



One Page Sermon

By Rev. Robb McCoy

October 20, 2024

Lucy Van Pelt, the foil

Recap of sermon from October 20, 2024

Scripture: Judges 4:17-21 and Romans 7:15-25

The display at the Charles Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa, California that is dedicated to Lucy Van Pelt is called "From Fussbudget to Feminist." If you go to the website (schulzmuseum.org/lucy) you will find this introduction:

"From her earliest moments as #1 fussbudget in the early 1950s to the empowered member of the Peanuts Gang who embodied the movement toward equality in the 1960s, 1970s, and beyond, there is no mistaking Lucy. Whether she's sharing sage advice from her psychiatric booth, contemplating against Schroeder's piano, or running from Snoopy's dog lips, Lucy can be counted as crabby, bossy, or even rude at times. But, within it all, there is a young lady who is confident, compassionate, and ready to tackle anything—literally!"

Ready to tackle anything—even an enemy general hoping to find the respite. Jael is not one of the most popular figures in the Bible. Her story does not make many children's story Bible for good reason. It is graphically violent. But there is no doubt that she was a determined woman who used her guile to thwart an enemy of Israel. Although a Gentile herself, she is remembered as a hero who helped gain a victory that led to 40 years of peace. She was the first Biblical character I thought of when I thought of Lucy, who is a strong and determined girl.

Lucy is probably the most complicated *Peanuts* character. A baffling mix of vain and vulnerable, she is often Charlie Brown's foil, but there are also times when she is his biggest supporter. She is perhaps most famous for being his holder, but never letting him kick the football.

Schulz shared that in this gag, which became an annual fall tradition as reliable as Thanksgiving itself, there was a touch of autobiography in Lucy. "It all started," he said, "with a childhood memory of being unable to resist the temptation to pull the football at the kick-off. We all did it, we all fell for it." (schulzmuseum.org/its-football).

Lucy holds up a mirror to our own struggles and triumphs. Like Jael, she is the tough-acting take-control heroine we all want to be. She is also like Paul, who's letter to the Romans captures the devious holder in all of us. She wants to hold the ball for Charlie Brown. She just can't help herself, and



Even though I found it too late for last week's look at Ecclesiastes, I couldn't help but share it now.

as we read Paul's torment in his letter to the Romans, we get it. "I don't know what I'm doing, because I don't do what I want to do. Instead, I do the thing that I hate" (Romans 5:15).

We are Lucy. We hold the ball, and just can't help pulling it away at the last minute. We know the good that has to be done in the world, but we just can't do it. We know what it would take to end world hunger, but instead we have a culture where billionaires buy websites to placate their ego. I know I should go to bed as soon as I start to get sleepy at night. But instead, I do the thing I hate. I stay up late, consume unhelpful media, and have an unhealthy snack.

Lucy is strong and decisive and has the courage to do what needs to be done. She is also vulnerable and insecure and can't help inflicting pain on someone else. She gives sound advice, but can't take it herself. She is fatalistic and hopeful. And like Lucy, there are days when we wake up and can't help but think, "I feel mean. I hate the whole world!"

So we hate Lucy and we love her. We are frustrated by her and we are compelled by her. We look into the mirror she holds up and are thankful for the grace that Christ gives. For today we see in the mirror dimly, but one day we will see clearly that faith, hope, and love remain. And the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13)

**Next Week: The Gospel According to Peanuts
Schroeder, the artist. Psalm 150**