

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Christian Worship: Year A EHV®

August 26, 2018

Matthew 16:13-20



¹³When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴They said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But you, who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overpower it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he commanded the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

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

There was a little light bulb manufactured in Shelby, Ohio by the Shelby Electric Company back in the late 1890s. It was originally a 30-watt or 60-watt bulb – but is now very dim – emitting about the same amount of light as a 4-watt nightlight. The hand-blown carbon filament common light bulb has been giving light since 1901. That’s a long time! It has perhaps been used in at least 4 different locations. In a hose cart house of the Livermore fire and police departments – then a garage in downtown Livermore. When the fire department

consolidated – it was moved to a newly constructed City Hall. Nobody really thought about it until 1972 when a reporter named Mike started looking into it. In 1976 the fire department moved to Fire Station #6 with the bulb. The bulb socket's cord was severed for fear that unscrewing the bulb could damage it. Deprived of electricity for only 22 minutes during the very careful transfer which was made in a specially designed box with a full fire truck escort! The fact is – they don't make light bulbs the way they used to! Sometimes you hear people say nothing lasts forever! But something does! Jesus' forgiving love lasts forever. And because Jesus' forgiving love lasts forever:

Jesus' Church Lasts Forever!

1. Jesus Is The Christ

2. The Church Is Built On The Gospel

Context! Jesus' enemies came after Him again and again! The Pharisees and the Sadducees – Pharisees and Sadducees had practically nothing in common – except a common hatred for Jesus and everything Jesus taught and stood for. Pharisees were self-righteous and work-righteous. They followed the Law of Moses meticulously – outwardly! They made the tassels on their prayer shawls exceedingly long and showy. They not only tried to keep all the Laws of Moses – they had invented and added some 365 *more* rules – the traditions of the elders – the proverbial “we always did it that way” – as if it were Heaven sent. There is something comfortable in – “we always did it that way” – don't you think? Lutherans pretty much sit in the exact same pew Sunday after Sunday. When I was in Sunday School we always sat in the 3rd pew from the front on the lectern side – closest to the center aisle. If I am looking for you in Church on Sunday I know where to look! People who come to 2 Sisters for breakfast Bible Class sit in the same chairs and when the server comes – could almost to a person say, “The usual!” – and she would know what to bring! We are

creatures of habit. The problem comes when what is comfortable and habitual – becomes so ingrained in us – we start to think anything different is at the same time wrong – because it’s – I don’t know – *different!* The Pharisees thought you have to wash your hands before eating – even if it’s just a little dipping of your fingertips in water. To simply pick an apple – wipe it on your shirt and take a bite – made the whole process morally “un-clean!” The Sadducees had their own unscriptural problems. They didn’t believe in angels nor demons. Sadducees didn’t believe in Heaven nor hell either! Sadducees lived for here and now – because there is no forever tomorrow! Pharisees and Sadducees together wanted Jesus to show them a sign from Heaven! Jesus said they **knew how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times! An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.”** Mt. 16:3b-4 EHV. Don’t you wonder if after Jesus rose from the dead if one of them hit his forehead and said, “*Now* I get it!” – or not!

⁵When his disciples came to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread along. ⁶Jesus said to them, “Watch out and be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ⁷They were discussing this among themselves and said, “It is because we did not bring any bread.” It’s all about attitude! It’s all about the ♥! When Jesus’ forgiving love fills your ♥--you will not be so concerned about the “*things and stuff*” of this world! It is sad when brothers and sisters do not even speak with one another all because of some stuff that used to belong to some relative who died – and someone else in the family took it for them-self! You did not have to drive far last weekend – to see piled out by the curb rolls and rolls of carpet – and rolls and rolls of the funny soft stuff from under the carpet. Out on the curb boxes and boxes of soggy papers and boxes of expensive electronics – that were

wrecked. In a matter of hours – there was the smell of swamp water in very nice rooms – because the sump pump overheated and quit and the water came running in. The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees is a very subtle thing that infects the ♥ with an attitude that I’m not perfect – no one is – but at least I’m better than some people I know. It’s the opposite of the ♥ of the Apostle Paul who said, **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst!”** Only when the Holy Spirit fills our ♥ will we say and **believe the good things I want to do I don’t do – and the bad things I don’t want to do – that’s what I keep on doing. What a wretched person I am. Who will rescue me from this body of sin and death? Thanks be to God – who gives me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ!**

¹³When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi... When Jesus and the 12 went straight north from the Sea of Galilee – with the Golan Heights to the East – they came to the region of Caesarea Philippi – a Roman – a Gentile place! Caesarea Philippi was a place famous for the worship of Pan--the god of the wild, shepherds and flocks, nature of mountain wilds, rustic music and impromptus, and companion of the nymphs. He has the hindquarters, legs, and horns of a goat, in the same manner as a satyr. He is recognized as the god of fields, groves, wooded glens and often affiliated with fertility and the season of spring. The word *panic* ultimately derives from Pan’s name. (cf. *Wikipedia*) Thus – this place people would connect with Pagan worship and every sinful aspect of “hugs and kisses” – is the place where Jesus chose to ask His students, followers and imitators – **““Who do people say the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴They said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” John the Baptist** – back from the dead – calling people to repent of their sins! Surely this was Jesus’ message – **Repent for the Kingdom of God is near! Others say Elijah!** Elijah asked the people of

Israel on Mount Carmel – **“How long will you halt between two positions? If the LORD is God worship Him. If Baal is god worship him!”** What did the people say? Their silence was painful! Some say Jeremiah – the weeping prophet – who also called the people to repent – to admit their sins – confess them – and pray for God’s mercy! And most of the people did not! **One of the Prophets?** Jonah called the people of Nineveh to repent and they did. Nathan called the people to repent and they would not! Joel called the people to repent and they did not! And the plague of locusts came wave after wave! Hosea married Gomer – redeemed the woman who sold “hugs and kisses”! Malachi called the people to repent! He told them **“For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble. The coming day will consume them,”** says the LORD of Armies, **“not leaving them root or branches. ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall. ³ You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing,”** says the LORD of Armies. **⁴ “Remember the instruction of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.”** Malachi chapter 4. Christian Standard Bible

¹⁵He said to them, “But you, who do you say that I am?” Here is the question that really counts – for time and for eternity. **¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.** How did

Simon Peter know the right answer – that Jesus is the Christ – the Messiah – the Anointed One – our Savior and Redeemer? His Heavenly Father put that answer in his mind and in his ♥! This is the Church – people who by the grace of God know and believe that Jesus is their Savior and Redeemer!

¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter – Petrus – the Rock, and on this rock – the rock of Simon Peter’s Gospel confession of faith-- I will build my church, the Church is built on Christ and Christ alone – crucified and risen to forgive us--and the gates of hell – the Gates of Hades – the power of the kingdom of death and eternal destruction-- will not overpower it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Two days before my 61st birthday – the general public witnessed through a dedicated webcam – that the forever light bulb had apparently burned out. The next morning – an electrician was called in to confirm its status. It was determined that the bulb had not burned out when the dedicated power supply was bypassed – using an extension cord. The power supply was found to have been faulty. Approximately 7 hours had passed before the light was reestablished. After being re-lit, the bulb burned at close to its original brightness for several hours before dimming again. The Livermore Fire Department plans to house and maintain the bulb for the rest of its life. How long will that be? Only Jesus knows! The fact is – by the grace of God – the Gospel light – burning in our ♥s will never go out. It will continue to shine – to the glory of God – here and now – and one day – in Heaven when we say, “Thank you, Jesus!” Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony P. Schatz