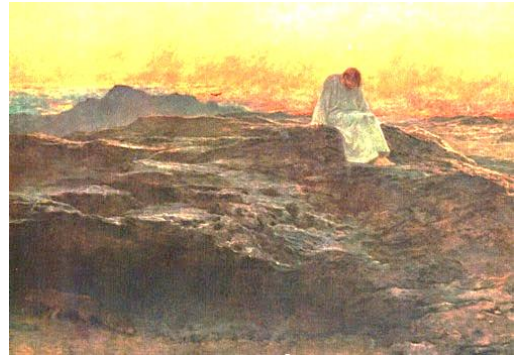


**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran  
Church  
Sermon by Pastor  
Anthony E. Schultz  
Advent Vesper II.  
December 7, 2016  
Matthew 4:1-4 and 5:6**



**4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” And again...<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

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

What is it? 18 days until Christmas? Walk into Watertown Wal-Mart and they have a huge sign just inside the store that says 18 days till Christmas! Do you have all your Christmas shopping done? The hot item this year? Hatchimals! They look like an egg – about the size of a pumpkin ball – softball. They aren't cheap. \$300--\$600 even \$900 for a pink and teal Hatchling! The real deal is if your 10 year old daughter told you about these furry little hatchlings – and you go out and buy up literally hundreds of them. And then – as soon as there is a stampede at Toys'R'Us and their shelves are empty – you go on the Internet and sell Hatchimals to desperate parents – at 3 and 4 and 5 times what you paid for them – maybe even more! And so it goes! Watch TV

and you see SUVs for sale. They show them going at high speeds on snow covered mountain roads! Then they show them parked with a massive ribbon – a gold and velvet bow – on the roof. Those ribbons can cost literally thousands of dollars on Escalades and Beamers and Mercedes! A family that belongs in a JC Penny catalog laughing and smiling and throwing puffy snowballs at each other! And a little voice inside says, “Must be nice!” There is a danger each Advent Season that we are caught up and distracted by Christmas commercialism! That’s why is exceedingly practical today to appreciate:

**Advent Adversaries: Busyness** last week.

**Advent Commercialism** today and

**Advent Nostalgia** next week!

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on today is part of the Gospel of the tax collector Matthew. I don’t know if we really appreciate how awkward it was for one of Jesus’ disciples to be a tax collector for the accursed Roman Emperor. If people wanted to find fault with the Lord Jesus all they had to say was, **“He is a friend of tax collectors and sinners!”** The Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy. Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3 are Jesus’ genealogies! Matthew’s genealogy, **“A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...”** Why does this matter? It matters because thousands of years earlier God’s Word promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the \*s and the ultimate descendant would be the Savior of the world! Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah. Remember Judah~the father of Perez and Zerah – whose mother was Tamar – Judah’s daughter-in-law? Jesus is descended from Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed – the Father of Jesse and Jesse the father of King

David. Jesus is descended from Uzziah – remember him? The leprosy on his forehead. Descended from Jotham – who was faithful but the people weren't. Ahaz was ungodly – sacrificing his sons in the valley of Ben Hinnom – the smoldering fires that make you think of Hell. Descended from Hezekiah – who was good King Hezekiah – yet proud and puffed up about all his things and stuff. Hezekiah – the father of Manasseh. Manasseh – the horrible standard of wickedness. God's Word says,

**21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah. <sup>2</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. <sup>3</sup> He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. <sup>4</sup> He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name." <sup>5</sup> In the two courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. <sup>6</sup> He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger. <sup>7</sup> He took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple, of which the LORD had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. <sup>8</sup> I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their ancestors, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them." <sup>9</sup> But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the**

LORD had destroyed before the Israelites. <sup>10</sup> The LORD said through his servants the prophets: <sup>11</sup> “Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols. <sup>12</sup> Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. <sup>13</sup> I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. <sup>14</sup> I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and give them into the hands of enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all their enemies; <sup>15</sup> they have done evil in my eyes and have aroused my anger from the day their ancestors came out of Egypt until this day.” 2 Kings chapter 21.

So – no hope for Manasseh – and so? Are you old enough to remember Paul Harvey and “The Rest Of The Story”? Read more of God’s Word! 2 Chronicles! <sup>10</sup> The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. <sup>11</sup> So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. <sup>13</sup> And when he prayed to him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God. <sup>14</sup> Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah. <sup>15</sup> He got rid of the foreign gods and

removed the image from the temple of the LORD, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. <sup>16</sup> Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>17</sup> The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

Consider the gross wickedness – not only in the ♥s and lives – not only of ancient Israel 1,000 years before Jesus was born. Think of the gross wickedness in my ♥ and yours. Then rejoice in the mercy and goodness of the Great I AM who sacrificed His innocent Son to save us! God’s Word tells us **Then Jesus was led by the Spirit – that is the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The Tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.”** When I was little I always had trouble understanding this Bible history. 40 days and 40 nights of nothing to eat or drink – and anyone would be in fact starving. The devil says – if you are the Son of God – make the stones bread. If you are? Here would be the easiest miracle ever – to prove once and for all – Jesus is God’s Son. So...why doesn’t He? Jesus does not use His divine power and might – to prove anything to the devil. Nor does Jesus use His power and authority as the eternal Son of God to indulge Himself! God’s Word says, **“But Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!’”** Christmas is not about egg nog and cookies – pickled herring on crackers – fruit cake and Stolen and venison Summer Sausage and Wisconsin squeaky cheese curds – chips and dip and chocolate dipped anything! Christmas is not about drinking – Christmas cheer – to the point



of too much to drink. One of my teachers at the Seminary used to say – “You have had too much to drink – the moment you would say or do anything you wouldn’t do – if you had not been drinking!” Think about that! We would be under the influence of alcohol – if that alcohol frees us to say or do anything that otherwise we would not do! That’s way before a person is falling down, throwing up, passing out – next morning hungover drinking. We need to be very careful – when the devil tempts us!

It was during a sermon on a grassy hillside to believers living their faith that Jesus said, **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be filled!”** Did you go to the Post Office to get Christmas stamps? There are lots of stamps for holiday celebration. There are stamps for Christmas – stamps of Mary and Joseph and the Christ-child. Stamps with Mary and baby Jesus. There are stamps for Kwanza. Do you know what Kwanza is about? There are stamps for Hannukah! Do you know what Hannukah is about? There are stamps to celebrate Muslim festivals – not really connected to Christmas at all. You can use any kind of stamp you want to use. It’s not a sin to use stamps with American Flags on them. But if you stop and think about it – when you hunger and thirst for righteousness – saying, “Happy Holidays” – leaves room for misunderstanding at best! Which holiday? What kind of happiness? When you say, “Christ the Savior is born!” – there isn’t much room for misunderstanding – and so? When you say, Blessed Christmas! Jesus is my Redeemer and King – it’s hard to misunderstand that! Season’s Greetings, too, is a little vague. Snow is nice – but sins like scarlet – made whiter than snow – says what Christmas is really about. Hunger and thirst for righteousness – for being right with your Heavenly Father means Jesus is the tiny King – announced by angels, worshiped by

shepherds, visited by wise men. Jesus is my Redeemer – born to die – to die on a tree – to wash away all my sins. Jesus is the One who will make us strong – so we aren't caught up in commercialism – but filled with the Christmas Gospel! God bless your Christmas in the name of the Christ-child! Amen!