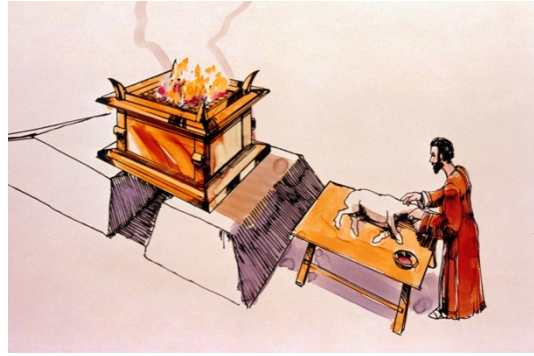


**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran
Church, Watertown, WI
Sermon by Rev.
Anthony Schultz
August 28, 2016
Pentecost 15. Eisenach
Series
Psalm 50:14-23 EHV**



14 "Sacrifice a thank offering to God, and fulfill your vows to the Most High. 15 Call on me in the day of distress. I will deliver you, and you will honor me." 16 But to the wicked, God says: "What right do you have to recite my statutes or to take up my covenant with your mouth? 17 For you - you hate instruction, and you throw my words behind your back. 18 If you see a thief, you approve of him, and cast your lot with adulterers. 19 You devote your mouth to evil, and your tongue weaves deceit. 20 You sit and speak against your brother. You slander your own mother's son. 21 "These things you have done and I kept silent. You thought I was just like you. I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face. 22 Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces and there will be no one to rescue. 23 "The one who sacrifices a thank offering honors me, and he sets up the way, in which I will show him the salvation of God."

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God and that is what we are by grace through faith for Jesus' sake:

Snakes! Yikes! Do you know how many Americans are bit by snakes every year? How many do you think? No~ more than that!

I read the other day between 7,000 and 8,000 Americans are bit by poisonous snakes every year! That's a lot – isn't it? How many Americans die from snake bites? No, less than that – about 5! I read about a snake called the Death Adder! That's a lovely name – and so? The Death Adder! The Death Adder likes to slither under a bunch of leafs and sand – and then when someone comes near – they just wiggle – a little. And when people come near – they fly out and bite them – bite them again and again – injecting their poisonous venom! It's a neuro-toxin – poison that disrupts the brain that tells your body things like ♥ keep beating – lungs keep breathing – eyes keep blinking – throat keep swallowing! Death Adders! They are a real danger if you are walking around in Australia. So--most of us are pretty safe. The Serpent from eternal destruction is a whole 'nother matter. Temptations to *misbelief, despair and other great shame and vice* are a threat to all of us. We are safe in one place – one place only – the nail marked hands and powerful arms of Christ Jesus – the Son of God – our Savior. Only He can and does keep us safe. Today – God's Word is again the most practical instruction:

The Gospel Motivates Worship and Stewardship

- 1. Beware the danger of unbelief**
- 2. Grow through the Gospel**

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on is from the Book of Psalms – the Old Testament hymnal and song book. Singing is an amazing thing – if you stop and think about it. God's Word says, **“Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.”** Psalm 47:6,7 It was a couple of years ago – that Uncle Terry was doing that “continuing

education” thing. And one of his assignments was to go to observe worship at a different kind of church – to see if you could see something different and learn something! Where to go? Where to go? Uncle Terry and Matthew drove into Milwaukee on Sunday morning – turned off the radio and rolled down the windows and drove down the street listening. They hadn’t driven far before they heard singing. They pulled up to a church with all the windows opened and they could hear the people singing. Not singing slowly and sadly – but singing – clapping – literally dancing as they sang the praises of their crucified and risen Savior! Singing! They call the Lutheran Church the singing church – and so? We sing at Adult Bible Class – we sing a hymn – without somebody – anybody playing the piano. We sing! We sing at the start of every confirmation class. We sing at our Trinity St. Luke’s School. We sing at Luther Prep for chapel – that you can watch on live stream – Prof. Kiecker then Prof. Schroeder then Prof. Chartrand then President Crass in the newly remodeled chapel. We sing at Lakeside Lutheran High School-at Chapel in the gym. What do angels do all day in Heaven? They sing to the glory of our Heavenly Father. I walked into my home office one day and they were singing the Hallelujah Chorus on my boom box and you just had to stand there – stand there and listen. If you have ever been to a Packer Game at Lambeau Field – you have to get there early enough to go through security – so you are in your seat when they sing the National Anthem – over 72,000 people sing, “The land of the free and the home of the wooooosh!” As the fighter jets or the Cobra helicopters fly over! Singing! God’s people sang when they had walked through the middle of the Red Sea – maybe a million people – through the middle of the Sea on dry land – and then came the army of the mighty Pharaoh. Chariots and horses and

swords rattling and arrows rattling in their quivers. And then the wheels literally came off and the horses stumbled and the chariots crashed – and the water came flooding back and literally that army threatened no one anymore *ever!* And God’s people sang! God’s people sang when Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah – by the power of the Great I AM – crushed the armies of their enemies. Hannah sang when the LORD blessed her with a son Samuel – which she gave back to the LORD. David wrote songs of praise. **“The LORD is my shepherd I shall not want...yeah though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff the comfort me!”** Jesus and his disciples sang Psalms after the Passover on the way to Gethsemane – on the way to the \dagger ! Paul and Silas sang hymns in the dungeon in Philippi in chains! And we will sing God’s praises with 10,000 times 10,000 angels when we are at rest in Heaven! **“Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus and take us home!”**

Psalm 50 – the one we are concentrating on today was written by a man named Asaph. He was a leader of the Temple musicians. Psalm 50 is connected with Psalm 49 – the one that comes just before it. If trusting in your \$ to save you is foolishness – then trusting in going to Church – to simply go through the motions is also foolishness. The heading for Psalm 50 reads, *“The Folly of Formalistic Worship”*. Formalistic worship! What is that? It’s simply going through the motions! It’s tempting! Like the prayer for the day – that quick little prayer right after the confession of sins and the announcement that Jesus took all our sins away. We sing a quick song of praise and thanksgiving – and then we say, “Let us pray...” And then there’s this quick prayer – lasts only a few minutes. It’s different every week. It asks usually for just one spiritual blessing. Before you

know it – we are saying/praying – **for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit – one God – world without end.** We sing – “**Amen!**” Off to the lectern for the three readings. The first and third reading most often connected in thought – the second reading usually a continuum...continuing to read for 3,4,5 weeks – from one Epistle or another! And so? A few weeks ago I preached at Riverview Lutheran Church in Appleton. The first part of their service was called a Gathering Rite – not right – but **rite** – liturgy – a gathering/coming together to worship. The pastor did readings – the explanation was printed on the margin – the piano kept playing when the Pastor read or prayed – the piano played softly in the background I am Jesus’ little lamb. It was very nice. It was very different! You had to pay attention!

**16 But to the wicked, God says: “What right do you have to recite my statutes or to take up my covenant with your mouth?
17 For you - you hate instruction, and you throw my words behind your back. 18 If you see a thief, you approve of him, and cast your lot with adulterers.”** The wicked! That would be me! Remember just the beginning of Luther’s daily – every day – confession of sins: *My dear Father, I always confess and you can see that as I walk or stand, every particle of my inner and outer being, together with my body and soul, deserves hell and fire. When all is said and done, you, my Father know that of my own accord there is not even a hair on my head, nor any other thing in me, that is good. Everything that belongs to me is hunted by the hated devil for the bottomless pit. What can I say about it?* Could it be said of us, “you hate instruction!” Do we? Do we literally hate it when someone – anyone says – here – let me show you how to do that! Show me??? “I don’t need to read the instructions! Just give me the parts!” When we are very little –

already – we don't want someone – anyone to show us or help us! "I can put my own pants on!" Ok, they are on backwards – but I put them on by myself! "I can put my own shoes on!" Ok, they are on the wrong feet – but I put them on by myself! School is starting – classes – teaching, learning! Do we love to learn – or not so much?

If you see a thief, you approve of him... Approve of a thief? Think about it! Who do we cheer for at the movies? Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid...and so – Paul Newman and Robert Redfield? Frank and Jesse James – robbing banks and robbing trains? We like them, too! Bonnie and Clyde – standing on the running board – hanging on to their classic car door – blasting their Tommyguns! John Dillinger – Johnny Depp – breaking out of prison – on a crime spree – hiding out from the Feds in northern Wisconsin? Again Johnny Depp – Jack Sparrow – and we love the pirates! Arrrrrrgh! Last weekend – one weekend 3 people murdered and 22 people wounded in Chicago? We are talking about a problem literally 3,000 years old? The answer is not just showing up on Sunday morning for 59 minutes – thank you very much! The answer is not just dropping children off for Sunday School – so they don't end up using Heroin in Watertown. It's not just a matter of ears! It's a matter of the ♥! It's not a matter of getting all my children and grandchildren confirmed – now I have done my part! It's about a life-time of growing in grace as the world grows darker and darker with sin!

14 "Sacrifice a thank offering to God, and fulfill your vows to the Most High. Up north at one of our day schools – they had a practice for an active shooter in their school. Police officers came and taught the teachers and helpers what to do – if – *Heaven forbid* – someone should come into their school – to try and do even lethal harm to Jesus' lambs and sheep. What to do if you are

standing face to face with someone with a weapon. The police officer told my daughter – pretend he was the attacker – and the people she was protecting were her students – even her own children – what would she do to the attacker? Grab hold of him – grab hold of his weapon – and then what? Show me! And she did! If you mess with the mama bear – what do you think is going to happen? The one who is after you and me – and our children and grandchildren – is not so much a bear but **a roaring lion looking for someone to devour!** The devil is a serpent slithering out of eternal destruction bent on doing eternal harm to our faith, our soul and our children! There is protection and safety and rescue only in the innocent blood of Jesus! Jesus is our strength – our only hope – our only rescue and salvation. That means read God's Word – sing his praises – come to Church and come to Bible class and Sunday School and grow in faith until we are all safe in Heaven for Jesus' sake! Amen!
To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schatz

