blueletterbible site.

### **Greeting**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

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

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Philemon's Love and Faith**

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, <sup>9</sup> yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus,<sup>[b]</sup> whose father I became in my imprisonment. <sup>11</sup> (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) <sup>12</sup> I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. <sup>15</sup> For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, <sup>16</sup> no longer as a bondservant<sup>[c]</sup> 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.

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

<sup>21</sup> *Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.* <sup>22</sup> *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

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

<sup>25</sup> *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](#) Or *slave*; twice in this verse (for the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface)

“The brief and practical book of Philemon has long been a favorite of Christians. This commentary expounds Philemon in light of its theological purpose and its setting in the Greco-Roman world. It probes the specific circumstances under which Paul wrote the letter; how Philemon fit in with Paul’s missionary travels; and who Philemon and Onesimus were within the Christian community.

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.

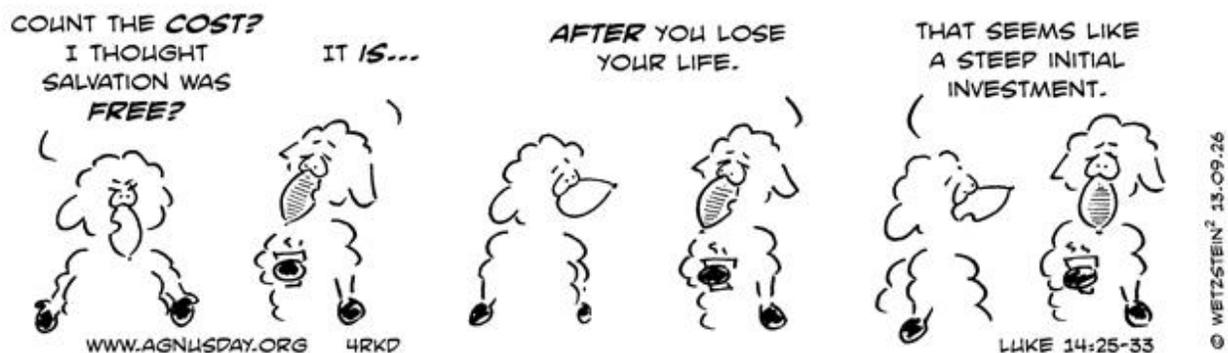
Unique features of this commentary include its depth; its detailed consideration of ancient Greek and Latin literature that sheds light on Philemon; and its theology, which emphasizes Jesus Christ, God’s Word and Sacraments, and the doctrine of vocation, whereby each Christian is called to serve God faithfully in his or her particular role in life. “

<https://www.cph.org/p-692-philemon-concordia-commentary.aspx> The complete commentary is 239 pages long and a 39 page sample can be read at this web site.

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

### “Glory to You, O Lord”

**Luke 14:25-35, RCL, Luke 14:25-33 (Luke 15:1-10)**



### The Cost of Discipleship

<sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “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. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> 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? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup> 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? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

## Salt Without Taste Is Worthless

<sup>34</sup> “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? <sup>35</sup> 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.”

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

“...This pericope serves as a warning to those who would follow Jesus to take seriously the cost. The two examples in the center of this discourse emphasize this (vv. 28–32). It is best not to think of these as parables. They are less stories, and more examples to be quickly related to. The nature of Jesus’s question is rhetorical. The obvious answer in both examples is, no one would do that. And so Jesus says to anyone who would follow him, recognize what it will cost. Jesus then leaves his hearers with one final image in verses 34–35 to emphasize the point. There is no in-between with salt. Salt is either salty or it isn’t. There is no “sort of” salty. If it isn’t salty it isn’t really salt and it should be thrown away. Its identity is its property and its property is its identity. In the same way one is either a disciple of Jesus, or one isn’t; there is no “sort of” disciple...” <http://concordiatheology.org/2016/08/proper-18-%e2%80%a2-luke-1425-35-%e2%80%a2-september-4-2016/>

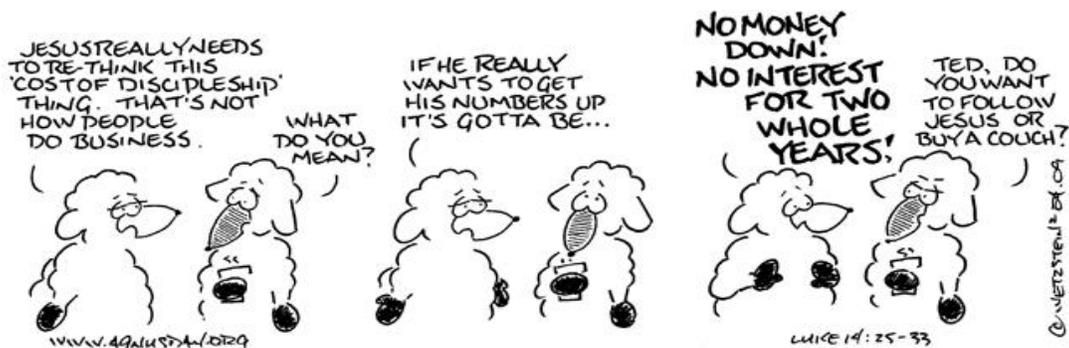
*This reading generated many video sermons. The list below gives you several choices, some Lutheran, some not; some short, some not. Give them a try.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBs4mFyn-fc> St Paul,, Clintonville, WI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEkd7WONZyM> St Michael’s Lutheran, New Caanan, CT

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUX\\_dIm-QnA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUX_dIm-QnA) Calvary Chapel, Las Vegas, NV

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzpmVWnzOOU> Catholic



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