

"God Never Exaggerates"

Text: Luke 17:1-10

"May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you." Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians:

You've all heard or read words used incorrectly, sometimes creating strange, unintended imagery. An old English professor of mine was in attendance at an essay I delivered several years ago, in which I wrote "...*died in the wool.*" Obviously I meant "*dyed in the wool*" but the effect was worth the error. My English professor said it put him in mind of sheep that passed away just before shearing. In my mind it conjured up images of men who wanted to be buried in their best suit.

I'm sure you've seen others, like "*I could care less*" – which of course means the person does care (the expression is "*I couldn't care less.*") Or "*If worst comes to worse*" – which actually means that things are getting better. One of my personal favorites is "literally." The way it is used today, literally almost never means literally. "*My boss literally blew up in front of the whole staff today.*" Highly unlikely. "*No, he literally just melted down right on the spot.*" Again, probably not.

While some find this sort of thing highly entertaining, there's a problem. We tend to assume that no one *literally* means *exactly* what they say in our day-to-day conversations. No one literally hits the showers, keeps his nose to the grindstone, or shoots the breeze. Worse than that, we *always* exaggerate. (Like just now when I said "always.") "*I've literally told her about a thousand times not to do that.*" "*I could literally give you a million reasons why that is a bad idea.*" The real problem here is that that same general mindset is carried into the understanding of God's Word – and that's not good. God's Word means what it says. It does not use exaggeration or embellishment to make a point. It speaks literally and factually. Bear this fact in mind as you read our text for this morning (or any part of God's Word for that matter) and you will discover new depths and insights. Our text for this morning is found in Luke's Gospel, the 17th Chapter:

^{ESV} **Luke 17:1-10** **And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!" ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were**

cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." ⁵ ¶ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. ⁷ ¶ "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

So far the very words of our God. Note well. No exaggerations, no falsehood, no embellishment. All truth, all the time. In humble acceptance of these facts so we pray, "**Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth.**" Amen.

What a completely different and unique perspective we can gain from the reading of our text just by bearing in mind that God communicates *with* sinful human beings, but he does not communicate *like* sinful human beings. He neither embellishes the facts nor exaggerates the consequences. He does not brag, nor does he use what is false in an effort to communicate what is true. In the concrete terms of our text, that means that it really is *impossible* to have an offense-free world – a world where there where nothing that anyone does or says threatens our Christian faith – and it really *would* be better, literally better, to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around your neck than to offend one of God's little ones.

Think about those two for just a moment. When we use the word "*impossible*" we really only occasionally mean *impossible*. Not so with God. He does not communicate with exaggerations or overstatements. In this case, once we understand that God really, literally means *impossible* here, we can and should move on to explore just *why* such offenses are *impossible* to avoid. So also with the second thought in this text. We tend to read statements like the "millstone" statement as if they meant what we would mean if we wrote them. So we might say something like, "*I'd rather have a root canal without Novocain than to go out with her again!*" but we don't really mean it. So too we read

statements like "***better to have a millstone hung around his neck***" and naturally tend to assume what we are really not permitted to assume, that God is exaggerating. Once we get past that fallacy, again, we are free to explore the real truth of the passage. In this case, since it really is true that death by millstone is better, then we turn our attention to just how horrible it must be, in God's eyes, to cause one of his precious little ones to sin, or to damage their Christian faith. Quick and certain death is preferable in God's estimation.

In this manner we continue to scan down through our text, and several things jump out at us. God really does mean, for example, that we are to forgive our neighbor his trespass - even if he does the very same thing to us seven times in one day. Nor is God exaggerating when he says that even a very small faith can accomplish extraordinary miracles.

Do we tend to read such things as though God is exaggerating a bit? Almost certainly. As evidence, who among us has ever imagined that he could, with a word, uproot a big old Mulberry tree and have it obey his command to be planted in a nearby sea? Who has ever really believed that he could ever do such a thing? God is in no way embellishing the facts when he says such things. Staggering, sobering thought, isn't it? It makes us wonder just how small our faith is. A better way to look at it: *it makes us wonder just how much greater our faith can and should be.*

With this as our background, we are prepared to examine the scenario outlined last of all by our Lord in our text for this morning. It is the picture of a servant – a slave really – who returns from working in his master's fields only to serve his master's evening needs before finally tending to his own. The point of the account was undoubtedly to drive home to the disciples the fact that even perfect obedience on their part did not earn them anything from their Master. Even perfect obedience to every commandment of God's Law is supposed to be regarded as the simple, reasonable service of every servant of God. No more, no less.

Consider that fact for a moment in light of what we know about the perfect truth and sincerity of God's Word. God is not exaggerating here. While we tend to think of perfect obedience to God's Holy Law as a maximum, Jesus is here instructing us to think of *perfect obedience* as a minimum – our simple, reasonable service. Perfect obedience = bare minimum.

Plug that truth into your life in order to gain an ever greater understanding of just what God is teaching us here. Suppose that you are eight years old and you decide to surprise mom and dad by waking up at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday morning to clean the house. The whole house. Very quietly, so

as not to wake them, you scrub every floor, clean every bathroom from top to bottom, dust every surface of the house, wash, dry and put away every last dish, do the laundry, and generally make the house shine before mom and dad even get out of bed. (Kids, feel free to try this at home.) Suppose, however, that mom and dad get out of bed, examine your work, but notice that your bed hasn't been made, as required, by the time specified. The verdict? The standard punishment: no TV or computer for a day.

Doesn't seem fair, does it? *That*, precisely, is the problem. It is *our* problem. We do not think of God's Law in terms that our God allows. We do not regard absolute, flawless compliance as our *reasonable service or duty*. We have this idea that failing in one point can be corrected or justified by serving in another; that doing "most" makes up for occasional failure. In fact if we are honest isn't that how we sometimes justify our own sin, even while condemning sin in others? "*I swore like a sailor with a toothache this past week, but I make up for it by being active in my church.*" The thoughts are generally not that crass, but the point is that we have come to regard God's commandments as less than what they really are – a bare and reasonable minimum for every single one of his children to follow. We don't really even care to address in our minds the simple truth laid out in our text that we are "***unworthy slaves.***" ("Slave" by the way is the best and clearest meaning of the original words used by our Lord.) We have trouble both with "***slave***" (we'd prefer to think of ourselves as *servants*) and with "***unworthy***" (we'd prefer something a bit softer, more complimentary, like "*trusted.*") "*Trusted servants*" sounds much better than "*Unworthy slaves.*" God's Word doesn't deal in half-truths or hyperbole. God's Word says what it means and means what it says, which here means we need to wrap our minds around "***unworthy slaves.***"

What do you suppose would happen if our society, including you and me, would really come to grips with the fact that perfect obedience to God's commandments is our *minimum standard of conduct*? What would happen if we would learn to regard even what we might consider an especially magnanimous act on our part as simply part of that which is *always* expected of us? What if we could truly learn to look at ourselves as "***unworthy slaves***"? Perhaps then we would finally look with open honesty into the mirror of God's Holy Law, and see ourselves as we really are – thoroughly sinful human beings.

Better still, then also the message of the Good News that we have a Savior in Jesus Christ would break upon the beleaguered heart like the sun breaking through the clouds after days of gloomy grey. Who then

could possibly find the message of a Redeemer to be boring or uneventful? Those that think of themselves as "good enough" don't need a savior. Saviors are for miserable sinners – which means that honestly acknowledging our sins makes Jesus instantly more valuable and infinitely more necessary than anything else in existence. Once we learn to recognize how utterly we have failed to keep God's holy laws, and just what God expects from each one of us, then how joyfully thrills the news that another – Jesus Christ – has satisfied the demands that for you and me were quite literally *impossible* for us to supply.

It was Jesus who adopted the exact attitude he himself mentioned in our text. He is the one who considered perfect obedience as his reasonable service, and counted himself as an unworthy slave of humankind. All this he did so that he might rescue us from the eternal hell we had deserved.

Jesus is never diminished when we frankly and literally admit just how sinful we really are, and how far short we fall in our thoughts, words, and actions. In fact just the opposite is true. Jesus is enhanced and becomes all the more precious to us. Then it is that we come to realize just how profound was our failure and how perfect was his sacrifice. Nothing else even comes close. How precious indeed is our Lord Jesus Christ – the Master, the Savior of every single human being ever born.

Then too we can recognize the horror of damaging or destroying the saving faith of even one of God's children, and how much preferred would be the millstone. How much better not only to teach them about their Savior Jesus, but to live our lives as examples they can follow in every regard. What this means, in very practical terms, is that if you are doing the right thing, keep it up. If you are doing the wrong thing, stop it. This is too important for make-believe, too important to pretend that the on-going sin in our lives is unimportant. God never exaggerates – either the danger and punishment of sin and unbelief or the incredible joy and eternal promise of saving faith.

So also we pray: *"Lord, we are your unworthy slaves. Give us the grace to serve you with perfect obedience, and grant that each of us might recognize such perfection as nothing more than his or her reasonable service, for you our God have given us life eternal through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen."*

Scripture Readings

^{ESV} **Habakkuk 1:1-4 2:1-4** The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. ² O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? ³ Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. ⁴ So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. ¶ I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. ² And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. ³ For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end--it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. ⁴ "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 1:1-14** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, ²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³ I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Michael McEnroe, President Eileen McEnroe, Head Organist

Michael Roehl, Pastor Today's Organist: Angela Pfennig

The 20th Sunday after Pentecost – October 2, 2016

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 457 (Red Hymnal)

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The Old Testament Lesson: (Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4) We, like the Prophet Habakkuk, ought to be disgusted not only by the sin that we see all around us, but in particular by the sin that we see *within* us. The world around us knows no better. We do – or certainly ought to. Thank God that we are not saved by our works or actions. Instead, as we hear in this lesson, we are assured that the righteous live eternally only by faith in Jesus Christ. God preserve us in that one true, Christian faith.

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 38 (Brown Hymnal page 39) (Read responsively)

The New Testament Lesson: (2 Timothy 1:1-14) Paul wrote 2 Timothy shortly before his execution in Rome. The tone of the Letter is that of a Christian man who faces his own death, but who can do so with confidence because he knows and believes in the One who has died to save him. Pray God that he would give to you the same gifts, asking him to give you a heart and mind filled with this same Christian hope and confidence when your last hour is at hand. It is right for us to have such confidence, for our salvation is sure in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Confession of Faith -

The Apostolic Creed – page 15. (Brown Hymnal)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 338 (Red Hymnal)

"Thine Forever God of Love"

The Sermon – Text: Luke 17:1-10 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"God Never Exaggerates"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Post-Sermon Hymn – 353 (Verses 1-5) (Red Hymnal)

"Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest"

The Offering followed by the Prayers

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 353 (Verses 6-7) (Red Hymnal)

"Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States, as well as Canada, India, and Africa. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again!

Attendance - Sunday (38) Ave (48)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship/Coffee Time
Monday	-9:00 a.m.	– Pastoral Study Conference in Pierre
Wednesday	-6:00 p.m.	– Confirmation Class
	-7:00 p.m.	– Midweek Bible Study
Next Sunday	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship w/ Holy Communion
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship/Coffee Time

CLC News – Pastor Paul Tiefel is considering the call to Grand Rapids. Pastor Michael Gurath has returned the call to Mt. Zion of Detroit.

Organ Dedication – The dedication of our new church organ has been scheduled for Sunday, October 16.

CLC Board Meetings – Summaries and full reports of last week's CLC Board meetings are available on the entry table, or from the Pastor.

Pictures, Take Two – Plans call for a retake of the pictures for our bulletin board this morning for any who so desire. Please see Cindy for details.

Mission Helper Trip – Plans are underway for a Mission Helper Trip to Nepal in the summer of 2017. More information is available at www.MHT.LutheranMissions.org.

ILC Visitors' Day – ILC Visitors' Day is scheduled for Friday, November 11 on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, WI. Activities include visiting classes, touring the campus, and attending the fall musical. Even if you are not considering entering the preaching or teaching ministries, ILC also offers a high quality two-year AA degree, and most credits transfer to other colleges and universities. More information is available from the Pastor.

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I'm sure you've seen others, like "*I could care less*" – which of course means the person does care (the expression is "*I couldn't care less*.") Or "*If worst comes to worse*" – which actually means that things are getting better. One of my personal favorites is "literally." The way it is used today, literally almost never means literally. "*My boss literally blew up in front of the whole staff today*." Highly unlikely. "*No, he literally just melted down right on the spot*." Again, probably not.

While some find this sort of thing highly entertaining, there's a problem. We tend to assume that no one *literally* means *exactly* what they say in our day-to-day conversations. No one literally hits the showers, keeps his nose to the grindstone, or shoots the breeze. Worse than that, we *always* exaggerate. (Like just now when I said "always.") "*I've literally told her about a thousand times not to do that*." "*I could literally give you a million reasons why that is a bad idea*." The real problem here is that that same general mindset is carried into the understanding of God's Word – and that's not good. God's Word means what it says. It does not use exaggeration or embellishment to make a point. It speaks literally and factually. Bear this fact in mind as you read our text for this morning (or any part of God's Word for that matter) and you will discover new depths and insights. Our text for this morning is found in Luke's Gospel, the 17th Chapter:

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cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." ⁵ ¶ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. ⁷ ¶ "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

So far the very words of our God. Note well. No exaggerations, no falsehood, no embellishment. All truth, all the time. In humble acceptance of these facts so we pray, "**Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth.**" Amen.

What a completely different and unique perspective we can gain from the reading of our text just by bearing in mind that God communicates *with* sinful human beings, but he does not communicate *like* sinful human beings. He neither embellishes the facts nor exaggerates the consequences. He does not brag, nor does he use what is false in an effort to communicate what is true. In the concrete terms of our text, that means that it really is *impossible* to have an offense-free world – a world where there where nothing that anyone does or says threatens our Christian faith – and it really *would* be better, literally better, to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around your neck than to offend one of God's little ones.

Think about those two for just a moment. When we use the word "*impossible*" we really only occasionally mean *impossible*. Not so with God. He does not communicate with exaggerations or overstatements. In this case, once we understand that God really, literally means *impossible* here, we can and should move on to explore just *why* such offenses are *impossible* to avoid. So also with the second thought in this text. We tend to read statements like the "millstone" statement as if they meant what we would mean if we wrote them. So we might say something like, "*I'd rather have a root canal without Novocain than to go out with her again!*" but we don't really mean it. So too we read

statements like "***better to have a millstone hung around his neck***" and naturally tend to assume what we are really not permitted to assume, that God is exaggerating. Once we get past that fallacy, again, we are free to explore the real truth of the passage. In this case, since it really is true that death by millstone is better, then we turn our attention to just how horrible it must be, in God's eyes, to cause one of his precious little ones to sin, or to damage their Christian faith. Quick and certain death is preferable in God's estimation.

In this manner we continue to scan down through our text, and several things jump out at us. God really does mean, for example, that we are to forgive our neighbor his trespass - even if he does the very same thing to us seven times in one day. Nor is God exaggerating when he says that even a very small faith can accomplish extraordinary miracles.

Do we tend to read such things as though God is exaggerating a bit? Almost certainly. As evidence, who among us has ever imagined that he could, with a word, uproot a big old Mulberry tree and have it obey his command to be planted in a nearby sea? Who has ever really believed that he could ever do such a thing? God is in no way embellishing the facts when he says such things. Staggering, sobering thought, isn't it? It makes us wonder just how small our faith is. A better way to look at it: *it makes us wonder just how much greater our faith can and should be.*

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Consider that fact for a moment in light of what we know about the perfect truth and sincerity of God's Word. God is not exaggerating here. While we tend to think of perfect obedience to God's Holy Law as a maximum, Jesus is here instructing us to think of *perfect obedience* as a minimum – our simple, reasonable service. Perfect obedience = bare minimum.

Plug that truth into your life in order to gain an ever greater understanding of just what God is teaching us here. Suppose that you are eight years old and you decide to surprise mom and dad by waking up at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday morning to clean the house. The whole house. Very quietly, so

as not to wake them, you scrub every floor, clean every bathroom from top to bottom, dust every surface of the house, wash, dry and put away every last dish, do the laundry, and generally make the house shine before mom and dad even get out of bed. (Kids, feel free to try this at home.) Suppose, however, that mom and dad get out of bed, examine your work, but notice that your bed hasn't been made, as required, by the time specified. The verdict? The standard punishment: no TV or computer for a day.

Doesn't seem fair, does it? *That*, precisely, is the problem. It is *our* problem. We do not think of God's Law in terms that our God allows. We do not regard absolute, flawless compliance as our *reasonable service or duty*. We have this idea that failing in one point can be corrected or justified by serving in another; that doing "most" makes up for occasional failure. In fact if we are honest isn't that how we sometimes justify our own sin, even while condemning sin in others? "*I swore like a sailor with a toothache this past week, but I make up for it by being active in my church.*" The thoughts are generally not that crass, but the point is that we have come to regard God's commandments as less than what they really are – a bare and reasonable minimum for every single one of his children to follow. We don't really even care to address in our minds the simple truth laid out in our text that we are "***unworthy slaves.***" ("Slave" by the way is the best and clearest meaning of the original words used by our Lord.) We have trouble both with "***slave***" (we'd prefer to think of ourselves as *servants*) and with "***unworthy***" (we'd prefer something a bit softer, more complimentary, like "*trusted.*") "*Trusted servants*" sounds much better than "*Unworthy slaves.*" God's Word doesn't deal in half-truths or hyperbole. God's Word says what it means and means what it says, which here means we need to wrap our minds around "***unworthy slaves.***"

What do you suppose would happen if our society, including you and me, would really come to grips with the fact that perfect obedience to God's commandments is our *minimum standard of conduct*? What would happen if we would learn to regard even what we might consider an especially magnanimous act on our part as simply part of that which is *always* expected of us? What if we could truly learn to look at ourselves as "***unworthy slaves***"? Perhaps then we would finally look with open honesty into the mirror of God's Holy Law, and see ourselves as we really are – thoroughly sinful human beings.

Better still, then also the message of the Good News that we have a Savior in Jesus Christ would break upon the beleaguered heart like the sun breaking through the clouds after days of gloomy grey. Who then

could possibly find the message of a Redeemer to be boring or uneventful? Those that think of themselves as "good enough" don't need a savior. Saviors are for miserable sinners – which means that honestly acknowledging our sins makes Jesus instantly more valuable and infinitely more necessary than anything else in existence. Once we learn to recognize how utterly we have failed to keep God's holy laws, and just what God expects from each one of us, then how joyfully thrills the news that another – Jesus Christ – has satisfied the demands that for you and me were quite literally *impossible* for us to supply.

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So also we pray: *"Lord, we are your unworthy slaves. Give us the grace to serve you with perfect obedience, and grant that each of us might recognize such perfection as nothing more than his or her reasonable service, for you our God have given us life eternal through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen."*

Scripture Readings

^{ESV} **Habakkuk 1:1-4 2:1-4** The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. ² O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? ³ Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. ⁴ So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. ¶ I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. ² And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. ³ For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end--it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. ⁴ "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 1:1-14** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, ²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³ I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Michael McEnroe, President Eileen McEnroe, Head Organist

Michael Roehl, Pastor Today's Organist: Angela Pfennig

The 20th Sunday after Pentecost – October 2, 2016

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 457 (Red Hymnal)

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The Old Testament Lesson: (Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4) We, like the Prophet Habakkuk, ought to be disgusted not only by the sin that we see all around us, but in particular by the sin that we see *within* us. The world around us knows no better. We do – or certainly ought to. Thank God that we are not saved by our works or actions. Instead, as we hear in this lesson, we are assured that the righteous live eternally only by faith in Jesus Christ. God preserve us in that one true, Christian faith.

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 38 (Brown Hymnal page 39) (Read responsively)

The New Testament Lesson: (2 Timothy 1:1-14) Paul wrote 2 Timothy shortly before his execution in Rome. The tone of the Letter is that of a Christian man who faces his own death, but who can do so with confidence because he knows and believes in the One who has died to save him. Pray God that he would give to you the same gifts, asking him to give you a heart and mind filled with this same Christian hope and confidence when your last hour is at hand. It is right for us to have such confidence, for our salvation is sure in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Confession of Faith -

The Apostolic Creed – page 15. (Brown Hymnal)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 338 (Red Hymnal)

"Thine Forever God of Love"

The Sermon – Text: Luke 17:1-10 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"God Never Exaggerates"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Post-Sermon Hymn – 353 (Verses 1-5) (Red Hymnal)

"Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest"

The Offering followed by the Prayers

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 353 (Verses 6-7) (Red Hymnal)

"Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States, as well as Canada, India, and Africa. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again!

Attendance - Sunday (38) Ave (48)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship/Coffee Time
Monday	-9:00 a.m.	– Pastoral Study Conference in Pierre
Wednesday	-6:00 p.m.	– Confirmation Class
	-7:00 p.m.	– Midweek Bible Study
Next Sunday	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship w/ Holy Communion
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship/Coffee Time

CLC News – Pastor Paul Tiefel is considering the call to Grand Rapids. Pastor Michael Gurath has returned the call to Mt. Zion of Detroit.

Organ Dedication – The dedication of our new church organ has been scheduled for Sunday, October 16.

CLC Board Meetings – Summaries and full reports of last week's CLC Board meetings are available on the entry table, or from the Pastor.

Pictures, Take Two – Plans call for a retake of the pictures for our bulletin board this morning for any who so desire. Please see Cindy for details.

Mission Helper Trip – Plans are underway for a Mission Helper Trip to Nepal in the summer of 2017. More information is available at www.MHT.LutheranMissions.org.

ILC Visitors' Day – ILC Visitors' Day is scheduled for Friday, November 11 on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, WI. Activities include visiting classes, touring the campus, and attending the fall musical. Even if you are not considering entering the preaching or teaching ministries, ILC also offers a high quality two-year AA degree, and most credits transfer to other colleges and universities. More information is available from the Pastor.