

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 13)
 Year of the Lord 2019
 Luke 12

**“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!”**

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” ¹

In the Name of Jesus:

Let me be bold to say this morning, dearly beloved of God, that there seems, to me, to be a ‘sniff test’ we can use to check on every thing—from which Christ the Lord saves us. Whenever we sniff ‘fear,’ there’s another reason Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.

The man who asked Jesus to be a judge between him and his brother—about MONEY!—that man was living in FEAR! ‘If I don’t get MY fair share of the inheritance, where will I end up?’ Jesus came to bring God to us, in Himself. HE is where we will end up! To end that fear forever!

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 12:13–21). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

At a Christmas-type pageant I enjoyed several times, always a wonderful tenor from the choir would BELT OUT the words of the herald angel from the day Jesus was born. ‘FEAARRR NOTTTT!’ As those words would echo through the Church building, I imagined those words sounding out, rolling out, over all men, all the world, AND...., dear friends, all of the Gospel according to Saint Luke! Good News! At least for ME!!

For I have felt fear since I heard this lesson growing up in the Church! ²¹ ‘So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.’ Happily, I had fine Christian parents, the most wonderful pastors and catechism instructors; and then I fell in love with reading Doctor Martin Luther. He taught the Church the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel!

Who is ‘not rich toward God?’ Who in the world is ‘rich toward HIMSELF for certain; but not necessarily with his Maker?’

The LAW says, ‘ALL! You, me, y’all, the world!’ Oh! Something to REPENT OF! Something to RUN FROM! Something to confess at the Lord’s Table!

But what the Lord does NOT want us to do from this lesson of the rich man who worried about future days and years, as if HE was in charge of providing for himself until he died—‘Bigger barns! That’ll do it!’---

---Jesus does NOT want to drive us to MORE FEAR! ‘Well, we better get goin’ on being rich toward God!’ Oh! And you KNOW where that ends up! ‘I am rich toward God! But I’m not so sure about others!’ Ugh!

Not for us! He wants for us to sniff out the FEAR that the world, our sad man inside and the devil want to pour in our noses and souls forever. And... Jesus, the Friend of sinners, wants us to be so FEARLESS about admitting what we are—sinners!—that we look in the mirror of the Law, see that WE TOO are in danger of covetousness, Temptation, self-preservation; and then call it what

it is: idolatry! ‘OH! If I don’t get what I just KNOW I gotta have right now, right here, then I won’t be able to sustain MSYSELF!’

‘Take care!’ our Savior cried out! Another version of ‘FEAR NOT!’

Until we pass, my dear ones; until He comes again from heaven the same way the apostles saw Him go into heaven—blessing His own, with the hands that still have Those Wounds!—

We walk in danger; fear...is...NORMAL! But because OUR King, OUR Christ, OUR Son of David is NOT Judge or Arbitrator—we can still fall into fear, and even scare others now and then; but that does NOT change Who He is and What He has done for us, and does still. ‘This is my Blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Take and drink it for the forgiveness of your sins. Fear NOT!’

I have three points I’d like you to remember from the readings today. One, the Gospel teaches that Jesus is LIKE Solomon; He is the Son of David; and He is wise. Number TWO: READ Solomon’s Wisdom in Ecclesiastes—and let Martin Luther be your guide! And three: Even coming as a NEW Solomon, the Prince of Peace, Jesus will NOT excel in what Old Solomon did: judging, arbitration, sniffing out who is right and who is wrong. HE came for something NEW!

1) Saint Luke spells out in his Gospel how Jesus is the ‘son of David’, new Solomon: from peace on earth, wisdom in temple, to today’s Ecclesiastes story, He claims to be that heir and king and son....

Y’all know well the wise judgment and arbitration of King Solomon. Two women claim a living baby after one of theirs had died. Solomon discerns the true mother, who cries out to SAVE the baby when the King orders it to be cut in two.

After almost three decades of being a pastor, that one has not come through the door. But the Gospel lesson problem has, time and

again. In fact, I've begun to COVET a problem like Solomon's— one baby, two women claiming him!—instead of people wanting ME to get involved in the family squabbles over the most life-and-death, earnest problem these poor people ever face: money! Surely you know how quickly love can dry up among family members, when pennies and nickels and dollars are on the line! And how often each member of the family is pleading with someone—even God in prayer!—‘Assert MY rights!’

Jesus will not; and I've had to learn to follow Him in this too!
How?

I can hardly do better than to commend to you the reading of the Book of Ecclesiastes; AND, the comments on Ecclesiastes from Doctor Martin Luther. Luther's Works, Volume 15.

2) What Ecclesiastes lesson says. LUTHER! ‘Under the sun,’ all is vanity, a waste of huffing and puffing breath! Above the sun now reigns the Crucified!

Christians: you may, with a good conscience, assert your rights, redress your grievances, in matters that are ‘under the sun.’ God institutes and ordains righteous government, to protect the weak and the wronged, and to subdue the wicked.

But E...V...E...R...Y step we take in addressing the wrongs done us under the sun, the Lord surrounds with godly fear. ‘Am I seeking what is due me? Or am I knocking God off the throne?’ ‘Am I trying a legal, lawful manner of getting back possession, reputation, honor, that has been wrongly taken? If so, what does my heart say? Am I so wrapped up in asserting myself, that God in heaven, men on earth, see in me that my life is OVER and USELESS, unless I get I deserve?’

‘Fear not!’ Even as we walk in fear, through such thorny problems!

3) He is NOT Solomon. NOT judge! NOT abitrator! Look

ELSEWHERE for your payback UNDER THE SUN!

Jesus did NOT tell the man from the crowd that that man must not read the billboard and call the lawyer's number to assert his rights! He simply said, 'I have not come for THAT! The LAW speaks to those matters. Run to the LAW! But take care, that you do not lose the Gospel while you demand the LAW to take effect!'

The Lord had already addressed this in His sermon earlier in the Gospel. These are the words that dispel all fear; the Holy Spirit alone knows them; but He brings them to life in His people, His temple, you and me!

Saint Luke, chapter 6:

²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

²⁶ “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

²⁷ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³² “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. ²

‘FEAR NOTTTTT!’

AND...as Solomon preaches in Ecclesiastes: enjoy your eating, drinking, toil, spouse, current state, as gifts from Creator to creature. AND... stand ready, and FREE!, to hold it all—all those GOOD THINGS--in CONTEMPT! When it all turns IDOL!

Sniff out the fear, dear Christians! Whenever the devil speaks through men, through the TV, through our own unbelieving Old Adam inside of us—Sniff it out and call out to the One Who gives us His Holy Spirit to keep us from covetousness, from temptation, from idolatry.

In fact, we may be so bold today as to say BACK to our Lord, Who says ‘Take care, and be on guard against all forms of covetousness; for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of even God’s good creations!’

‘Yes, Friend Jesus, our Lord. We will take care. Step number one: You, dear Lord, take care of us: Grant us your Holy Spirit, so that we believe your Word and live godly lives, contented—despite our fears!—godly lives here in time and there, with you, in eternity!’

Hear the Spirit of Jesus, dear Christians. ‘Fear NOT!’ For YOUR life now consists of the very Spirit of God from ABOVE THE SUN! The Holy Spirit, with Whom you were baptized and Who will take care of you, through all things, through all fears, above AND under the Sun, in the Name of Jesus! Amen!

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 6:20–37). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.