

## Notes for Next Sunday

Fifth Sunday in Lent

### The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 43:16-21). For 39 chapters Isaiah had called Judah to repent. Beginning with chapter 40 Isaiah has a message of hope. Here in this text Isaiah is reminding the people of how God rescued Israel from Egypt by bringing them through on dry ground while Pharaoh's army was drowned. Isaiah then goes on to say that God will bring them back from Babylon. The reclaimed people of God will praise Him and through them will come the Savior of the world.

Epistle (Philippians 3:4-14). Paul wants the Philippians to know how precious salvation is and that it is not something they can earn. He points out that if salvation could be earned he would stand a better chance than most. He goes on to point out what he all did as a type of super Jew. But when all is said and done he counts all his earnings as the worst kind of garbage. Then Paul lists the incredible blessings that are his through the faith in Christ that was bestowed on him. The greatest of these gifts is eternal life in heaven. Paul's response to such great news is to use all his physical energy to serving Christ.

Gospel (Luke 20:9-20). In this parable Jesus uses an image of a vineyard to compare it to God's kingdom. Jesus points out that someone who owns a vineyard did everything possible to have it be productive. The owner then took a long trip and put the vineyard in the hands of his workers. When he sends some his servants to collect some of the fruit, the tenants beat the servant. But, the owner doesn't give up easily and continues to send servants and finally his own son. But all these are put to death. When God chose Israel He put people in charge to lead the people in worship. When prophets came to warn Israel about its idol worship they were beaten and sometimes killed. Then Jesus was sent and He was also treated rudely and ultimately crucified. The teachers of the law and priests in the audience know Jesus is talking about them and make plans to kill Him.

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 43:16-21

**<sup>16</sup> This is what the LORD says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, <sup>17</sup> who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: <sup>18</sup> “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. <sup>19</sup> See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. <sup>20</sup> The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, <sup>21</sup> the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.**

*43:16 way of the sea.* The Lord prefaces His claim with a reminder of the exodus and the destruction of Pharaoh's armies. (TLSB)

*43:18 do not dwell on the past.* This statement must be meant in the sense of letting the memory linger on the events of the past, of dwelling nostalgically on what happened in the good old days. They are to cultivate hope, not remembrance. (Leupold p. 89)

43:19-21 Israel could expect something new—a miracle so marvelous as to eclipse the former things. Cf Col 2:17. (TLSB)

43:18 *streams in the wasteland*. As God described this new thing, it might have reminded God's OT people of the journey through the wilderness under Moses. Then God fed His people in the wilderness; He provided water for them, sometimes miraculously. The same things are mentioned here. (PBC)

43:20 WILD ANIMALS – Even the wild beasts have an interest and a share in what happens to God's people. It will make them glad to behold what God does for them, so glad that they, in their own way “will honor” him, even “jackals” creatures notoriously shy and unfriendly. (CC)

#### EPISTLE – Philippians 3:4-14

**<sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

3:5 *tribe of Benjamin*. His Jewish roots are deep and unambiguous. Jerusalem, the Holy City, lay on the border of the tribal territory of Benjamin. (CSB)

3:6 *faultless*. The Pharisees developed their own system of laws based on the Law of Moses. Paul claimed to keep these laws perfectly (Jesus denounced the; Mt 23:23) (TLSB)

3:7 *profit ... loss*. The great reversal in Paul—begun on the road to Damascus (see Ac 9:3–16)—from being self-centered to being centered in Christ. (CSB)

3:8 *rubbish*. Human waste or dung (TLSB)

3:8 *gain Christ*. Clinging only to Christ, one enjoys all the benefits of Christ. (TLSB)

3:13-14 We strain against our own sinful nature and against the world and the devil, even while our soul is at peace under God's promises and grace. (TLSB)

#### GOSPEL – Luke 20:9-20

**<sup>9</sup> He went on to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. <sup>10</sup> At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants**

so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed.<sup>11</sup> He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed.<sup>12</sup> He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.<sup>13</sup> “Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.’<sup>14</sup> “But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’<sup>15</sup> So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. “What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?<sup>16</sup> He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When the people heard this, they said, “May this never be!”<sup>17</sup> Jesus looked directly at them and asked, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone’?<sup>18</sup> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”<sup>19</sup> The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

20:9-15 The owner is God, the vineyard is Israel, the tenants are the religious leaders, the servants are the prophets, and the beloved son is Jesus. The parable’s background fits absentee landlord arrangements of the first century. The point is not the vineyard’s productivity but the caretaker’s actions. (TLSB)

20:11 *sent another servant.* Note God’s patience. (TLSB)

20:17 *the capstone.* Jesus, rejected by official Israel, is exalted by God, who builds His Church on Jesus as the “Church’s one foundation” (LSB 644:1). (TLSB)

20:18 *will be broken to pieces.* Everyone will be broken or crushed. Those who believe in him, disciples, must fall into the brokenness of repentance in order to be raised again as new beings, living stones in Christ, the temple of God. But upon unbelievers comes the crushing blow of judgment. (CC)

20:20 *authority of the governor.* Fearing to take action themselves, the Jewish religious leaders hoped to draw from Jesus some statement that would bring action from the Roman officials and remove him from his contact with the people. (CSB)