



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 20

September 21, 2025



“Wounds That Heal”

No One Can Serve Two Masters

There are more than 2,300 Bible passages that speak about money. Why? Money is a master Satan frequently tempts us to serve. In fact, out of all the masters competing for our service besides God, money is probably at the top of the list. Money provides us with a false comfort and sense of security. Money serves as a source of pride. This week, Jesus’ sharp words identify the impossibility of serving more than one master. More, Jesus teaches that if we dedicate our lives in service to money, money will always let us down. In contrast, God has proven that he is a master worth serving. When we serve God, money is put in its proper place. Instead of it being a master to serve, it becomes a tool in our service of our true Master.

First Reading³ Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

Solomon instructs his listeners on faithful work combined with gratitude to God. Hoarded wealth brings only harm to its owner. Earthly wealth is fleeting; to chase after it is as fruitless as chasing after the wind.

Second Reading³ 1 Timothy 6:6-10,17-19

Godliness with contentment leads the faithful steward to a life marked by faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Content with our needs, we make faithful use of the Lord’s blessings to carry out his kingdom work. Use of money for God’s loving purposes, avoids the love of money itself. We, then, fight the good fight to break the grasp of mammon and take hold of the eternal life to which we are called.

Gospel³ Luke 16:1-13

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager has caused some consternation among New Testament believers. Was the manager dishonest or was he merely taking advantage of his master’s manipulation of the law of Moses? If he was dishonest, how can the Lord hold up sin as an example for faithful living? Do not miss the point. This is a “fish or cut bait” lesson being taught by the Great Teacher. Love for money or love for God are the options. Each brings with it eternal results. Those who love money will not be trusted with greater treasure. Those who love the Lord and faithfully use his possessions for kingdom work will be trusted with the eternal treasure of heaven.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 128 C “Blest Are Those Who Love You”

The Church sings Psalm 128 in services that encourage the faithful use of material blessings. As people live their Christian vocations, blessings from the Lord are both requested and promised. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 128 is a comfort psalm. Marriage itself is praised, and married partners are comforted by God’s gracious will for them. They are encouraged not to look at the trouble, work, discouragement, or discomfort of marriage, but rather at its happiness and blessing. Married life is a gracious creation of God, something that he blesses and holds dear.”

Gospel Acclamation Matthew 6:33

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have told us not to be anxious about what we need for this life. Move our hearts to seek you and your kingdom, that all good things may be given to us as well; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day 807 “All Depends on Our Possessing” (Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Andächtige Haus-Kirche, Nürnberg, 1676)

Church Year Season¹ Season after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

Minor Festivals St. Matthew, Apostle (September 21)

Colors & Symbolism Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

Nain Paraments Sundays after Pentecost

Superfrontal: When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

Lectern antependium: The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

Pulpit antependium: At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

⁴ From *Christian Worship: Psalter* © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Reprinted by permission.

· Clipart courtesy of “Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas”