



From Pastor's Desk Mimic His Zeal

by Rev. Jason M. Braaten

The parable of the unjust steward vexes us. Why would our Lord commend the unjust steward and the sons of this world as He does? It's because the sons of this world know how to treat something that they think is valuable. They love money and the earthly comforts that come with it. They jump to get the job with higher pay, better benefits, or greater prestige.

Yet all of this, as we know, will fade and wear out. And so, Jesus does not commend the sons of this world for *what* they love. He commends them for *how* zealously they love and the lengths they will go to attain it.

Mimic their zeal, but do not become a son of this world. Do not be drawn away by the love of money. The sons of this world are set for destruction, but at least they pursue it with vigor. They know what they want, and they go after it.

We, on the other hand, as Christians, desire the joy of eternal dwellings, but sometimes you would hardly know it. And so, we are accused of lacking zeal for the kingdom of God. For we have not pursued what we supposedly value with the same zeal that the sons of this world pursue what they value. We don't seek fellowship with the Father like the sons of this world seek the comfort that money provides. We don't put on purity with the

enthusiasm that the sons of this world put on the latest fashions. We don't invest in the work of the Church, our very salvation, with the same zeal that the sons of this world invest in the markets.

Don't get sucked into pursuing the love of money and what it provides, but what money you do have, use for good works. Use money and possessions, but don't allow them to use and possess you. God in His grace and mercy gives you many things. You are stewards over what He gives into your hands. You control them. Don't let them control you. Use what you have been given to serve your neighbor, those who are part of your family, your community, and your church.

Get what you need to eat and drink; a home to shelter your family, and clothes that you need. But don't squander. Don't waste your excess on things that don't serve you and your neighbor. Make friends with it instead. Give it to those in need. In so doing, you show mercy. And in showing mercy, you give a picture of God's mercy to you in Jesus Christ. You imitate the loving-kindness and mercy that God has given you to others. By faith, trusting in the promise that God will never leave you or forsake you and will provide everything that you need, you demonstrate what is of the highest value to you: the eternal dwellings of heaven. Thus, on the last day, Christ will receive you into them.

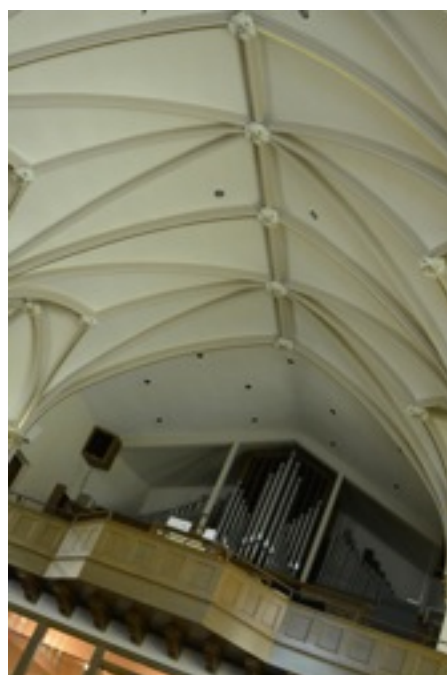
For Christ is the one son of light who is the most zealous, the most single-minded. He squanders the possessions of His Father with wanton abandon, not in wastefulness, but for your benefit. For these can't be wasted. They never run out. And so He lavishes the grace and mercy of God upon you without price, without charging you a cent, without keeping any books, without demanding any accounting of you. Christ takes all that belongs to the Father and gives it to you in abundance. And the treasures He gives never run out, never

fade away, but are stored where moth and rust cannot destroy. They are eternal. They never end.

So better than mimicking the zeal of the sons of this world. Trusting in Christ, imitate His zeal and His works. For He gives out not only earthly treasures, but also heavenly ones.

A Music All Our Own

by Rev. Christopher Neuendorf



Did you know that we Lutherans have our own music? To be sure, ever since we in the Missouri Synod started using the English language, we've borrowed generously from any and every church whose hymn writers have set orthodox texts of poetic merit

to genuinely churchly tunes. But there is a music all our own, a set of hymns that grew out of the heart of Lutheranism itself. We call them the chorales, and they're worth getting to know.

Learn these hymns. Sing them at home, in the car and in the shower. Make them a part of your daily life. The chorales will richly reward your efforts!

Read the rest of this article at <http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/a-music-all-our-own>

From the President Back to Basics in Preaching

by Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

After his famous “Here I stand” speech before Emperor Charles V, Luther was “captured” by Prince Frederick and whisked away to hiding in the Wartburg castle. Meanwhile, things deteriorated back in Wittenberg—and badly. A fanatic took leadership of the church and forced changes upon people that were not in accord with the Gospel or the Scriptures.

Luther hated coercion. The Gospel does not coerce. There were also some charismatics, called the “Zwickau Prophets,” who came to town claiming the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They claimed education wasn’t needed to understand the Scriptures, so schools were closed, and maybe even the university!

Luther resolved to return to his pulpit. On March 9, 1522, on Invocavit Sunday (First Sunday in Lent), Luther began preaching a series of eight sermons on these burning issues.

Go to <http://mercyjourney.blogspot.com/2013/02/luthers-invocavit-sermon-1522.html> to read Luther’s first sermon of the series. My friends, the Lutheran Church was born of Luther’s direct, profound but simple preaching style. He most often preached on Bible texts—the Sunday readings on Sundays and sermon series on whole books of the Bible or parts of the Bible during the week, line by line. He explained the Bible in a way that common people could understand it. Above all, Luther preached repentance and forgiveness in Christ. He was a master of Law-and-Gospel preaching. That’s what the apostles preached (Acts 2–3).

Along with this Law-and-Gospel issue of The Lutheran Witness, I’d like you to read that very short sermon by Luther listed above, noting several things:

- The sermon is topical. It’s on Christian patience, love and freedom.
- Note how often Luther references the Scriptures and what they teach.
- Note how he grabs the hearers’ attention in the brief sermon introduction. “Everyone must fight his own battle with death by himself.”
- Note how clearly he states the Law and the Gospel right up front in the first two paragraphs of the sermon.
- Note that in his third point, he makes a specific point of the Law. “Through love we must do to one another as God has done to us through faith.”
- Note very carefully Luther’s use of the pronouns “I,” “you” and “we.”
- Notice how Luther includes himself in Law statements and Gospel statements. “We are all the children of wrath.”
- Notice how he uses “I” as he repeatedly expresses his intimate knowledge of his hearers, his love for them and his dismay at them: “I love you even as I love my own soul.”
- Notice how he uses “you” and “we” to both preach very pointed Law and deliver the sweet Gospel.



As you read the sermon, you can visualize Luther looking directly at his hearers with his finger pointing at them. He did not rely on a manuscript. Luther preached from notes or simply by following the text of the Scriptures.

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Note, too, how he uses “you” in very pointed Law and Gospel statements. “A donkey can almost chant the lessons, and why shouldn’t you be able to repeat the doctrines and formulas? ... Faith without love is not enough.” Note how direct and blunt Luther’s language is. There’s no guessing about his point. That is a sermon calling the hearers to repentance and faith in Christ and teaching them what love and patience are.

The sermon has a great deal of Law (to condemn and instruct). Later sermons in the week gave way to more Gospel. “But if you believe that God steps in for you and stakes all He has and His blood for you [in Christ] . . . then let us see what can harm you; come devil, death, sin, and hell and all creation” (AE 51:93).

Remember, that is a sermon in a dire circumstance calling for repentance. Other Luther sermons drip throughout with the sweetest delivery of the Gospel “for you.”

It’s time for us to pay attention to the greatest preacher in history, aside from Jesus, John the Baptist and St. Paul. It’s time for back-to-basics preaching.

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LCMS News Desk LCMS Offers Resources on Religious Persecution

(1) The devil is behind all and every persecution. Accordingly, our fight is not with the flesh and blood. It must be thought of in spiritual categories. “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). The single most important thing is to abide with the Lord and His gifts by all means possible. Come to Church where His gifts are administered.

(2) When a non-Christian government

targets the church for an attack, it may (among other things) attempt to infiltrate the Church to bring another gospel and so change Church from inside. So, have your ears to hear the true voice of your Shepherd. Be nurtured in Scripture and confessions of the Church so that you may “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1).

(3) Make sure you know at least some Scripture verses by heart. It will help you pray and find consolation if you are left alone and have no Bible around. Also, remember the stories of those who served as an example in faith, both in ancient and recent times.

(4) Pray. Christ hated sin, but He loved sinners. At the time of death, He prayed for His executors (Luke 23:34), and the first Christian martyr, Stephen, did likewise (Acts 7:60). Our Lord expects us also to pray for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44).

Go to <http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/shaped-by-the-cross> for more on preparing for religious persecution in America today.

Book of the Month *Lutheran Bible Companion*

No other book ties God’s promises to specific people, places, times, and cultures like the Bible.

The Lutheran Bible Companion is a highly visual two-volume handbook that welcomes Christians to a deeper exploration of the cultural and historical contexts of the events captured in Scripture and the Apocrypha. Go to www.cph.org to order.



SUMMER CONFESSIONS STUDY

JOIN US FOR A STUDY IN

THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

WEDNESDAYS
6:30 PM–7:30 PM
BEGINNING JULY 9

IMMANUEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
TUSCOLA, ILLINOIS



Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters

3 Aug.....	Harold Wattjes(West)
	Jim Dyer (East)
10 Aug.....	Joan Vukelich (West)
	Laverl Byers (East)
17 Aug.....	Ruth Sims (West)
	Tim & Teri Pollock (East)
24 Aug.....	Donna Campbell (West)
	Harold Wattjes (East)
31 Aug.....	Jim Dyer (West)
	Joan Vukelich (East)
7 Sep.....	Laverl Byers (West)
	Ruth Sims (East)
14 Sep.....	Tim & Teri Pollock (West)
	Donna Campbell (East)
21 Sep.....	Harold Wattjes (West)
	Jim Dyer (East)
28 Sep.....	Joan Vukelich (West)
	Laverl Byers (East)

Coffee Committee

AugustHarold & Irene Wattjes
September.....Ann Carroll

Funeral Committee

August Tammy Kresin
September.....Joan Rahn

Altar Guild

3 Aug.....Wanda Long; Cassie Russo
10 AugWanda Long; Mackenzie Bowles

17 Aug	Wanda Long; Marissa Russo
24 Aug	Sherrie Hoel; Lexi Russo
31 Aug	Sherrie Hoel; Cassie Russo
7 Sep	Sherrie Hoel; Mackenzie Bowles
14 Sep	Dolores Ford; Marissa Russo
21 Sep	Dolores Ford; Lexi Russo
28 Sep	Dolores Ford; Cassie Russo

Elder On Duty—Communion

3 August.....	Ronald Legg
10 August.....	Ronald Legg
17 August.....	Ronald Legg
24 August.....	Mark Whitson
31 August.....	Mark Whitson
7 September.....	Mark Whitson
14 September	Josh Whitson
21 September	Josh Whitson
28 September	Josh Whitson

Altar Flowers

3 August	Ronald & Judy Legg
10 August.....	Tom & Ruth Bretz
17 August	Mike & Tina Russo
24 August.....	Joan Rahn
31 August	OPEN
7 September	OPEN
14 September	OPEN
21 September	OPEN
28 September	OPEN

ATTENDANCE				OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	Special	General	Missions	Building
7/6/14	22	48	0	\$2,347.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
7/13/14	19	63	0	\$4,826.00	\$1,520.00	\$0.00
7/20/14	24	58	0	\$1,981.00	\$0.00	\$40.00
7/27/14	12	64	0	\$1,888.00	\$10.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	77	233	0	\$11,042.00	\$1,530.00	\$40.00
Average	19.25	58.25	0	\$2,760.50	\$382.50	\$10.00

AUGUST 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 8:00 AM Divine Service (Communion) 9:30 AM Bible Class 2:30 PM Nursing Home Service 3:00 PM All Church Picnic Burgundy Studio Clouds Cafe	4 7:30 AM Matins 5:00 PM Board of Mission & Evangelism 6:00 PM Board of Education 7:00 PM Board of Elders	5 7:30 AM Matins Chris & Diane Stevens Glen & Janet Stumeler	6 7:30 AM Matins 6:30 PM Summer Confessions Study Courtney Arthur Josh Dyer Logan Wierha	7 7:30 AM Matins	8 Leonard & Karen Roritz Leonard & Karen Roritz Margaret Stillwell Tom & Ruth Bretz Pastor's Day Off	9 5:30 PM Divine Service (Communion)
10 8:00 AM Divine Service (Communion) 9:30 AM Bible Class 10:30 AM Parent Pastor Collaboration Meeting Guy & Margie Shawers Children's Sermon Day	11 7:30 AM Matins Maris Eversole	12 7:30 AM Matins 9:00 AM Mattoon Circuit Meeting Jason Wierha	13 7:30 AM Matins 6:30 PM Summer Confessions Study	14 7:30 AM Matins	15 Cary & Beth Rahn Diane Stevens Jonathan Bretz Pastor's Day Off	16 8:00 AM Church Cleaning Day 5:30 PM Divine Service (Communion) Nathaniel Pollock
17 9:00 AM Divine Service (Communion) 10:30 AM Bible Class Kenny Kresin	18 Jeremiah Osborne	19 Ryan Bowles	20 Rachel Sanders	21 Thomas & Susan Ladaga Pastor on Vacation	22 Christopher Palka Kay & Howard Bell Jennifer Brown	23 5:30 PM Divine Service (Communion) Greg Campbell William & Rachel Sanders
24 8:00 AM Divine Service (Communion) 9:30 AM Bible Class Julian Rasmussen Justin Oye	25	26 7:00 PM L.W.M.E.	27 11:30 AM TAMA Meeting Tammy Kresin Pastor on Vacation	28 1:30 PM Ladies Aid Brendon Palka Jeremy Dantes Pastor Jason Brazden	29 Jeremy Ingram	30 5:30 PM Divine Service (Communion)
31 8:00 AM Divine Service (Communion) 9:30 AM Bible Class Arlene Ingram Pastor on Vacation						

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Immanuel’s stained glass window in the Narthex.

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