

Jeremiah 15:15-21

FOLLOW
the Way
of the Cross



Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost 2020

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Rev. Ronald C. Szep, pastor

Sunday, September 13, 2020

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MORNING DEVOTION

The Church is militant: first the cross, then the crown.

Today Christ tells us that for him and for us, going God's way means death must come before life. He calls on us to deny ourselves and follow him on the way of the cross. Those words offend our sinful flesh and make our Old Adam cry with Peter, "Never!" They make us accuse God with Jeremiah. So today the Church prays for the never-failing mercy of Christ that we might avoid such wicked and harmful thoughts and instead be guided on the cross-laden path to salvation. Then, and only then, do these words of Christ cease offending our flesh and become a joy and delight for our heart.

Greeting by the minister

Please Stand

OPENING DIALOGUE:

Minister: God, our Father, each day is a gift of your grace.

Congregation: Your mercies are new every morning.

M: Guide our steps by the light of your Word.

C: Shield us from harm and keep us from evil.

M: Better than life is your love.

C: Put joy in our hearts and praise on our lips.

THE PRAYER FOR GRACE:

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Matthew 16:21-26

Peter's great confession from last Sunday's Gospel showed the disciples understood who Jesus was. But though they understood his person, they still failed to understand his work. He had come to fulfill the redemptive mission for which he was anointed; he had not come to fulfill Israel's earthbound views of Messiah. He couldn't be the Messiah they wanted, and still be the Savior they needed. Cross and death were necessary first. Thanks be to God that our Savior saw the necessity of the cross before the crown! Now for Christian followers, cross comes before the crown as well. We die to self, but gain Christ, the Life.

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

"Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter,

"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

Please Be Seated

HYMN OF THE DAY: CW Hymn 465

"Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken"

465

Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken



1 Je - sus, I my cross have tak - en,
 2 Let the world de - spise and leave me;
 3 Go, then, earth - ly fame and trea - sure!
 4 Haste, my soul, from grace to glo - ry,



All to leave and fol - low you. Des - ti -
 They have left my Sav - ior, too. Hu - man
 Come, dis - as - ter, scorn, and pain! In your
 Armed by faith and winged by prayer. All but



tute, de - spised, for - sak - en, You on
 hearts and looks de - ceive me; You are
 ser - vice pain is plea - sure; With your
 heav'n is tran - si - to - ry; God's own



earth once suf - fered, too. Per - ish ev - 'ry
 not, like them, un - true. And since you have
 fa - vor loss is gain. I have called you
 hand shall guide you there. Soon shall end this



fond am - bi - tion, All I've ev - er
 smiled up - on me, God of wis - dom,
 Ab - ba, Fa - ther! You my all in
 earth - ly sto - ry; Swift shall pass the

hoped or known; Yet how rich is my con-
 love, and might, Foes may hate and friends may
 all shall be. Storms may howl, and clouds may
 pil - grim days, Hope soon change to heav'n - ly
 di - tion! God and heav'n are still my own.
 shun me— Show your face, and all is bright.
 gath - er; All must work for good to me.
 glo - ry, Faith to sight and prayer to praise.

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847, abr., alt.
 Tune: HYFRYDOL (87 87 D) Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–87.

SERMON: *based on Jeremiah 15:15-21*
“Follow the Way of the Cross”

The church is militant, and that means dying to self and the things of man. After a hard ministry, Jeremiah began to forget the things of God and concentrate too much on the things of man. The prophet Jeremiah struggled to carry the cross given him by his God. God’s Word was a joy and delight to his heart, but Jeremiah’s life had been anything but joy and delight. After bearing much persecution, God’s prophet finally tired of self-denial. He wondered whether God’s promises amounted to nothing, but were as failed and fruitless as a dried-up brook in times of drought. How does God respond? Does he remove the cross and persecution? No, he commands his prophet to repent and turn to God for mercy. Then, God will permit him again the privilege of carrying a cross in his name. God renews a promise that he had made at the beginning of Jeremiah’s ministry. He didn’t promise to remove the persecution, but to make Jeremiah strong enough to take it. May God make each of us bronze walls, certain of the fact that even as we follow the way of the cross-no, especially as we follow the way of the cross-our God is with us to rescue and save us, and redeem us from the grasp of the cruel. That knowledge renewed and restored Jeremiah to a ministry centered on the things of God as he served in the Church militant.

¹⁵ Lord, you understand;
remember me and care for me.
Avenge me on my persecutors.
You are long-suffering—do not take me away;
think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.

¹⁶ When your words came, I ate them;
they were my joy and my heart's delight,
for I bear your name,
Lord God Almighty.

¹⁷ I never sat in the company of revelers,
never made merry with them;
I sat alone because your hand was on me
and you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸ Why is my pain unending
and my wound grievous and incurable?
You are to me like a deceptive brook,
like a spring that fails.

¹⁹ Therefore this is what the Lord says:
“If you repent, I will restore you
that you may serve me;
if you utter worthy, not worthless, words,
you will be my spokesman.
Let this people turn to you,
but you must not turn to them.

²⁰ I will make you a wall to this people,
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you
to rescue and save you,”
declares the Lord.

²¹ “I will save you from the hands of the wicked
and deliver you from the grasp of the cruel.”

Please Stand

PROFESSION OF FAITH: The Apostles' Creed *(read in unison)*

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

I believe 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 and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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.

PRAYERS:

Luther's Morning Prayer *(in unison)*

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Special prayers and intercessions: optional, read by the minister

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent Prayer

M: O Lord Jesus Christ, preserve the congregation of believers with your never-failing mercy. Help us avoid whatever is wicked and harmful, and guide us in the way that leads to our salvation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *(in unison)*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING:

M: May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself. May the power of the Lord Jesus make us strong to do his will. May the peace of the Lord Jesus fill our lives.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: CW Hymn 453 v4-5
“Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spoke”

COMMITMENT

453 **Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spoke**

4 “I teach you how to shun and flee What harms your
5 Then let us fol - low Christ our Lord And take the
souls’ sal - va - tion, Your hearts from ev - ’ry
cross ap - point - ed And, firm - ly cling - ing
guile to free, From sin and its temp - ta - tion.
to his Word, In suf - f’ring be un - daunt - ed.
I am the ref - uge of the soul And
For those who bear the bat - tle’s strain The
lead you to your heav’n - ly goal.”
crown of heav’n - ly life ob - tain.

Text: Johann Scheffler, 1624–77, abr., st. 1-3, 5; *Geistliche Lieder und Lobgesänge*, 1695, st. 4; tr. Charles W. Schaeffer, 1813–96, alt.
Tune: MACHS MIT MIR, GOTT (87 87 88) Bartholomäus Gesius, c. 1555–1613, adapt.