

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost October 10, 2021

Today's Gospel Lesson from Mark ends with these words: "Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Great possessions are not always a blessing. In fact, they can be and often are just the opposite. Here we see that great possessions came between this man and Jesus. If it is not great possessions that come between you and Jesus, then what is it? A busy schedule? A desire to be popular? The cares of the world? A hardened heart? Sin? Indeed it is sin that comes between us and God, between us and our inheritance of eternal life.

Jesus himself had to remove these obstacles that keep us away from Him and eternal life. It is impossible for us to do it ourselves. It would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. But in Christ all things are possible. He made our salvation possible by going to the cross and opening the kingdom of heaven to us and all believers!

Salvation unto Us Has Come Lutheran Service Book 555, Lutheran Worship 355, The Lutheran Hymnal 377



1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come By God's free grace and fa - vor;
2 What God did in His Law de - mand And none to Him could ren - der
3 It was a false, mis - lead - ing dream That God His Law had giv - en
4 From sin our flesh could not ab - stain, Sin held its sway un - ceas - ing;



Good works can - not a - vert our doom, They help and save us nev - er.
Caused wrath and woe on ev - 'ry hand For man, the vile of - fend - er.
That sin - ners could them - selves re - deem And by their works gain heav - en.
The task was use - less and in vain, Our guilt was e'er in - creas - ing.



Faith looks to Je - sus Christ a - lone, Who did for all the
Our flesh has not those pure de - sires The spir - it of the
The Law is but a mir - ror bright To bring the in - bred
None can re - move sin's poi - soned dart Or pu - ri - fy our



world a - tone; He is our one Re - deem - er.
Law re - quires, And lost is our con - di - tion.
sin to light That lurks with - in our na - ture.
guile - ful heart— So deep is our cor - rup - tion.

5 Yet as the Law must be fulfilled
 Or we must die despairing,
 Christ came and has God's anger stilled,
 Our human nature sharing.
 He has for us the Law obeyed
 And thus the Father's vengeance stayed
 Which over us impended.

Public domain

L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalms 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalms 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalms 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 112:3–6; antiphon Psalm 112:1

L Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
 who greatly delights in his commandments!

C Wealth and riches are in his house,
 and his righteousness endures forever.

L Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;
 he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

C It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;
 who conducts his affairs with justice.

L For the righteous will never be moved;
 he will be remembered forever.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
 who greatly delights in his commandments!

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**

L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

C **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

C **For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, whose grace always precedes and follows us, help us to forsake all trust in earthly gain and to find in You our heavenly treasure; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Amos 5:6–7, 10–15

⁶Seek the LORD and live,
lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,
and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,
⁷O you who turn justice to wormwood
and cast down righteousness to the earth!

¹⁰They hate him who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor him who speaks the truth.
¹¹Therefore because you trample on the poor
and you exact taxes of grain from him,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not dwell in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.

¹²For I know how many are your transgressions
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and turn aside the needy in the gate.

¹³Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time,
for it is an evil time.

¹⁴Seek good, and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
as you have said.

¹⁵Hate evil, and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,

C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Psalm 90:12–17

L ¹² So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

C ¹³ **Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants!**

L ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

C ¹⁵ **Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.**

L ¹⁶ Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.

C ¹⁷ **Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!**

Hebrews 3:12–19

¹²Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

¹⁶For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Galatians 6:2

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Bear one another's burdens, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. and so fulfill the law of Christ. Alleluia.

Mark 10:17–22

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 10th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁷As [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do

not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.”²⁰ And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”²¹ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”²² Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Take My Life and Let It Be Lutheran Service Book 783, Lutheran Worship 404, The Lutheran Hymnal 400



1 Take my life and let it be Con-se - crat - ed, Lord, to Thee;
2 Take my hands and let them move At the im - pulse of Thy love;
3 Take my voice and let me sing Al-ways, on - ly for my King;
4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, Not a mite would I with - hold;



Take my mo - ments and my days, Let them flow in cease-less praise.
Take my feet and let them be Swift and beau - ti - ful for Thee.
Take my lips and let them be Filled with mes - sag - es from Thee.
Take my in - tel - lect and use Ev - 'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Devotional Thoughts:

Can you read in your sleep? I can! When our children were little, I would enjoy reading to them in the evening while we were on vacation. Our books ended each chapter with a cliffhanger. The stories were so exciting that the family always wanted me to push on.

Since we were on vacation and there was no real bedtime, I would agree to their request. But before long someone would ask, “Dad, are you falling asleep?” Apparently, I was! Although I was still reading, I was mumbling and the words just didn’t make sense. So we would have to stop and wait until the next night to find out what happened to our heroes.

Our Gospel lesson for this week is like those childhood stories, it ends, “Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” But that’s not really the conclusion of the story. We really should press on to find out what happens next. We are in the middle of the plot. In most Bible translations, the account of the Rich Young Man continues for nine more verses! But we will have to wait a week to find out what happens next. (I suppose you could read ahead.)

I’m not sure why our lectionary does this. Without reading on, it is very easy to misunderstand Jesus’ interaction with this rich young man.

At the beginning of chapter 10, we find Jesus on the east side of the Jordan River not too far from Jericho. He is on His way to Jerusalem. There He will celebrate Passover with His disciples, suffer, and die upon the cross for the sins of the world. The events of Holy Week are days away.

Following His encounter with the rich young man, Mark records:

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise” (Mark 10:32-34).

With this background, let’s consider Jesus’ encounter with the rich man. He runs up to Jesus and asks, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” How refreshing! Jesus’ agenda had been dominated by secondary issues such as marriage, divorce, and questions concerning who is the greatest. Finally, here is a man interested in eternal life!

Jesus prefaces His answer with the key to understanding the matter, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.” If people were good, there would be no need for completing the task before Him. If people were good, there would be no need for Jesus to suffer and die for the sins of the world. But no one is good! (Romans 3:10-12). So Jesus must push on to Jerusalem.

To press home His point that no one is good, Jesus reminded the rich young man of the commandments. “Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.” There is no mystery or secret to obtaining eternal life in heaven, simply keep the Ten Commandments!

Unfortunately, the rich young man, like so many of us, is delusional when he considers his personal morality. So he responds to Jesus, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” Oh, really?

In Jesus’ day, there were countless numbers of people like this rich young man. The Pharisees were leading the charge. We still have them today. Not that anyone claims to be perfect. “Nobody’s perfect” has entered our lexicon. However, modern Americans measure their morality by comparing themselves to others.

We look around and before long; we find people who don’t measure up to our personal standards of goodness. If you follow social media at all or watch news reports, you soon will find a despicable character that makes you look good. Right now, the spirit of Puritanism is strong in us. But it’s a Puritanism of new ethics and morality. It’s common to hear of people losing their jobs for something they said or wrote decades ago. And of course, we can always point to those rascally politicians in Washington.

But Jesus set the bar much higher. We dare not rely on our personal “goodness” because no one is good except God alone! Jesus had been driving home this point since the beginning of His ministry.

Here are a few of the things that He said in His Sermon on the Mount. “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire” (Matthew 5:21-22). “Everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). And to sum it all up, “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Reading this, it becomes much more difficult for us to join with this rich young man and declare, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” Jesus chooses to expose this man’s lack of obedience in another way. With love in His heart, Jesus says, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

By his claim to have kept the commandments, this rich man was saying that he loved his neighbor as himself (Mark 12:31). But he hadn’t. Jesus was simply trying to prove it to him. Unfortunately, the rich young man was disheartened by the saying. He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

All of God’s commandments can be summarized by one word: love! The first table of the Ten Commandments instructs us to love God above everything else. The second table of the law directs us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Do that and you will have eternal life! Every sin uncovers the truth that we don’t love the way we ought. It’s not just the love of money that gets in our way!

So what are we to do? With this impossible standard, who can be saved? As a preview of next week, I will tell you that the disciples asked that exact same question. Jesus responded, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27).

Jesus’ entire life was dedicated to making the impossible, possible! His life was dedicated to making the imperfect, perfect and the unholy, holy. His death on the cross was the fulfillment of His ultimate love for God and for us, His neighbors. Jesus lived and died for us so that our sins would be forgiven. When God forgives your sins, they are taken away from you. Psalm 103:12 declares, “As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.”

You inherit eternal life because God has made you good! You have become good and holy, not by what you have done or could do but through what Jesus has done for you!

You have been justified by faith. One way to understand the meaning of the word “justified” is to remember this phrase, “It is *just as if I’d never sinned!*”

That’s all for now. Tune in next week for “the rest of the story.”

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

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

L O Lord, God of hosts, reveal our sin to us through Your Word. Do not let us approach You in our own righteousness, but move us to come before You in repentance, that we may inherit eternal life by Your grace in Christ alone.

C Amen.

L Lord God, preserve us from the love of possessions. Grant us willing spirits to share our bounty with others as You have shared Your bountiful goodness with us.

C Amen.

L Lord God, keep us from spiritual apathy. Produce in us a spiritual urgency to understand that today is the day to turn from our sins and receive the salvation that Jesus won for us on the cross.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during the pandemic. As we again experience an increase in infections, we ask for Your continued protection and grace.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Salvation unto Us Has Come Lutheran Service Book 555, Lutheran Worship 355, The Lutheran Hymnal 377

6 Since Christ has full atonement made
And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad
And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead,
Your death is now my life indeed,
For You have paid my ransom.

7 Let me not doubt, but truly see
Your Word cannot be broken;
Your call rings out, "Come unto Me!"
No falsehood have You spoken.
Baptized into Your precious name,
My faith cannot be put to shame,
And I shall never perish.

8 The Law reveals the guilt of sin
And makes us conscience-stricken;
But then the Gospel enters in
The sinful soul to quicken.
Come to the cross, trust Christ, and live;
The Law no peace can ever give,
No comfort and no blessing.

9 Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone
And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known,
With love and hope increasing.
For faith alone can justify;
Works serve our neighbor and supply
The proof that faith is living.

10 All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His grace;
All glory to His merit.
O triune God in heav'n above,
You have revealed Your saving love;
Your blessèd name we hallow.

Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some liturgical portions are adapted from Lutheran Service Book © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Lutheran Service Book License: 10002731 Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Michigan

Hymns are in the public domain. The remainder of this work including adaptations and the Devotional Thoughts © 2021 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

October 11 – October 16, 2021

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Introit Psalm 112:3–6; antiphon Psalm 112:1

- L** Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commandments!
- C** **Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.**
- L** Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.
- C** **It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;
who conducts his affairs with justice.**
- L** For the righteous will never be moved;
he will be remembered forever.
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
- L** Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commandments!

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

It's not surprising that our introit for this week links God's commands and wealth. How we obtain our wealth and how we use it are good indicators of what we think about God and His commands.

It's a common pastime in our country to condemn the rich. Many believe that they certainly must have obtained their wealth by oppressing someone. While that may be true, I'll let God worry about it. The bigger questions are: How do I obtain and use my possessions? How do I obey God's commands?

The most common God-pleasing way to obtain wealth is through honest labor. Ephesians 4:28 says, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." Here is an interesting concept. We work in order to have something to share! Psalm 112:5 in our introit says the same thing, "It is well with the man who deals generously and lends."

I once had a conversation with a woman that revealed a widespread misconception concerning Christians and wealth. She told me, "If I give God 10% then I can do what I want with the other 90% of my income."

Of course, this is false. We are responsible to God for 100% of what He has given to us. That is why Jesus can say to the rich young man, "Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor." Now to be sure, this is not a general command to all of us, but it is a reminder that all we have belongs to God and He directs us on how to use it.

Some of what He gives to us should be given to support His work. The Old Testament tithe was part of the ceremonial law that was fulfilled by Jesus. Paul writes about the New Testament model for giving in 2 Corinthians 8 & 9. Here are two key passages, "They gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us" (2 Corinthians 8:5). "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (1 Corinthians 8:7). These principles apply whether our gift to the church is 2%, 20%, or 90%.

But what about the rest? According to Psalm 112, let generosity be your guide. As parents, some of our wealth must be used to provide a home, food, clothing, and the like for our children. We are never given wealth to squander or use for sinful activities, no matter how much we have given to the church.

The context of 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 is the relief effort organized by Paul. There was widespread famine. Brothers and sisters in Christ were suffering from hunger in Judea. The Macedonian Christians had been quick to respond to His appeal.

We all are aware of fraud and deception among some who beg. However, at certain times and places, God places before us those who have a genuine need. To them, may we be generous. God has been generous to us. He sent His only-begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life. "It is well with the man who deals generously" (Psalm 112:5).

L Let us pray. Almighty God, You have given us much. Grant that we remember Your generosity and constantly do Your will. When times are prosperous, may our hearts be thankful, and in troubled times do not let our trust in You fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen

Tuesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Galatians 6:2

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Bear one another's burdens, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. and so fulfill the law of Christ. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, whose grace always precedes and follows us, help us to forsake all trust in earthly gain and to find in You our heavenly treasure; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

The collect for this week is a sermon in itself. We must always trust the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. We must never trust in earthly wealth.

Roofs often leak where an addition is added to the original structure. Such was the case for a church where I once served but long before I was there. The pastor related a story to me from this earlier time.

At a meeting to discuss the leak, it was decided repairs must be made. Since this was an unexpected situation, there was no money allocated in the budget for such an expense. The suggestion was made to ask everyone to give a little more. A gentleman, who the pastor indicated was a generous giver, responded, "I have set my budget for this year. I don't have any more to give to the church."

The pastor replied, "This may be true but you haven't begun to imagine all the ways God has of taking that money from you." I wouldn't have been so bold. But the pastor and this man were friends and so he chose to speak bluntly.

A year later, this same man was in the hospital and the pastor came to call. He told the pastor, "I'm not going to recover. My insurance is used up. I'm ready to give up before my savings are gone so my family will have something to start with when I'm gone."

The pastor said, "That certainly is your choice. But I know that your family would rather have you a thousand times more than your money."

As it happened, this man decided to hold on. He was the recipient of a breakthrough treatment and lived into his old age.

While we are not guaranteed the same outcome in our lives, the words of the pastor were spot on. Or as Jesus says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-20).

This gentleman is in heaven today. But for decades after this event, he helped many people who were going through the struggles of life. Thank God for the heavenly treasure that waits for us through faith in Christ our Lord.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, whose grace always precedes and follows us, help us to forsake all trust in earthly gain and to find in You our heavenly treasure; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Galatians 6:2

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Bear one another's burdens, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and so fulfill the law of Christ. Alleluia.

Psalm 90:12–17

- L** ¹² So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.
C ¹³ **Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants!**
L ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
C ¹⁵ **Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.**
L ¹⁶ Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.
C ¹⁷ **Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!**

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

We received a report on our retirement savings yesterday. We lost money! As is true for many people, a portion of our retirement is invested in mutual funds. While the overall trend has been positive, our investments have suffered losses from time to time over the years.

I know some people who are heavily invested in the stock market and take a daily interest in the latest trends. One friend told me that every morning he makes his coffee and checks on his investments. I'm afraid that I wouldn't have the knowledge or discipline to be so engaged.

Psalm 90:12 tells us something that we all must be engaged in. It says, "Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." The number of days in my earthly account has been steadily declining! I don't know if you've noticed the same. A heart of wisdom knows to count the days and years and prepare for eternity.

Thankfully, our heavenly account is full. Our heavenly treasure is boundless.

Earthly wealth can be a blessing but it can never buy eternal joy. The Apostle Peter tells us what can. He writes "that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

There is a prayer in the Lutheran Hymnal liturgy book for use at the death of an adult that concludes this way. "Teach us all to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom and finally be saved."

May we all have such wisdom.

Prayer: Most merciful God, You desire everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Grant that by the preaching of Your Gospel we may be given that wisdom that leads to salvation. Direct us by Your Spirit that we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior until we shall stand before You in the joy of everlasting glory; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Thursday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day: Galatians 6:2

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Bear one another's burdens, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. and so fulfill the law of Christ. Alleluia.**

Kyrie

L	O Lord,	C	Have Mercy on us.
L	O Christ,	C	Have Mercy on us.
L	O Lord,	C	Have Mercy on us.

Amos 5:6–7, 10–15

⁶Seek the LORD and live,
lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,
and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,
⁷O you who turn justice to wormwood
and cast down righteousness to the earth!

¹⁰They hate him who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor him who speaks the truth.
¹¹Therefore because you trample on the poor
and you exact taxes of grain from him,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not dwell in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.

¹²For I know how many are your transgressions
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and turn aside the needy in the gate.
¹³Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time,
for it is an evil time.

¹⁴Seek good, and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
as you have said.
¹⁵Hate evil, and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

In preparing for today's meditation, I learned a new word, "obdurate." It's an old word that goes back to the 15th Century. But since I don't remember hearing this word before, I assumed that it had gone out of use. I was wrong. According to a little online research, it was used as recently as August in the New York Times and Forbes. Imagine that!

It actually comes from the Latin word *obdūrātus* meaning "to harden" or "be persistent." Since it was used in a book written by one of my seminary professors, Walter Roehrs (He came out of retirement and I was privileged to have him for Old Testament), I'm not surprised that it has a Latin pedigree.

Its first definition in current English is to be "stubbornly persistent in wrongdoing." This certainly applies to the people of Amos' time. According to Roehrs, "The Lord sorrows over His obdurate people."

Amos urges these obdurate people to seek the Lord and live. But no, they abhor the one who speaks the truth. They trample on the poor.

May we not be like these obdurate people. May our hearts not be hardened and persistent in wrongdoing.

God always wants us to soften our stubborn hearts, turn from our sins, and live. God knows how many are our transgressions and how great are our sins. That is why He sent the Savior!

We Give Thee But Thine Own Lutheran Service Book 781, Lutheran Worship 405, The Lutheran Hymnal 441



1 We give Thee but Thine own, What - e'er the gift may be;
2 May we Thy boun - ties thus As stew - ards true re - ceive
3 Oh, hearts are bruised and dead, And homes are bare and cold,
4 To com - fort and to bless, To find a balm for woe,



All that we have is Thine a - lone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
And glad - ly, as Thou bless - est us, To Thee our first-fruits give!
And lambs for whom the Shep-herd bled Are stray - ing from the fold.
To tend the lone and fa - ther-less Is an - gels' work be - low.

5 The captive to release,
To God the lost to bring,
To teach the way of life and peace,
It is a Christ-like thing.

6 And we believe Thy Word,
Though dim our faith may be:
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,
We do it unto Thee.

Public domain

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Galatians 6:2

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Bear one another's burdens, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and so fulfill the law of Christ. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Hebrews 3:12–19

¹²Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

¹⁶For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Some years ago, I was invited to speak at a dinner given in honor of Pastor Eldor Haake. I served as vicar number eleven for Pastor Haake. He was a gifted pastor with a kind and generous heart toward each of his vicars. Without his gentle tutelage, I would not be the pastor that I am today. So I was quick to accept the invitation.

I could (and probably should) write volumes about this man of God. But today I want to recall an unfortunate comment that I made at the dinner in his honor.

I served at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline, Ill in the mid-70s. At that time, a program called “Kennedy Evangelism” was all the rage in churches across the country. The head of our evangelism board considered it his responsibility to take each new vicar under his wings and teach him the ins and outs of making evangelism calls. As a result, I got to know him very well. I respected him for his upbeat attitude, passion for evangelism, and deep faith.

The dinner for Pastor Haake was held at a local community college. The room was filled to capacity in honor of this beloved pastor. As I stood up to speak, I could see faces in the audience of many people that I had come to know and love during my year at Holy Cross. But I couldn’t see my evangelism mentor and I wanted to relate an experience that the two of us had shared. Then I made my mistake.

I was certain that he must be in the crowded room so instead of privately inquiring about him, I simply asked the assembly if he was there. Unfortunately, he wasn’t. Worse than that, Pastor Haake turned and said, “He doesn’t come around much anymore.” I was embarrassed to have assumed he would be there and put Pastor Haake on the spot by calling his name out. Even worse, I had publicly highlighted the cooling of his enthusiasm for the work that He had once so loved. It had been inconceivable to me that this gentleman would ever abandon his faith and church.

Yet, I should have known better. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews had warned of such a thing already in the first decades of the church. In verse 12, we read, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.”

Falling away from the living God is always a real possibility. It had happened to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. It happened in the early church. It happens today.

Our lesson directs us to be concerned not only about our own faith but the faith of others around us. It instructs us to “exhort one another every day” that none “may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Today is a good day for you to think of a friend or loved one who may have grown cold in their faith. Pray for them. If God so moves you, contact them and encourage them to return to the Lord and the salvation won for us by Christ.

Prayer: Father, I pray that You would move the heart of my loved one to repent and receive Christ's forgiveness so that this dear child of Yours who is lost would now be found. Comfort my loved one in all trial and temptation and restore the joy of salvation. Keep us all from the pride of thinking that we cannot fall, and cause us to trust solely in the strength You give through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Saturday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,
C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Verse of the Day: Galatians 6:2

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Bear one another's burdens, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and so fulfill the law of Christ. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-22

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Our verse for this week is Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:14 is listed as a cross-reference. It seems good to me to consider this longer reading from 1 Thessalonians as we contemplate bearing each other's burdens.

One adult Christian virtue that I constantly need to cultivate is being sensitive to the needs of others. I often forget that not everyone thinks and feels the way I do.

Sometimes I am bold and sometimes I am fainthearted and so are you. My boldness comes and goes depending on the circumstances.

When I am bold, it is always important to stop and consider the people around me who may be fainthearted. It is good for me to learn to help them and be patient with them.

Here is a little confession that I have to make. Some churches recognize their Sunday morning visitors by having them stand. When I visit those churches, I find this to be very uncomfortable for me. I know, you may think this is odd because I am accustomed to standing publicly in front of large groups of people. Nevertheless, it is true. I try to remember this whenever I am tempted to call attention to someone in public.

I share this modest example as a reminder that we are often not aware of our neighbor's burdens or weaknesses. When you sense that someone is acting in unexpected ways, ask yourself if something else might be going on in their lives. They may be bearing a burden that is beyond their capacity. God may have placed you there at that time to lend a hand.

Jesus bore our greatest burden on the cross. May we share His love for others by bearing their burdens with patience and compassion.

Prayer: Our Lord Jesus, Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light. Help us to be Your representatives as we bear one another's burdens with patience. Amen.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship © 2021 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.