

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
October 6, 2013 Luke 17:1-10 Pentecost 20



17.1 Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. ²It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. ³So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.” ⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to **this mulberry tree**, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you. ⁷“Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? ⁸Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? ⁹Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

One of the most popular hard-cover newly published books right now is called Killing Jesus. Who would have thought a book about Good Friday would be so popular? The book is 304 pages and costs \$33 if you want a collectable copy – is that autographed? It costs about 1/3rd that much if you get the e-book. The first thing you notice is the cross on the dust cover. It’s like a capital T – not the shape like we have in the front of St. Luke’s. Jesus through the whole book is called Jesus of Nazareth – never Jesus Christ – because that means the Messiah, the Anointed One – the Son of the Living God! Killing Jesus says Jesus didn’t say “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!” They claim Jesus couldn’t have said that – maybe when they were nailing him to the † but not when he was hanging on the cross--because when you were crucified – you ultimately died from suffocation – because you could not breathe. So you couldn’t talk – certainly not loud enough for anyone to hear you – except the Roman soldiers in charge of your crucifixion – so Jesus didn’t say that? That’s just wrong! How do I know? Because God’s Word says Jesus said that! Spoiler alert! Spoiler alert! The worst mistake in this book – pardon the pun – the fatal flaw of this book is the line, “Jesus’ body has never been found!” On TV Mr. O’Reily said, “If you could find Jesus’ body it would be worth billions of \$!?” You cannot find Jesus’ *dead* body because Jesus is alive again – risen from the dead – the risen Christ – the living Lord! That makes all the difference in the world. Killing Jesus? Jesus the Good Shepherd says, **“No one takes my life from me. I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again.”** Jesus gave up his life on the †. And Easter morning Jesus was alive again! It is only in light of Jesus’ sacrifice that we can say,

We Are Unworthy Servants!

Living in the light and power of Jesus’ love~

- 1. Don’t offend...but forgive**
- 2. Pray**

3. Be faithful!

God's Word says, **Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"** Matthew 20:17-19 As we catch up in spirit with the Lord Jesus – he is resolutely walking toward Jerusalem to lay down his life to save us. On the way – with even greater intensity and passion – if that's even possible--Jesus is teaching his disciples. Time is short! Today is the 19th Sunday we are reading from the Gospel of Luke. With Jesus' permission we will read from Luke 7 more Sundays – every Sunday this Church Year – except for *Reformation* Sunday – when we will have Mission Festival.

17.1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. ²It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble." Things that cause people to stumble. Learn yet another Greek word--τὰ σκάνδαλα – from which we get our English word scandal – to stumble – to offend! The word picture is that of a trap! A thousand years before the Christ-child was born – wise King Solomon warned against the trap of adultery. **For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, keeping you from your neighbor's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes. For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread, but another man's wife preys on your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished!** Proverbs 6:23-29 Surely King David was a faithful humble child of God. Remember David and Goliath – the courage that the LORD put into David's heart – as he did battle with the Philistine warrior giant? King David who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write, **"The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake!"** And still David committed actual physical adultery with *Uriah's* wife Bathsheba – then had Uriah murdered – and then tried to run away from his guilt for a year! Remember the faith and courage of Simon Peter? And yet Simon Peter cursed and swore that he didn't know this Jesus of Nazareth. If King David and Simon Peter could stumble so painfully – so could we!

17.1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. ²It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. Temptations will come – but woe to anyone who causes other people to sin. It would be better to row a rowboat to the middle of the Sea of Galilee – and throw someone overboard – with a massive doughnut of a stone tied around your neck. Next stop – the bottom of the Sea! Jesus is making it clear – leading other people into sin is serious business! We dasn't be the one to begin gossiping – talking badly about our neighbor. We dasn't be the one to tell a dirty joke that will spread through the office or the factory. We dasn't be the one to give the first beer to our friend who is struggling with alcohol. We dasn't be the one to buy another round – when we know our friend has already had too much to drink. We dasn't be the one to begin anything that is contrary to God's Word and God's will. Rather we need to be the quiet, humble, gentle, strong faithful and powerful example of doing what is right – because we love Jesus who loved us first and loves us best!

³ So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.” People sin. It happens all the time. We sin. Sometimes people sin against us and it *hurts!* When someone sins against us—the devil tempts us to compound the problem by complaining to someone else. Often times you will hear called workers say, “Matthew 18! Matthew 18!” The Gospel of Matthew chapter 18 records Jesus saying, “If someone sins against you—go and tell him—the person who sinned against you—his fault—just between the two of you.” You go and tell them—humbly, gently, patiently, lovingly. By the grace of God—they will repent—say they are sorry—and we assure them we forgive them. And that’s the end of it—never to be mentioned again! That’s how it’s supposed to work. Talk to the person who sinned—nobody else! Here Jesus says if they keep making the same painful hurtful mistake against us say 7 times in a day—a co-worker almost every hour of the work day—the same hurtful sin—and 7 times says, “I am sorry!”—forgive them—from the ♥ even as Jesus always forgives us! Forgive them. Forgive and forget! Forgive for Jesus’ sake!

⁵ The apostles (Jesus’ disciples are his students, followers, imitators. Jesus’ disciples were basically the same people—apostles stressing the aspect that Jesus sent them out—to share the Gospel) **The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶ He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.** The disciples realized what Jesus was asking them to do—would not be possible without the faith that the Holy Spirit gives them. **Increase our faith!** Make us strong to love and to forgive! Jesus replied, **“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you!** That’s pretty remarkable! Faith can move trees. Faith can move mountains! Jesus’ words are encouraging. They are also at the same time humbling. Faith the size of a mustard seed—mustard seeds are very small. Mustard seeds are smaller than a sesame seed—very small. If faith so small is that powerful—our faith needs to grow. And that happens when we are by the means of grace! That’s the Gospel in Word and Sacrament! This October—when we think of the Lutheran Reformation—there is no better time—to read our Bible, read Meditations, read the People’s Bible—read the new NIV or the ESV or be the first on your block to own an NASB or a Holman Christian Standard Bible! Come to Lord’s Supper when you are here—every chance you get! Grow in faith. Grow in your prayer life! Grow in faith through the Gospel!

⁷ “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? ⁸ Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? ⁹ Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’” Jobs for Jesus—that’s what we do—jobs for Jesus. We serve Jesus—not out of fear—that he will punish us if we don’t! We serve Jesus—not because we earn or deserve anything from him. We don’t serve Jesus because of some cosmic Karma—what goes around comes around—so be busy doing good and good things will happen to me. No! We serve Jesus out of thankfulness for all Jesus has done to redeem me! I read today about a man named Louis. The year I graduated from High School—1970—Louis was convicted of murder—by means of arson! Louis was convicted of setting fire to the Pioneer Hotel—where some 28 people died—from *flames*—more likely from the smoke—that stopped their breathing and their ♥! Just the other day—after serving more than 41 years in prison for a crime he didn’t commit—Louis was set free! One of the first things Louis did was go and get a fast food

hamburger. The hamburger guys gave him a free t-shirt. How nice was that?! The lawyer – the attorney who fought for 41 years to get Louis free is named Hammond! How could you thank Mr. Hammond for enabling you to be free again? I don't know. How can we thank Jesus? By dedicating our lives anew to glorify and share Him! Watch for opportunities and create opportunities to share Jesus' love! When something good happens – tell people you thank Jesus for it! When something painful and difficult happens – tell people you trust Jesus to take care of that! When there is trouble in the government – tell people you know that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords – so you don't let Washington make you afraid or painfully frustrated. You know Jesus is still really in charge!

"We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty!" I read today about a man named Herman. Herman is 71 years old and very frail. Herman also spent the last 41 years in prison – for murder – for the murder of a prison guard. Herman spent the last 41 years in prison – *in solitary confinement*. Do you know what that means – solitary? It means all by yourself – no visitors – no company – nobody to talk to. It means no television or radio. It means being all alone. Pretty strong people – after just a few days or weeks of solitary confinement have been at their wits end! They say it's almost impossible to imagine the hurt and harm this confinement can do to a person – when Jesus created people to be with people. It was very early on that God said, "It's not good for the man to be alone!" Imagine painfully alone for 41 years! You could lose all track of time all alone. Herman's conviction has been overturned. He is dying from liver cancer. He has been taken from the prison to a hospice for treatment for his final 3 days or 3 months. Only Jesus knows! The priceless news is – we are all as bad as Herman – born dead in trespasses and sins. Jesus died in our place to cover all our sins with his innocent blood. We will not spend forever apart from God. We are unworthy servants – slaves who will spend forever safe in Jesus' nail marked hands – by grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz