

**The Cross That We Must Carry in our Time Is the Work of Reconciliation,  
in the World, the Church, Our Families and Our Places of Work**

"Discipleship is more than quality of character, moral fortitude and singleness of mind," Deacon Donald Hughes said in his sermon Sunday. "It is, above all, sacrifice. 'You cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me,' and 'No one can become my disciple without giving everything for me.' . . ."

"Jesus is looking for a full-hearted response on the part of his followers," Deacon Hughes continued, because "Jesus has at least some understanding of what events are coming down the pike. Jesus wants the crowd to understand that the excitement of the moment can entice followers who are not yet ready for the journey. By including the stories of the tower builder and the warring king, he is asking them to ask themselves, 'Do I have the resources to finish the journey?' 'Am I prepared for the battle forming on the horizon?' By taking time to consider the cost, the answer could be yes, but a hasty, careless decision to follow Jesus to Jerusalem would most likely only come to embarrassment and failure. . . ."

"In addition to warning the crowd to count the cost of discipleship," he continued, "Jesus is also warning that if Israel does not follow him, they will experience the ruin of their tower [the Jerusalem temple, then being re-built] and the ruin of a lost battle [if Israel were to decide to go to war with Rome]."

"It is not easy for those of us who live comfortably and safely in the 21st century to make application of this passage in a way that honors the text. What is the cross for this time in history? And where is it we are to follow?"

Paul's letter to Philemon helps us see the answer, he said, as Paul, in that letter, intercedes to reconcile Philemon and his runaway slave Onesimus. "Herein lies the connection to today's Gospel," he



"Parables of the Lost Coin and Lost Sheep", an engraving in a book by Martin Luther (1483-1546) entitled, *Kirchen Postilla das ist: Auslegung der Episteln vnd Evangelien*. In this engraving, Jesus tells the parables as the action takes place, and as it will be described in the Gospel reading this Sunday. This image is made available through Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation. Source: [www.pitts.emory.edu](http://www.pitts.emory.edu)

said: "sacrifice and reconciliation." When Paul asks Philemon to accept Onesimus as he would accept Paul, it "is the heart of the gospel. Paul desires that the partnership he and Philemon (p.2→)

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Choral Evensong

Thursdays: 6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 7:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

**Readings, 9/16:** Ex. 32:1, 7-14; Ps. 51:1-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10.

**9/23:** Amos 8:4-12; Ps. 138; 1 Tim. 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13.

**Prayer Emphases:** Gabon; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; St. Francis Episcopal Missionary Church, Austin, TX, and Fr. Len Giacalone, Rector; Habitat for Humanity; parishioners on Northview Circle.

**For the poor (supplemented list):** Ground beef, chicken, bacon, \*fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, milk, butter, cheese, cooking oil, pancake mix, syrup, dry cereal, chili powder, garlic powder, diapers, baby wipes, toilet paper, hand and bath soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream, men's and women's new underwear, gift cards or money to buy ice for dining facilities, cleaning supplies and bleach. \*(particular need at this time)

(Sermon, cont'd.) have in the work of the gospel will have the effect it is meant to have: reconciliation. . . . Brothers and sisters, . . . this is the cross for the 21st century, the cross that demands a full-hearted response to the work of reconciliation." Although the work of reconciliation is "costly, at times risky, and yes, even scary," we will, "if we count the cost," by Jesus' grace, "be reconcilers" and disciples in our world, church, families, and workplaces.