

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September 2016 Daily Lectionary: <u>LSB</u> pp. 299-304	The Epistle readings for Sunday - September 11, 18, and 25 are from 1 Timothy. Notes from: http://concordiatheology.org/2013/09/proper-19-%E2%80%A2-1-timothy-15-11-12-17-%E2%80%A2-september-15-2013/			<u>1</u> 1 Ki 18:1-19 Eph 1:1-23 Ps 47	<u>2</u> 1 Ki 18:20-40 Eph 2:1-22 Ps 138	<u>3</u> 1 Ki 19:1-21 Eph 3:1-21 Ps 119:57-64
<u>4</u> 2 Ki 2:1-18 Eph 4:1-24 Ps 90:13-17	<u>5</u> 2 Ki 2:19-25; 4:1-17 Eph 4:2 -- 5:14 Ps 56:8-13	<u>6</u> 2 Ki 4:8-22, 32-37 Eph 5:15-33 Ps 127	<u>7</u> 2 Ki 4:38 --- 5:8 Eph 6:1-24 Ps 131	<u>8</u> 2 Ki 5:9-27 Php 1:1-20 Ps 71:12-16	<u>9</u> 2 Ki 6:1-23 Php 1:21 -- 2:11 Ps 61	<u>10</u> 2 Ki 9:1-13; 10:18-29 Php 2:12-30 Ps 58:1-8
<u>11</u> 2 Ch 29:1-24 Php 3:1-21 Ps 44:1-8	<u>12</u> 2 Ch 31:1-21 Php 4:1-23 Ps 94:12-15	<u>13</u> 2 Ch 32:1-21 Col 1:1-23 Ps 27:7-13	<u>14</u> 2 Ch 33:1-25 Col 1:24 -- 2:7 Ps 38:6-16	<u>15</u> 2 Ch 34:1-4, 8-11, 14-33 Col 2:8-23 Ps 1	<u>16</u> 2 Ch 35:1-7, 16-25 Col 3:1-25 Ps 108:1-6	<u>17</u> 2 Ch 36:1-23 Col 4:1-18 Ps 130
<u>18</u> Ne 1:1 -- 2:10 <u>1 Tm 1:1-20</u> Ps 118:5-14	<u>19</u> Ne 2:11-20; 4:1-6 <u>1 Tm 2:1-15</u> Ps 136:1-9	<u>20</u> Ne 4:7-23 <u>1 Tm 3:1-16</u> Ps 46	<u>21</u> Ne 5:1-16; 6:1-9, 15-16 1 Tm 4:1-16 Ps 55:12-19	<u>22</u> Ne 7:1-4; 8:1-18 1 Tm 5:1-16 Ps 133	<u>23</u> Ne 9:1-21 1 Tm 5:17 -- 6:2 Ps 51:5-13	<u>24</u> Ne 9:22-38 <u>1 Tm 6:3-21</u> Ps 123
<u>25</u> Mal 1:1-14 Mt 3:1-17 Ps 51:5-13	<u>26</u> Mal 2:1 -- 3:5 Mt 4:1-11 Ps 16	<u>27</u> Mal 3:6 -- 4:6 Mt 4:12-25 Ps 91:9-16	<u>28</u> Dt 1:1-18 Mt 5:1-20 Ps 145:17-21	<u>29</u> Dt 1:19-36 Mt 5:21-48 Ps 19:7-14	<u>30</u> Dt 1:37 -- 2:15 Mt 6:1-15 Ps 119:161-168	

Proper 19 • 1 Timothy 1:(5–11) 12–17 • 17th Sunday after Pentecost -- By William W. Schumacher

In the shorter reading Paul offers himself as a living example of the saving mercy of God in Christ. Paul admits that he was anything but “faithful.” But Christ is the one who gives Paul strength, who decided to use Paul for ministry (or service, “diakonia” in v. 12). The same Christ now keeps displaying his perfect patience using Paul as an example. The emphasis is constantly on Christ and his mercy, grace, patience—in short, on his salvation. Paul’s unworthiness, though real enough, fades into the background and serves only to glorify Christ’s mercy. Paul’s new post-conversion obedience is also not the point; now Christ takes center stage and does everything that matters.

In the longer reading (beginning with v. 5), Paul’s graphic list of the kind of sinful people for whom the law is intended (especially vv. 9–10) may capture the spotlight in our understanding, making us more concerned about various kinds of really horrible human sin than about God’s “overflowing” (v. 14) and “trustworthy” (v. 15) gospel promise. Today we may be sensitized by public and political debate over matters such as homosexuality and abortion. Our attitude may resonate to the old parody of a hymn: “Chief of sinners though I be / you-know-who is worse than me!” And “you-know-who” can easily be identified with proponents of gay marriage, or politicians who vote for late-term abortions, or whatever villains are the focus of the current insatiable news cycle.

A comparison between sinners to decide which is “worse” is certainly not the point Paul wants us to grasp, but once we entertain such a comparison, we may not readily be convinced that Paul, the former blasphemer and “insolent opponent,” really is in any sense “foremost” of the sinners that Christ came into the world to save (v. 15). The murderers, fornicators, perjurers, human traffickers, etc. all seem much, much worse by our modern standards than Paul’s pre-conversion behavior. It is too tempting for us, perhaps, to gloss quickly over the merely religious (!) sins of unbelief and blasphemy and condemn the really egregious and wicked violations of the commandments of the second table of the law. And yet Paul confesses himself as the “foremost” (literally “first”) sinner, and we should not discount his words as mere hyperbole or modesty. Our contemporary estimates of which sins are “worse” are frequently distorted or just plain wrong. Paul’s unbelief and opposition to Christ and his followers were horrible, damning sins against the first and second commandments.

We should also be wary of locating Paul’s sins simply in his pre-conversion life. Paul does not thank the Lord that he is no longer such a bad sinner as he was before. He does not say, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I was the foremost,” but rather “of whom I am the foremost.” The verb tense is present, and the pronoun is emphatic. We must not imagine that mercy, grace, and salvation were simply past necessities that corrected Paul’s previous ignorance and let him start over. The saving mercy of Christ Jesus our Lord is the present and continuous reality in which Paul now lives and serves as “exhibit A” of Christ’s perfect patience. The same present reality of sin—and even more of God’s grace—comes through in Romans 7, where Paul writes about his struggle with the sin that still clings to him, but rejoices in victory in Christ.

Recall what the Law is for (v. 9) and what “the glorious Gospel” (v. 11) does and shows. The Law reveals and condemns sins in all its horror and vileness. The Gospel shows us Christ: his mercy, his patience, his forgiveness, his absolutely trustworthy promise of salvation and eternal life. With such a clear, unwavering focus on Jesus Christ, no room is left to quibble about greater or lesser sins. My own sins are the worst, for only those can damn me. Thanks be to Christ who saves sinners—even me! No prizes go to the “first” of sinners; all honor and glory belong to the only God, the King of ages, forever and ever. There’s no time for breast-beating in the midst of such a doxology.