

The Sixteenth 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.

I really need y'all to pay attention today. HIS ways and thoughts are not OUR thoughts and ways.

In the Name of Jesus.

Matthew 20:1–16 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard...”

I beg you to hear me. I say what Jesus said—and He’s gonna bear with me. Bear with me: The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out to hire laborers for his vineyard...

No...it...AIN'T!

The BIBLE tells me so! The Holy One of Israel—through the song of Isaiah:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Soooo...what is Jesus doing by calling the KINGDOM...of...HEAVEN....sumpin' IT...AIN'T!

Because HE is EVERYTHING E...V...E...R...Y last sinner idolizes, lusts for, demands—and yet, He is not at ALL what any of us are looking for...

We lust for a government that's OUR kinda government. Jesus promises us a kingdom. KINGDOM! Ha!

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. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.¹

'I have a kingdom. Everyone takes advantage of it and tramples it!'

HEAVEN?! Ha—HA!

⁴ Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 11:11–12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

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.”²

Heaven is GOOD—and sinners are.... Well. Now HEAVEN is pleased when heaven and earth are all mixed up?!

KING?! Ha-ha-h’-HA-HA!

(That ain’t your pastor being cutesy. It’s ALL Bah-ble!)

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.
²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head.³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.³

³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads⁴⁰ 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,

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 3:4–4:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 27:27–31). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

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.’ ” ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. ⁴

And, just so that your poor pastor never has good reason to despair, He went there:

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”⁵

It seems that JESUS done bet on the WRONG....GAW-AWD, t’boot!

Either that, or His thoughts are not our thoughts nor are our ways His ways.

This DREADFUL ‘kingdom of heaven is like’ that Jesus told the disciples—yuchhh!—it comes after just about the rottenest thing any disciple ever put to this strangest King:

²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” ²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” ⁶

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 27:37–44). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 27:45–46). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 19:23–27). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

I may have other kings mixed up; there's been a gaggle of them. But Mr. Internet tells me that the longest serving monarch in European history hung on for 72 years 110 days: Louis XIV, the Sun King. I hope old age never lets me forget poor Looey's lament as he turned old, and started to experience reversals on the diplomatic and military fronts. Praise God someone recorded this: 'How can God forsake me like this, after all that I have done for Him?!'

Can't wait to hang out with 14 Lou in the kingdom to come. In my own way, I have done lots and lots for God, heaven, the kingdom, the King—there's something WRONG with all these words!—and 'disappointment' with the whole structure hangs over and around me.

I'm in solid company! Peter: 'ROOKIT all what WE gone and done for YOU, Jesus!'

Jesus: 'Why, out of all people—IF you are God and IF you are MINE—why turn you face from ME?!'

Easy-peasy, Jesus. Ask me a HARD one!

All what we're afraid of and try to appease—heaven-god-power-life-death-chance-history-good-bad-sin-religion—ALL that turned on Him, because HE was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Like it or not, He is with us, all the way. And—praise The Holy Spirit and His Word—on the cross...being with us all the way...He most definitely did NOT like it! And He screamed and died and they chunked Him in the clay; no mourners; as far from 'All THAT,' from the 'Sun King' as you can get.

And—smile, my dear ones!—even all THAT did not let Jesus off the hook! His work does not END! He rose—to send every

second from heaven and E...V....E....R...Y event, good, bad, whatever!—from God; to send even the mess we make of religion and this money-grab men call ‘church.’

And in it all, this un-King, un-sinner, un-THREAT—says, ‘I can work with this.’

Oh! His thoughts are NOT our thoughts! Nor are OUR ways HIS ways!

Yes, Jesus compared what HE was all about with a rich man hiring day laborers and the day laborers grumbling that they got what the rich man had contracted with them to pay them.

NOT because that’s what HE is about! But, to save us, to reach us, to work with us—yeah. He knows that’s what WE are all about!

Hear me. He IS saving you, dear disciples: right where and when YOU—a faint shadow of your poor PASTOR’S wickedness!—

RIGHT where, RIGHT when, YOU have an air-tight complaint—about how YOU are treated by men—(you mean GOD, however! I do!)

The laundry list of the next man’s glaring faults proves it; the list you and I rehearse.

I cannot shake this.

You and I—and every sincere Christian—mourns today the passing of one of our most important rulers, ordained and installed by the Living Christ, for the sake of His Church! One of that tiny group of people who sit in a court of final appeal has gone the way of all flesh. And your miserable minister decided to check out the

‘NEWS’ about that.

At least I found out I wasn’t the ONLY man who should take comfort in a Savior slain!

My dear ones; my dear ones.

We cannot use ‘politics’ as an excuse.

The rottenest thing you will do this fall is to rejoice over the downfall of a politician you despise. IF there is heaven—do we believe that? IF there is a God—or are we foolish enough to deny this? IF...CHRIST...IS...KING....

Then E...V...E...R...Y minute, every news item, every man—is in His hands; with you and me.

And if you and I are not thanking God for and honoring and cherishing the authorities He places over us to save us from our sins—even JESUS can’t make up a ‘kingdom of heaven is like’ story to save. Or maybe He can. But how?

How to wrap up?

Begin your day by reciting the prayers taught the Church in the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther. His Baptism of you means nothing to the world and even LESS than nothing to those who boast of being on the side of Jesus. I suggest you rejoice in it. I can give you no other comfort over what’s in your heart than what’s in the Spirit’s heart: Holy Baptism.

Taste on your tongue, roll around in your mouth, the highest delights of heavenly food: the Apostle’s Creed. God is Father; God is Almighty; God buys us from where we sell our souls; God’s Spirit—‘The healthy do not need a doctor; the sick do. The Spirit works on sinners only.’

Pretend there's a God—act and talk to Him as if HE is more ABOUT...YOU...than you can ever be about you. 'FATHER! THAT'S what Heaven is now! Watch how high I can swing! You can have a turn when I'm done! Watch how I forgive! Down the road, You may need to forgive me!'

And because the man of idols and the man of lusts and the man of 'fairness' is a sad sack we cannot shake until God mercifully kills us—

Recite and make your religion the Ten Commandments of Moses. If they're working today, they'll show you what's what in HEAVEN'S brain, instead of your own, or mine.

And won't we be glad if the Holy Spirit has mercy on the Lutherans again?! And gathers us to eat the Body of the Strange King, and drink His Blood—with the Bread and with the Wine—

And we can leave this place, again—FLY outta this place Thanking the Lord, singing His praise, telling everyone what HE thinks, what's HIS WAYS, what HE has done!

'My position on everything is NOT His position! His judgments are not my judgments! And I am NOT...GOING...TO...GET...A...PAYDAY... NO...MAN...IS...GOING...TO...GET...WHAT...HE...DESERVES in the Name of Jesus!'