



Sunday Devotion for Martin Luther Church

5th Sunday after Pentecost, July 5, 2020

**A warm welcome to watch this devotion and related videos at
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIjEQnirqCMNPBFHMs4oYY30Mg-6fNerB>**

A. GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Words of Welcome

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Good morning everyone and welcome to our Sunday service.

My name is Silke Fahl and I'm one of the vicars here at Martin Luther Church. Today is the second Sunday in our "Summer with Romans" series. The text for this week is a pretty accurate analysis of human nature. But I don't want to spoil anything for you, so you'll have to wait for the reading and the sermon to find out more.



Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:

You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

B. WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Psalm 145:8-14, read by Ida

⁸The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹Lord, you are good to all,
and your compassion is over all your works.

¹⁰All your works shall praise you, O Lord,
and your faithful ones shall bless you.

¹¹They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your power,

¹²that all people may know of your power
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout all ages,₁

You, Lord, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up those who are bowed down.

Readings: Romans 7: 15-25a read by Ariane

¹⁵I don't understand what I do—for I don't do the things I want to do, but rather the things I hate. ¹⁶And if I do the very thing I don't want to do, I am agreeing that the Law is good. ¹⁷Consequently, what is happening in me is not really me, but sin living in me. ¹⁸I know that no good dwells in me, that is, in my human nature; the desire to do right is there, but not the power. ¹⁹What happens is that I don't do the good I intend to do, but the evil I do not intend. ²⁰But if I do what is against my will, it is not I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹This means that even though I want to do what is right, a law that leads to wrongdoing is always at hand. ²²My inner self joyfully agrees with the law of God, ²³but I see in my body's members another law, in opposition to the law of my mind; this makes me the prisoner of the law of sin in my members. ²⁴How wretched I am! Who can free me from this body under the power of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God—it is Jesus Christ our Savior!

(The Inclusive Bible)

Sermon by Vicar Silke Fahl

When I opened my Bible at the beginning of the week to read this week's text, I instantly noticed the comment I had written in the margins years ago. My guess is I wrote it during Bible study when I was still at uni as it is a quote from my pastor during that time. It says, "Der Oberkracher in Blick auf Menschenkenntnis und Selbsterkenntnis." Translated it means something along the line of, "Incredibly on the point with regard to the knowledge of human nature and self-awareness."

"I don't do the good I intend to do."

Wanting to do something, but unable to do it. There are so many things in our lives where we think, "It would be good to do this or not to do that." Like not buying plastic bottles or not using single use straws. To take the bike more often instead of the car. To shop locally instead of online. To do more sports and eat less unhealthy food. To call our friends and family more often

I don't know about you, but I often think about doing everything that is considered the right thing to do. For myself, the people in my life and for the environment. And then things have to get done quickly or I feel like I just don't have the time. And then I end up taking the car after all or skip my yoga session again.

"I don't do the good I intend to do."

Wanting to do something, but unable to do it. Apart from those, „it would be better if“ situations that we probably all know there are a lot of other reasons why people may want to do something, but literally aren't able to. And often you can't tell from just looking at a person. For example, people who suffer from depression or anxiety or a chronic illness often can't do everything they would like to do. What people can and can't do varies from person to person. Some people struggle getting out of bed on bad days. Others struggle with asking for help when they aren't doing well. And some get an anxiety attack when the phone rings or they see how many unanswered emails and messages they have and are thus unable to answer.

“I don't do the good I intend to do.”

Wanting to do something, but unable to do it. Sometimes we say that we can't do something or that we just don't have the time for something. Or we use it as an excuse when we don't want to get into trouble for something we didn't do. We then say, “I would really like to, but...” Yet that isn't what Paul is talking about when he says, *“I don't do the good I intend to do.”*

What he is talking about is the feeling of wanting to do something but being honestly unable to do it. He talks about the feeling of being unable to act and how that feeling sometimes just doesn't want to pass. For example, when we have to take a vocabulary test and despite learning for it, we just can't remember the words. When we want to do something, be productive, go out with friends or what not, but we are just too tired and exhausted. When we want to laugh and have fun, but a cloud of sadness has a grip on us.

“I don't do the good I intend to do.”

Wanting to do something, but unable to do it. In our society it tends to be incredibly important to be productive. If you aren't able to be as productive as people think you should be, you fall through the cracks. Especially if one appears perfectly healthy but has a chronic or mental illness and simply can't manage the same things or same amount of things as other people do. It then happens so easily that people look down on you and judge you; think you're lazy. And when that happens all the time it is so hard to look at yourself in a positive light. Even if you know that you are doing the best you can.

It is this feeling of not being good enough that Paul addresses in this part of his letter. When we say, “I want to, but I just can't”, Paul answers, “That is perfectly normal. And you know what: God accepts you as you are. We all want to do so many things, and yet we aren't always able to do them. God knows that and loves us exactly as we are.”

We can and are allowed to live with this trust, with this faith. We can, we actually shall continuously remind ourselves and other people that a person's worth doesn't depend on their productivity. No one has less worth just because they seem to accomplish less than other people. And honestly, who is to say that someone accomplishes less? If you have a chronic illness, something as seemingly easy as doing the laundry can be a huge

accomplishment. We are all God's beloved children exactly as we are. And I hope with all my heart that we can love each other and look at each other with this kind of love as well.

Amen.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your mind in Christ Jesus."

Amen.

Hymn: I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say ELW 611

1 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
so weary, worn, and sad;
I found him in a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

2 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one;
stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

3 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise,
and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till trav'ling days are done.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray:

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

We pray for the church. Sustain us as we share your word. Embrace us as we struggle to find our common ground. Lift up leaders with powerful and prophetic voices. Free us from stagnant faith.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the well-being of creation. Protect the air, water, and land from abuse and pollution. Free us from apathy in our care of creation and direct us toward sustainable living. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all nations. Guide leaders in developing just policies and guide difficult conversations. Free us from patriotism that hinders relationship-building. Lead us to expansive love for our neighbor. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all in need. For all who are tired, feeling despair, sick, or oppressed. Take their yoke upon you and ease their burdens. Give your consolation and free us from all that keeps us bound. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for our and all congregations. Bless pastors, deacons, and congregational leaders. Energize children's ministry volunteers, church administrators, and those who maintain our buildings. Shine in this place that we might notice the ways your love transforms our lives. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all who celebrated their birthdays in the past week, especially for Christel Wendland and Maria Hack. Bless them as they walk into a new year of their lives. Surround them with your love and your grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those who have died in faith. Welcome them into your eternal rest and comfort us in our grief until we are joined with them in new life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven

Hallowed by thy name

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

**And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever.
Amen.**

C. SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you and ☒ give you peace.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

Announcements

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak, **all meetings and worship services are taking place virtually.**

- Sunday [Video Devotions](#) are on our [YouTube Channel](#). Please subscribe and comment.
- German [Radio Devotions](#) on our website and Sundays at 9.30 am on CHLO Radio AM 530
- [Virtual Sunday Coffee Hour](#) at 11:00 am on Zoom (invitation sent by office)
- [Sunday School lessons](#) on our website (April-June)
- [Virtual Coffee Shop Talk](#), Mondays 7:00-9:00 pm on Zoom led by Vicar Silke Fahl. Email vicarfahl@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Virtual Prayer Circle](#), Wednesdays 5:30-6:00 pm through Zoom led by Solveig Christina Voss; we also have a Prayer Request Wall in the Church Foyer
To request a prayer or join our prayer circle, email prayers@martinluther.ca.
- A Summer with Romans:
 - ◊ Sermon Series until August 30
 - ◊ Bible Study: Wednesdays July 8-August 26. A 30-minute weekly discussion of Paul's letter to the Romans. Two opportunities: Roman Coffee at 8:30 am and Roman Lunch at 12:15 pm. Email vicarsmith@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Give Peas a Chance](#)- A grow some, give some movement hosted by Martin Luther and Redeemer Lutheran with donated seeds.
- A Facemask for Everyone - a project to ensure that everyone who wants to protect themselves from the virus has access to masks. Everyone who wants to get involved can find an activity that suits them. Contact Vicar Adam McComb if you'd like to volunteer, vicarmccomb@martinluther.ca
- [Corona-Care Calls](#)- Volunteers are continuing to call you with more information and to understand your needs. Let us know if you'd like to join the call team!
- Please phone or email the church office:
 - ◊ if we can help you in any way
 - ◊ if you'd like to volunteer by doing Sunday readings
 - ◊ with feedback on what we're offering
 - ◊ to support our church and [donate](#). Best ways are PAR or send cheque to church office.

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*Member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) &
Partnered with Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)*