



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 20

September 18, 2022



Serve God with Money; You Can't Serve God and Money

There are more than 2300 Bible passages that speak about money. Why? Money is a master Satan frequently tempts us to serve. And that evil foe knows how successful his efforts with money can be. Money provides us with a false comfort and a sense of security. It serves as a source of pride. It serves as a wonderful tool for a favorite pastime: justifying ourselves in our own eyes and the eyes of others. Jesus knows that serving money makes it impossible to serve God. The human heart is not big enough for both. As a result, Jesus does all he can to expose the futility of serving money. He also helps us see that the only one truly worth serving is our gracious, loving God. When we serve God, money is put in its proper place. Instead of money being a lord to serve, it becomes a resource for serving the Lord. This is the hard truth. There is no way for us to serve both God and money. But we can serve God with our money.

The Propers

*The Proper*s are those portions of the service that change (or, are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin *ordo*, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.

First Lesson³

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 Lesson³

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.

Gospel of the Day³

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 Day

Psalm 38

“Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.” When his conscience plagues him, the Christian knows God is his only Savior; to trust in anything else is foolish.

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

Lord, we pray that your mercy and grace may always go before and follow after us that, loving you with undivided hearts, we may be ready for every good and useful work; 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

421 “All Depends on Our Possessing” (Andachtige Haus-Kirche, Nurnberg, 1676)

Church Year Season³

Sundays 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

Sundays after Pentecost: 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

Superfronatal: 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.

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