

## Pericope Study for Sunday, October 2, 2016 – Lectionary 27C

Presented Tue 9/27/16 by Richard Burgess

### Collect / Prayer of the Day

Benevolent, merciful God: When we are empty, fill us. When we are weak in faith, strengthen us. When we are cold in love, warm us, that with fervor we may love our neighbors and serve them for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. (ELW)

### Possible Sermon Titles for Lectionary 27C

As usual, use at your own risk.

	Hab	2Tim	Lk
Do You Live by Faith?	X		
Heard but Not Feeling like It	X		
If The LORD Seems to Tarry	X		
Keeping Watch	X		
There Is Still a Vision	X		
Waiting on the Lord, but How Long?	X		
Are You Ashamed?		X	
Hold to the Standard; Guard the Good Treasure		X	
Spirit of Cowardice or of Power & Love?		X	
Worship with a Clear Conscience		X	
Are Jesus' Worthless Slaves Really Worthless?			X
Are You a Good Worthless Slave?			X
How Far Can You Throw That Mulberry Tree?			X
Mustard Seeds for Jesus			X
Small Faith Leads to Big Results			X
What Are Your Expectations?			X
Worthless Slaves			X

## Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

[1.1] The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

[2] O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,  
and you will not listen?  
Or cry to you "Violence!"  
and you will not save?

[3] Why do you make me see  
wrongdoing  
and look at trouble?  
Destruction and violence are before me;  
strife and contention arise.

[4] So the law becomes slack  
and justice never prevails.  
The wicked surround the righteous--  
therefore judgment comes forth  
perverted.

[2.1] I will stand at my watchpost,  
and station myself on the rampart;  
I will keep watch to see what he will say  
to me,  
and what he will answer concerning  
my complaint.

[2] Then the Lord answered me and  
said:

Write the vision;  
make it plain on tablets,  
so that a runner may read it.

[3] For there is still a vision for the  
appointed time;  
it speaks of the end, and does not  
lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will  
surely come,  
it will not delay.

[4] Look at the proud!  
Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.

### Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

Habakkuk probably lived in Judah ca 600 BCE, roughly the time of Babylon's defeat of Assyria and the subsequent control of Palestine by Babylon.

Hab 1.2 Do we ever *cry for help* and are not heard? What is the difference between not being heard and not feeling heard?

Hab 1.3 *see wrongdoing and look at trouble* This is called "vicarious trauma" and can be as serious as if the *destruction and violence* had actually happened to the observer. Where in our congregations have we / our people seen wrongdoing and looked at trouble? What needs to be done pastorally?

Hab 1.4 *justice never prevails* "Never prevails" might be a bit over the top, but it clearly doesn't prevail nearly often enough. What can we do about it? Be about it?

Hab 1.5-17 Why are these verses left out? Would including them change the connection between 1.1-4 & 2.1-4?

Hab 2.1 Habakkuk witnesses the injustice in his world and waits for the LORD to answer. How could witnessing & waiting be appropriate for us in our ministries? Our people in theirs?

Hab 2.1 *I will stand at my watchpost . . . I will keep watch* Great image. What can we do with it?

Hab 2.3 *For there is still a vision for the appointed time; . . . If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.* Can we really believe this? What does this say to those for whom justice didn't come in time? Ie, how satisfactory is Habakkuk's theodicy?

Hab 2.4 *Look at the proud! . . . the righteous live by their faith.* How is this related to "justification by grace through faith"?

## 2 Timothy 1:1-14

[2.1] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

[2] To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

[3] I am grateful to God--whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did--when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

[4] Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. [5] I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. [6] For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; [7] for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

[8] Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, [9] who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, [10] but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. [11] For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, [12] and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. [13] Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and

love that are in Christ Jesus. [14] Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

### Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

2Tim 2.3 *I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did* How do you “worship with a clear conscience”? What does it mean to do so as your ancestors did? What if your ancestors didn’t?

2Tim 1.7 *for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.* How does cowardice manifest itself in our congregations? Power, love, & self-discipline? How might this be relevant during stewardship season? During an era of the decline of Western religion’s numbers? As we approach national elections in November?

2Tim 1.8 *Do not be ashamed, then, of witnessing for our Lord (GNT)* Are we ashamed? What does not being ashamed look like? What does *suffering for the gospel* mean in our time & place?

2Tim 1.13-14 *Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. [14] Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.* How can we put flesh on this exhortation so we can live out of it?

## Luke 17:5-10

[1] Jesus said to his disciples, "Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! [2] It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. [3] Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. [4] And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive."

[5] The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" [6] The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

[7] "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table?' [8] Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink?' [9] Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? [10] So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

### Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

Lk 17.1-10 The LBW had this lesson starting at verse 1. Lk 17.1-10 would seem to be a collection of seemingly unrelated sayings with no real context. Is that so? What is to be gained from expanding the pericope to include verses 1-4?

17.6 Why a *mustard seed*? Why a *mulberry tree*?

17.6 *faith the size of a mustard seed*  
Can you give an example of mustard seed faith? Transplanting a mulberry tree into the sea?

17.7-10 This parable seems to scold the disciples and put them in their place. Does it? Why is it here?

17.10 *worthless slaves* What is a *worthless slave*? Are you one of Jesus' worthless slaves? Who are the worthless slaves in your life?

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Where have You hidden,  
Beloved, and left me moaning?  
You fled like the stag  
After wounding me;  
I went out calling You, and You were gone.

Faith and love are like the blind man's guides. They will lead you along a path unknown to you, to the place where God is hidden. Faith, the secret we mentioned, is comparable to the feet by which one journeys to God, and love is like one's guide. In dealing with these mysteries and secrets of faith, the soul will merit through love the discovery of the content of faith, that is, the Bridegroom Whom she desires to possess in this life through the special grace of divine union with God, as we said, and in the next through the essential glory, by which she will rejoice in Him not in a hidden way, but face to face. [1 Cor. 13:12]

-John of the Cross 1542-1591 "The Spiritual Canticle 1:11" as quoted in <http://www.edgeofenclosure.org/proper22c.html>