

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (2020)

Holy Spirit, Light Divine: Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day;
Let me see my Savior's face; let me all His beauties trace;
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to Thee.
Amen.

Matthew 16:21–28 *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”* Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

In the Name of Jesus.

Saint Matthew had recorded something like this episode before; chapter 4:

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

“ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. ¹

So, all it takes to rule the world, is to fall down and worship the devil! Remember that, throughout this Fall, dear Christians.

The alternative is this:

⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸ saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?” ²

And...

³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”³

But, BEFORE all of that, THIS Son of God did something else; heard something else:

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 4:8–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 26:63–68). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 27:39–43). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” ⁴

Is this an *invitation*?

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Invitation? Recruiting poster? No.

Your poor pastor hears it as Lutheran: repentance and faith, Law and Gospel. He invites US to do OUR thing—boasting, willing spirit and weak flesh; and then HE does HIS thing: Son of God and Christ and David come again and a kingdom! A Kingdom that RINGS with THESE SOUNDS!:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:10

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:19

¹⁹ Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 3:13–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Matthew 5:20

²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁵

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”⁶

Matthew 11:11

¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:12

¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.⁷

Matthew 19:14

¹⁴ but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 19:23

²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.”⁸

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you,²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”⁹

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 5:3–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 7:21–8:11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 11:11–12:25). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 19:14–23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 26:26–29). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

At the end—at the beginning of the Church!—He speaks as King, as Son of God as Christ; but NOT the way any claimant to heaven has ever sounded.

‘All authority in heave and on earth...has...been...GIVEN...TO....ME!’

Not earned. Not gained by Me. NOT... ‘Look at all my VOTERS!’

But given; and taken by violence. And the MOST supportive: ‘I do not know the man!’

So that NOW...how FAR...DOWN...must WE look, to see heaven BENEATH US?!

It’s ALL...OURS! Cross! Tomb! Skies!

Cross...done!

Tomb...empty!

Skies...ours.

As much as it’s all GIVEN...not EARNED by us; even if by EARNING we say BELIEVING....

Oh, my dear ones! HIS dear ones!

‘Thy kingdom come!’ HE...GAVE...us those words: to grab Heaven by the ears and make everything sad come untrue.

So, to save us, He speaks of OUR cross; losing a life that we—in our deluded state!—call ‘OURS!’

‘THISS is MY life and I will do what I will do when I wanna do it and where I wanna be....!’

Another word for the LIFE we call ‘OURS,’ that Jesus begs us to lose, is ‘SIN!’

There’s really only one sin left now in us. HIS reign has one goal; that we LOSE this sin:

‘BAD stuff?! EVIL stuff?! NO! That must NEVER happen to those with whom Heaven is well-pleased!’

Satan appeared to your poor pastor many times this week. Almost too easy to recognize. I wonder what he’s really got up his sleeve? Or am we becoming so familiar, Satan and me?

‘RAGE’ was the common theme, inside me and coming from outside. ‘When you burn the roast you can smell it!’

‘I am right, Right, RIGHT! And YOU...AM...wrong, Wrong, WRONG!’

Admit it, children! THAT’S the worstest!

It’s ONE thing to do wrong and then suffer. Everyone I know insists that the thousands of speed limit signs God and His angels have installed every ten seconds whizzing down the road—ech! Take the advice, or leave it.

Well, I have vetted and hired nice men in blue to pull you over and fine you. OK. It’s one thing to sin brazenly and defy God’s ordained and installed rulers; and THEN hafta pay a price.

Even then, though, my dearies: ‘Well, EVERYONE speeds! Why am I SINGLED OUT?!’

When you cool down, you can accept it. ‘Well, I go caught. Maybe I should listen to my idiot pastor.’

But those other times! When you are IN...THE...RIGHT...

And the wrong guy---the next guy---is ALL...WRONG!

Then what? Our pal Satan is ready with rage and unbelief and shunning the cross.

Our friend, Jesus, has something else for us: in the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther.

Start well-pleasing to heaven, as a gift: I am baptized. Happy day! Given; always given; what you EARN is...bad.

Then pray the prayer that rules heaven: Thy kingdom come; watch MY pardon of those who are wrong; and you, dear Father, won’t have a problem pardoning the wrong that’s...ME!

And when you see how RIGHT you pray and live and forgive and believe—and how WRONG—as if you need learn it all over again, every minute...like a child...

Remember that the ONE election Jesus ran in—as king of Israel—He lost.

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered,

Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”¹⁰

Pilate was no fool. This man was no Israelite hero. He was a pain in the neck to the Jews too. And yet...

Barabbas: wrong, wrong, wrong. Released!

Jesus: right, right, right. Condemned!

Hallelujah! Jesus and His cross and we with ours—This King requires NO VOTES FROM US. Instead, HE chooses! The sick who need a doctor; the sinners who need chastising and pardon.

Right man; heaven-sent man; God’s Son pledges: He will drink wine and celebrate again, in His Kingdom; but not until people like US are safely there.

People to whom He gives His Body to eat with the Bread and His Blood to drink with the Wine. Satan, get behind us ALL in the Name of Jesus.

¹⁰ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 27:15–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.