

## The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (2017)

“Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

<sup>17</sup>non moriar sed vivam et narrabo opera Domini <sup>1</sup>

Heard that Latin chant this week. Psalm 118:17, “I shall not die, but I shall live and I shall tell great stories about the deeds of the Lord!’ Boundless JOY! RESCUED by the One we give NO REASON to rescue us—rescued from prattling on about the deeds of the next man or, more tedious, our OWN deeds—to tell the new, new story, of Jesus and His love!

*trained ... a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”*

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Weber, R., & Gryson, R. (1969). *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem* (5th revised edition, Ps 117:17). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

HE...is...NEW! ‘You shall give Him the Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins!’ They are HIS people—they have sins—but He saves them from them. Great NAME for beginning today’s story, today’s life in His Baptism! Oh, and great PEOPLE for today’s story! For the word ‘trained’ for the kingdom of heaven—that scribe, that Master of the house and Master of the Living God’s Word—is the same WORD Jesus rushed off to Galilee—where WE live—to mandate to the Eleven. ‘Train them; with My Washing, the Washing of the God Who is Man now, at peace with all men, and with the teaching I have given you, TRAIN THEM to bring ME out of the treasure-house that is My kingdom! And the Law, their sad state belongs in there too. As long as you begin and end and FILL the whole house with the NEW! Then the people of God can bear with the Old, and their sins, their admissions and reparations and, worst of all, their guilt.’

We sing during Advent, with hearts on His first arrival and promised New arrival:

1 O Lord, how shall I meet You,  
 How welcome You aright?  
 Your people long to greet You,

My hope, my heart's delight!  
O kindle, Lord most holy,  
Your lamp within my breast  
To do in spirit lowly  
All that may please You best.

2 Your Zion strews before You  
Green boughs and fairest palms;  
And I too will adore You  
With joyous songs and psalms.  
My heart shall bloom forever  
For You with praises new  
And from Your name shall never  
Withhold the honor due.

HOW shall we meet Him?! With THIS teaching,  
THIS training, THIS Word:

3 I lay in fetters, groaning;  
You came to set me free.  
I stood, my shame bemoaning;  
You came to honor me.  
A glorious crown You give me,  
A treasure safe on high  
That will not fail or leave me  
As earthly riches fly.

4 Love caused Your incarnation;  
Love brought You down to me.  
Your thirst for my salvation  
Procured my liberty.  
Oh, love beyond all telling,  
That led You to embrace  
In love, all love excelling,  
Our lost and fallen race.

Baptized with THAT authority, and taught like a child—again and again and again, as long as he gives us all breath!—we are made bold and are told that WE, His people, His treasure, His sinners, are His treasure, His pearl, for which He has given up more than can be measured. And so we have THIS standing before the Lord, and with one another in the Church, and with those we hope would also receive His Body and Blood to be made His people:

5 Sin's debt, that fearful burden,  
Cannot His love erase;  
Your guilt the Lord will pardon  
And cover by His grace  
He comes, for you procuring  
The peace of sin forgiv'n,

His children thus securing  
Eternal life in heav'n.

And the 'good' fish versus the 'worthless' fish?  
It is not your poor pastor's job to erase one tiny  
demand of the Law. There's an ANSWER TO the  
Law: the New, Christ, His gifts! I can ABSOLVE  
you—and COMMANDED to step into your Jesus'  
spot and MAKE YOU forgiven, not just 'tell' you  
about it. But there is nothing going wrong when you  
and I confess that WE are in need of the same  
salvation as the bad fish. What's the difference  
between the two? What makes one fit to keep and  
the other fit for the flames? The OLD says: look at  
YOU! The New says: Look to Him!

6 He comes to judge the nations,  
A terror to His foes,  
A light of consolations  
And blessèd hope to those  
Who love the Lord's appearing.  
O glorious Sun, now come,  
Send forth Your beams so cheering,  
And guide us safely home.

It was Wednesday or Thursday this week; and I knew that the dozen flower pots out back had been watered! How did I know? Because I had hose water up my nose, and in my ears, and burning my eyes! My socks were soaked and my shirt. Baby Jonathan was over for a few days. And our young man is only THREE once in his life! We BOTH needed dry socks and shorts and a towel for our heads—his hair, my skull. And what do I respond to ‘I sprayed the flowers good, right pastor?’ I felt the soil and the leaves after ten minutes or so with the Baby J’s hand on the nozzle trigger. And I DID find ONE of the planters with a couple drops on the leaves, and where the dirt was not TOTALLY bone dry! So, yes, ‘Son! You did a great job!’ And, ‘Look how ELSE we can do this too! Come over here and let me help you with the hose!’

Some weeks the man who knows God least has God revealed in so many poems and hymns and psalms. Even I! A favorite:

‘Ex Ore Infantium’

By Francis Thompson (1859–1907)

LITTLE Jesus, wast Thou shy  
 Once, and just so small as I?  
 And what did it feel like to be  
 Out of Heaven, and just like me?  
 Didst Thou sometimes think of there,                   5  
 And ask where all the angels were?  
 I should think that I would cry  
 For my house all made of sky;  
 I would look about the air,  
 And wonder where my angels were;                   10  
 And at waking ’twould distress me—  
 Not an angel there to dress me!

Hadst Thou ever any toys,  
 Like us little girls and boys?  
 And didst Thou play in Heaven with all           15  
 The angels that were not too tall,  
 With stars for marbles? Did the things  
 Play Can you see me? through their wings?  
 And did thy Mother let Thee spoil  
 Thy robes, with playing on our soil?               20  
 How nice to have them always new  
 In Heaven, because ’twas quite clean blue!

Oh, dear ones! Hear and rejoice and pray and believe and rise and live and 'NEW' every-thing, every-one: God, angels, friend and foe, righteous and sinner!:

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,  
 And didst Thou join thy hands, this way?  
 And did they tire sometimes, being young,   25  
 And make the prayer seem very long?  
 And dost Thou like it best, that we  
 Should join our hands to pray to Thee?  
 I used to think, before I knew,  
 The prayer not said unless we do.         30  
 And did thy Mother at the night  
 Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?  
 And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,  
 Kiss'd, and sweet, and thy prayers said?

What is OUR HOPE, sellow finners!, that WE  
 don't get chuck in da fish-fer-bernin' basket, and  
 instead to the bliss of a Father in heaven, delighting  
 to watch our good deeds? His deeds? What is our  
 hope? Christ's enemies, the USELESS, the  
 RELIGIOUS PROUD, direct US: to US. Faithful  
 children, disciples, masters and Christians direct us  
 and all men to the Incarnation of our Lord. He

PROMISED that He will never shake OFF what HE  
is now, all that we are too!:

Thou canst not have forgotten all                    35  
That it feels like to be small:  
And Thou know'st I cannot pray  
To Thee in my father's way—  
When Thou wast so little, say,  
Couldst Thou talk thy Father's way?—                    40  
So, a little Child, come down  
And hear a child's tongue like thy own;  
Take me by the hand and walk,  
And listen to my baby-talk.  
To thy Father show my prayer                    45  
(He will look, Thou art so fair),  
And say: 'O Father, I, thy Son,  
Bring the prayer of a little one.'

And He—the Father!—will smile, that [THY]  
children's tongue  
Has not changed [THEE] since Thou wast  
young! 50

Satan, hear this proclamation:  
I am baptized into Christ!  
Drop your ugly accusation,

I am not so soon enticed.  
Now that to the font I've traveled,  
All your might has come unraveled,  
And, against your tyranny,  
God, my Lord, unites with me!

‘Go and make disciples of all nations!’

The way the Lord’s mandate sounds, it sounds like a job that can get **DONE!** No matter how much more there is to learn. **SOME** of the leaves and petals were moist. Jonathan has just about surpassed **MY OWN** gardening skill! In two years or so, **HE** will be indulging **ME!** ‘Yeh, that’s **REAL GOOD,** pastor. But let me hold the hose for a minute **WITH YOU!** Let’s do it together!’

You know, the way y’all treat your pastor as a scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, **MASTER** of the Lord’s house and kingdom—despite what I really am: a man that **ALL** you can do with is **FORGIVE!**

And there are others around you who need pardon **ALMOST AS MUCH** as your pastor. ‘**NEW**’

THEM, my dear ones! ‘CHRIST’ them, ‘JESUS’ them! Take their sins away! And then you’ve spread the kingdom of your God—God says!—in a way that makes heaven so proud, and makes the angels ENVIOUS of OUR DEEDS!

‘But it’s so HARD—cross and all of that, and our weaknesses!’ Yes, but being GOOD over against USELESS—that is HEAVEN’S decision and choice and verdict and judgment, NOT OURS! Praise the Lord! And if He wanted the flowers watered with greater skill and the Law kept better than we’ve been doing, then God has had FOREVER to DISCOVER a better sort of people to make His own and to attach Himself to and love and pardon and smile at and raise and hear their prayers!

And the BEST that heaven could come up with, is this Holy Place the Holy Spirit calls His CHURCH?! Now, THAT’S NEW, in’it?

## **Easter Hymn**

*by Henry Vaughan*

Death, and darkness get you packing,  
Nothing now to man is lacking,  
All your triumphs now are ended,  
And what Adam marr'd, is mended;  
Graves are beds now for the weary,  
Death a nap, to wake more merry;  
Youth now, full of pious duty,  
Seeks in thee for perfect beauty,  
The weak, and aged tir'd, with length  
Of daies, from thee look for new strength,  
And Infants with thy pangs Contest  
As pleasant, as if with the brest;  
Then, unto him, who thus hath thrown  
Even to Contempt thy kingdome down,  
And by his blood did us advance  
Unto his own Inheritance,  
To him be glory, power, praise,  
From this, unto the last of daies.

‘The Kingdom of this earth—is become—the kingdom of our God, and of His Christ, and of His Christ! And He...shall...reign...forever and ever!’

<sup>15</sup> Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our

Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”<sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God,<sup>17</sup> saying,

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,  
who is and who was,  
for you have taken your great power  
and begun to reign.

<sup>18</sup> The nations raged,  
but your wrath came,  
and the time for the dead to be judged,  
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and  
saints,  
and those who fear your name,  
both small and great,  
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

<sup>19</sup> Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.<sup>2</sup>

And graves are beds now for the weary.

And Jesus’ tongue is the same as when He was young.

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Re 11:15–19). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

And yes, the thought of the Last Day is scary; and it's okay if you are scared, child of God. And you may have some things to work on, like your watering abilities, and talking goodness instead of woe, and smiling instead of frowning.

But now that the NEW has come, Jesus our Baptizer and Master and Brother and Friend, the Old is the Old and the New is the New. And that means that even I am in charge of heaven! And if I, then you for certain! And it is time to jet out on of here, in'tit, and to tell ALL MEN, 'If heaven doesn't make one move that's not for MY GOOD, then that must count DOUBLE FOR YOU!'

I shall not die, but I shall live, and I shall tell of the deeds of the Lord in the Name of Jesus!' Amen!