

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church**  
**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**July 14 & 17, 2016**  
**Pentecost 9. Eisenach Series**  
**Jeremiah 23:23-29**



<sup>23</sup> “Am I only a God nearby,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far away? <sup>24</sup> Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD. <sup>25</sup> “I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’ <sup>26</sup> How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? <sup>27</sup> They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their ancestors forgot my name through Baal worship. <sup>28</sup> Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?” declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup> “Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?”

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

Last week Prof. Westendorf preached about Jesus’ Parable of the Good Samaritan. I kept thinking about that this past week—watching for opportunities—by the power of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of my Savior—to **go and do likewise!** It’s was while I was thinking about that—that I read an article that says while you would like to think car accidents are a part of the *work day radio* morning and afternoon news, sports, weather and *traffic report*. You hear about lanes blocked and people in the ditch but you think that’s not something that’s ever going to happen to me. Fact is—the average person is involved in 3 or 4 accidents—before you are old enough for your children to say—“Hey, Grandpa/Grandma, maybe you should think about giving your car to one of your grandchildren—and we will be happy to pick you up and take you wherever you need to go—or we will give you a bunch of taxi coupons—and they will drive you where you need to go.”

I read the other day about a lady named Kimberly—who was in a rollover accident. A man came running over almost immediately. She thought—he’s my guardian angel—come to save me! This guy named Shakir *said* he would call 911. What he *did* was steal Kimberly’s credit cards and ID. Shakir’s girlfriend came by and used a stolen credit card to buy some stuff for herself! Tempting— isn’t it—to think to yourself—I’m not *perfect*. Nobody is! But I would *never* do that! And in that moment—we have become the Pharisee—who prays, **“I thank you, LORD that I am not like some people—tax collectors and sinners** who have such a refrigerator where their ♥ ought to be—that they would rob somebody in a rollover car accident! I would never do something as terrible as that! *Really?* That’s pretty much the opposite of the attitude that says, **“Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners of whom I am the worst!”** Today again God’s Word is Law and Gospel reminding us:

**Our God Fills Everything**

- I. God sees everything
- II. God judges everyone!

They teach us at the Seminary-to always put the Word of God we are concentrating on—in context. One of my teachers used to say God’s Word is not little bits and pieces like a jar or a sword or a life preserver from the Titanic in a glass box down the dark and dusty hall in some Museum. God’s Word is living and active—sharper than any two edged sword--piercing even to dividing soul and spirit joints and marrow—it even judges the thoughts and attitudes of the ♥! Understand the Scriptures in the original context—and we can by the power of the Holy Spirit—better apply them to my ♥ and attitude and life! And thus Christ will be glorified! Context! Jeremiah’s father was a Priest named Hillkiah. He was born into that work—descended from Moses’ brother Aaron. Priests worked first in the Tabernacle—then Solomon’s Temple. When Solomon’s Temple was smashed down by the Babylonians—it was rebuilt—70 years later. The day would come—when Jesus’ words of warning would be fulfilled. The Romans would smash down Herod’s Temple—to the point that not one massive stone would be left upon another. Go to Jerusalem today—the Temple is gone!

Priests like Hilkiah worked in the Temple—descended from Aaron—and able to prove it! Family trees—family records had to be kept—to prove you were descended from Aaron to be a Priest. Descended from Levi—a Levite—worked in the Tabernacle or the Temple. Again—remember last Sunday’s sermon—the Good Samaritan who stopped to help—when the Priest and the Levite didn’t? Priests and Levites worked in the Temple. From the first light of dawn until the sun went down at night—sacrifices! The Scriptures were made vivid and painfully simple—**“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness!”** (Hebrews 9:22) Lambs died, goats died, sheep died, cows died, bulls died—even quiet and gentle turtle doves died. They shed their blood as a shadow of the Ultimate Lamb of God who would be sacrificed one time on the altar of the † because of my sins and yours! We are responsible. We are to blame! It’s my fault. And it’s your fault!

If you watch the news a lot—it’s tempting to think everything is coming apart! Tempting to think it has never been worse than right now! *Tempting!* The fact is Wise King Solomon was right when he wrote, **“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”...** **“Is there anything of which one can say, ‘Look! This is something new’? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them.”** Ecclesiastes 1:2f Jeremiah preached God’s Word during the last 6 kings of Judah. Do you remember their names? One of the powerful blessings of going to Luther Prep or Lakeside Lutheran High School—is you study God’s Word every day—every day. You learn about the last kings of Judah. King Amon was king for 2 years when Jeremiah began to preach. Then came Good King Josiah. They called him *Good* King Josiah because there were so few *Good* kings! *Good* King Josiah was King for 31 years. Imagine having a Good President for 31 years! Imagine having a horrible President like Manasseh—who was king for what? 55 years? Amon, then Good King Josiah for 31 years. Then came Jehoahaz for 3 months; Jehoiakim for 11 years, Jehoiachin 3 months and 10 days; then Zedekiah again 11 years. No one would forget Zedekiah. The LORD told Zedekiah to surrender to the Babylonians who had laid siege to Jerusalem but he refused! In a selfish panic he made a break for it—was of course captured. The Babylonians made him watch his sons being put to death. Then they took out his eyes—the last thing he saw was the death of his sons! They took out his eyes and in chains dragged him off to far away Babylon where he died! This is the backdrop to Jeremiah’s 40 year ministry. God’s Word says the kings and priests of Judah had led the people into idolatry,

immorality, violence and injustice. Sound familiar? As Jeremiah preached God's Word the ♥s of the people grew cold!

<sup>23</sup> "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away?" <sup>24</sup> Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD. This, too, is not a new concept! King David wrote some 3,000 years ago: <sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. <sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," <sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. <sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139

Jeremiah preached: <sup>25</sup> "I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!'" <sup>26</sup> How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? <sup>27</sup> They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their ancestors forgot my name through Baal worship. Like my father~when I go to the bank I go inside. Not that there's anything wrong with the drive-thru – but I always go inside Ixonia State Bank to do my finances. It has been said-bank people can spot counterfeit bills in a moment. It's not that they look at them with this super critical eye. They spend so much time handling real money – slip them a phony bill and it just feels funny. It feels different. The same with God's Word. If you have read your Bible – I mean read it all the time – and then somebody tries to pass off something that isn't God's Word – you know it! I read part of a book the other day. It said, "I have an engineering problem. While for the most part I'm in terrific physical shape, I have 10 tumors in my liver and I have only a few months left to live...so how to spend my very limited time?...to teach my children what I would have taught them over the next twenty years...right from wrong, what we think is important, and how to deal with the challenges life will bring...about honesty, integrity, gratitude and other things I hold dear..." (The Last Lecture) What is missing? The ✠ of Christ and the empty tomb! What is essential? Christ crucified and risen to forgive all my sins! What do my children and grandchildren need – the truth of God's Word on each page of Scripture – nothing less and nothing more! Know God's Word and Satan's lies will not fool you!

Jeremiah preached: <sup>28</sup> Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup> "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" *Faithfully!* That's the LORD's benchmark~*faithfulness!* Faithfulness requires self-discipline. The Apostle Paul talked about that in his 1st letter to the Corinthians <sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. <sup>27</sup> No, I

**strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1 Corinthians 9:24f** There are people – whatever field you want to talk about. People who play the piano – people who play football, baseball, basketball, hockey, soccer – people who can paint – people who can sing or dance or speak that are extremely gifted. It comes very easily to them. They are way above average – without much effort at all. And that’s wonderful! But give me a person with average ability – even below average ability who has a ♥ for what they do – a ♥ for the people they serve – and I will give you the best person in their field – because they are faithful! Give me a physician, a teacher, a pastor, who is faithful – and Jesus will bless that faithfulness-with even more gifts and even more opportunities – and Jesus will be glorified and Jesus’ lambs and sheep will be blessed until we find complete rest in Heaven by grace through faith for Jesus’ sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

*Rev. Anthony E. Schatz*

