



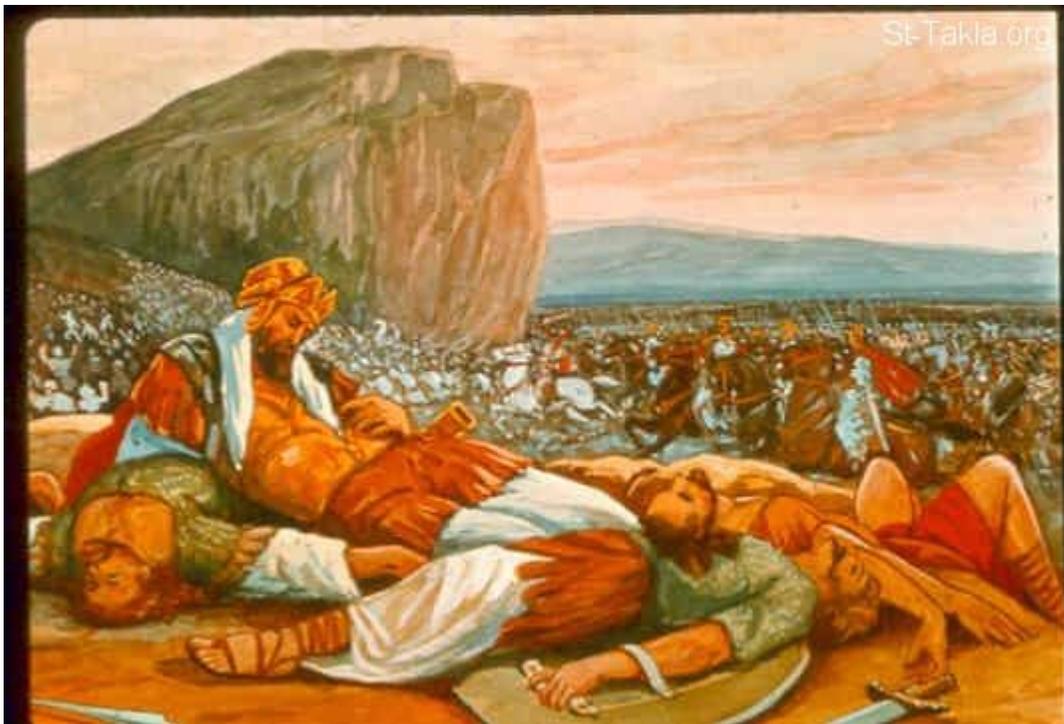
*This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge  
August 1, 2021*

**8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said – no music)**

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**10 a.m. – Holy Communion**  
*In-church and online*

## **The Ninth Sunday after Trinity**



### **A TRAGIC END**

Samuel 31, today's Old Testament lesson, records the tragic end of Saul and the first defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines during Saul's reign. Included in the slaughter were Saul's three sons, including Jonathan, David's best friend.

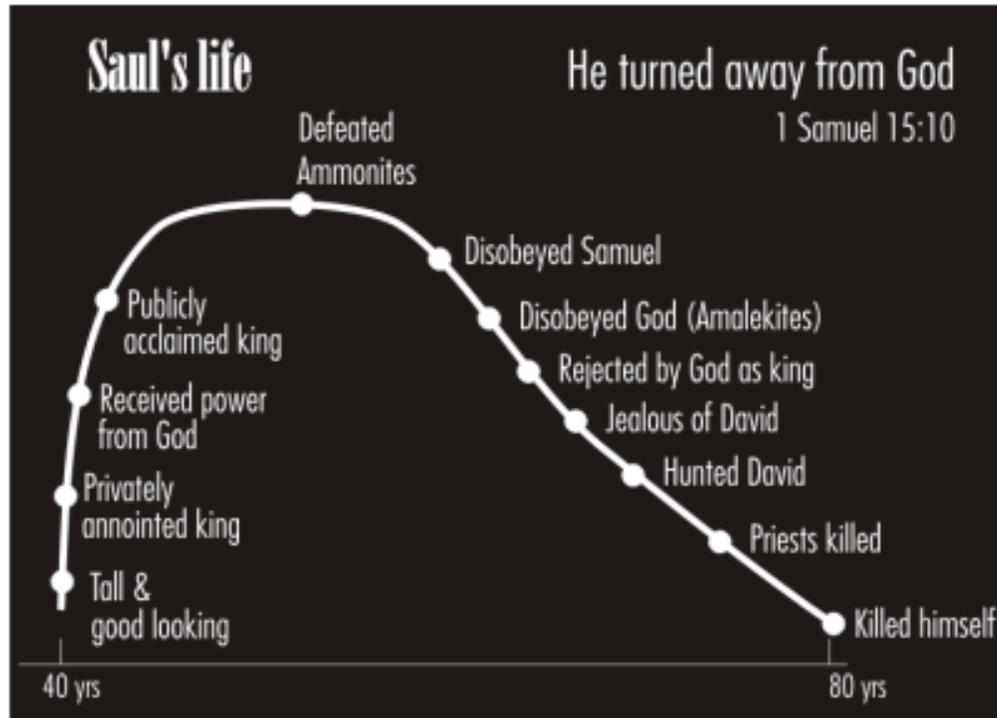
In the end, Saul's life ended by him falling on his own sword. The next day, the Philistines found his body, cut off his head, stripped off his armour and carried his carcass back to one of their chief cities.

Saul was given many opportunities to turn back to God, yet he wandered deeper and deeper into the night of sin, finally to a point of no return. 1 Samuel tells the story of his descent into darkness and the grave. His progression downward took the following steps: disobedience, jealousy, lies, breaking vows, slander, murder and finally consulting a medium (the witch of Endor).

What is so tragic is that Saul began well. He is described as a very handsome man who is "a head taller than the rest". Then his story ends in defeat and death.

Surely, there is a lesson here for us. It is not enough to begin well. Ending well is the object of our earthly journey, and the only way we can do that is by staying close to the Lord and following His will and way.

*Lord God, when thou givest to thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same, until it be thoroughly finished, that yieldeth the true glory; through him who, for the finishing of thy work, laid down his life for us, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.*  
Attributed to Sir Francis Drake (1540-96)



## THE COLLECT FOR TRINITY 9

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right\*; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### THE EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (J.B. Phillips)

*Whatever our experience, we need God's help*

**10** <sup>1-7</sup> For I should like to remind you, my brothers, that our ancestors all had the experience of being guided by the cloud in the desert and of crossing the sea dry-shod. They were all, so to speak, “baptised” into Moses by these experiences. They all shared the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink (for they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ). Yet in spite of all these wonderful experiences many of them failed to please God, and left their bones in the desert. Now in these events our ancestors stand as examples to us, warning us not to crave after evil things as they did. Nor are you to worship false gods as they did. The scripture says—‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’

<sup>8-10</sup> Neither should we give way to sexual immorality as did some of them, for we read that twenty-three thousand fell in a single day! Nor should we dare to exploit the goodness of God as some of them did, and fell victims to poisonous snakes. Nor yet must you curse the lot that God has appointed to you as they did, and met their end at the hand of the angel of death.

<sup>11</sup> Now these things which happened to our ancestors are illustrations of the way in which God works, and they were written down to be a warning to us who are the heirs of the ages which have gone before us.

<sup>12</sup> So let the man who feels sure of his standing today be careful that he does not fall tomorrow.

<sup>13</sup> No temptation has come your way that is too hard for flesh and blood to bear. But God can be trusted not to allow you to suffer any temptation beyond your powers of endurance. He will see to it that every temptation has a way out, so that it will never be impossible for you to bear it.

NOTE: The apostle Paul points out that in the Scriptures there are numerous warnings and examples which are “for our admonition.” Truths which are understood because of insight gained from the past are a way in which God brings His testimonies to men’s attention. (William Sydnor)

## **THE GOSPEL – St. Luke 15:11-32 (J.B. Phillips)**

### *The prodigal son*

**15** <sup>11-19</sup> Then he continued, “Once there was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the property that will come to me.’ So he divided up his property between the two of them. Before very long, the younger son collected all his belongings and went off to a foreign land, where he squandered his wealth in the wildest extravagance. And when he had run through all his money, a terrible famine arose in that country, and he began to feel the pinch. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him out into the fields to feed the pigs. He got to the point of longing to stuff himself with the food the pigs were eating and not a soul gave him anything. Then he came to his senses and cried aloud, ‘Why, dozens of my father’s hired men have got more food than they can eat and here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go back to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have done wrong in the sight of Heaven and in your eyes. I don’t deserve to be called your son any more. Please take me on as one of your hired men.”’”

<sup>20-24</sup> So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still some distance off, his father saw him and his heart went out to him, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. But his son said, ‘Father, I have done wrong in the sight of Heaven and in your eyes. I don’t deserve to be called your son any more ....’ ‘Hurry!’ called out his father to the servants, ‘fetch the best clothes and put them on him! Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, and get that calf we’ve fattened and kill it, and we will have a feast and a celebration! For this is my son—I thought he was dead, and he’s alive again. I thought I had lost him, and he’s found!’ And they began to get the festivities going.

<sup>25-32</sup> “But his elder son was out in the fields, and as he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants across to him and enquired what was the meaning of it all. ‘Your brother has arrived, and your father has killed the calf we fattened because he has got him home again safe and sound,’ was the reply. But he was furious and refused to go inside the house. So his father came outside and called him. Then he burst out, ‘Look, how many years have I slaved for you and never disobeyed a single order of yours, and yet you have never given me so much as a young goat, so that I could give my friends a dinner? But when that son of yours arrives, who has spent all your money on prostitutes, for him you kill the calf we’ve fattened!’ But the father replied, ‘My dear son, you have been with me all the time and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and show our joy. For this is

your brother; I thought he was dead—and he’s alive. I thought he was lost—and he is found!”

NOTE: Jesus did not divide men into the bad and the good, for God alone is good (Mark 10:18; cf. Romans 3:23). Rather, He thought of men as penitent sinners, whom God can forgive (like the prodigal), and self-righteous sinners, who shut themselves out from the Father’s love (like the elder brother). (William Sydnor)

## LECTIONARY READINGS

### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – 1 Samuel 31 (RSV)

*Saul’s reign ends ingloriously*

**31**<sup>1</sup> Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilbo’a..

<sup>2</sup> And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abin’adab, and Mal’chishu’a, Saul’s sons.

<sup>3</sup> And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

<sup>4</sup> Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

<sup>5</sup> And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

<sup>6</sup> So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

<sup>7</sup> And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

<sup>8</sup> And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilbo’a..

<sup>9</sup> And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.

<sup>10</sup> And they put his armour in the house of Ash’taroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

<sup>11</sup> And when the inhabitants of Ja’besh-gil’ead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul;

<sup>12</sup> All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

<sup>13</sup> And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

NOTE: The story of Israel's history continues with the death of King Saul. When the king had talked with the ghost of Samuel he was told that "the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy" (28:16). Here that prophecy was fulfilled. (William Sydnor)

## **The Ninth Sunday after Trinity**

Preacher: The Rector

*Ending Well*

### **Sunday Worship Options**

1. In-church.
2. Drive-in. Those choosing this option are asked to remain in their automobile and listen to the service via their car radio (FM 98.1). Holy Communion will be delivered to cars in pre-packaged containers.
3. Online. Services will continue to be livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on You Tube.  
To access both put "Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga." In the search bar.

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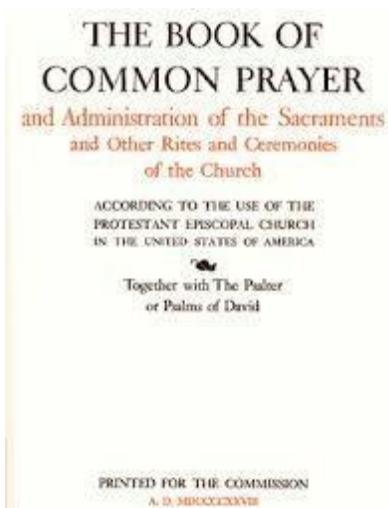
**Tip of the Canterbury Cap** to Rosanne Johnston for keeping emergency medical equipment in the rear of the church tested and up to date.



### **Items needed for the SLMG & WSL annual yard sale**

The men and women's groups of St. Luke's are gearing up for their annual combined yard sale set for Sept. 10-11. Donations of sellable items are needed for each. SLMG prefers donations of such items as tools, electronics, camping / sporting / hunting / fishing gear, etc. WSL, meanwhile, is looking for more general household items . . . no clothes. To donate or assist with the sale, call Ruth Johnson at (706) 838-4851 or Neil McDonald at (407) 538-7523.

### **NEED A PRAYER BOOK?**



The Book of Common Prayer is a treasury of religious devotion. While in no way replacing the Bible, it turns the Bible into prayer, teaching God's people to think and pray biblically and Christianly. If you don't have one of your own or would like to share this treasure with a friend, call the church office [(706) 632-8245] to secure a copy of a new paperback edition.

These books are being mailed free to anyone in St. Luke's online congregation who requests one. Voluntary donations to assist with our online ministry are appreciated.

## OUR MISSION

*St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.*

### Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2021

*As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2021.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Weekly \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_\_\_ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him to store, as God has prospered him.*



### SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2021.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

**Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year. Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to sign up.**

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St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; [\(706\) 632-8245](tel:(706)632-8245); [www.stlukesblueridge.org](http://www.stlukesblueridge.org); [stlukes@tds.net](mailto:stlukes@tds.net).