

Notes for Next Sunday

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Jeremiah 15:15-21). In the verses before our text God has sent a drought on Judah for her iniquities. Jeremiah has attempted to intercede for them. But God refused to relent and commanded Jeremiah not to pray for the people. Jeremiah, in dark despair at God's refusal, lamented his birth and the contempt that the whole land has for him. Jeremiah implores God's active intervention with "remember" which implies action as well as remembrance and care. Although Jeremiah struggled to accept the words God gave him to speak, he has eaten and inwardly digested them. God's words are a joy and delight to his heart, in particular because Jeremiah is called by God's name. The Gospel brings joy to those who hear with faith. God instructs Jeremiah that as he speaks with God's authority, he must not yield to the pressures to join the ways of wayward Judah. Instead, Judah must turn to Jeremiah, for true repentance is a return to God's Word.

Epistle – (Romans 12:9-21). **21** Here is what a life of genuine love (v 9) looks like in specific detail. It is a life that follows Christ's example (Php 2:1–11) and models His words from the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7). We all fail to live up to this standard. However, as living sacrifices, we have been transformed to live according to God's loving will (vv 1–2). This serves as a powerful witness to others (cf Mt 5:16; Jn 13:34–35). God in Christ has first loved us in this way and, by His mercies (v 1), our salvation is secure and not dependent on how we love.

Gospel (Matthew 16:21-28). Jesus now sets His eyes on Jerusalem, where He must suffer, die, and on the third day be raised in order to fulfill His Father's will. At this point Peter, who had made the incredible confession earlier, takes Jesus to task for speaking about having to suffer and die. (The disciples like most Jews of that time were looking for a Savior who would drive out the Romans and restore Israel's glory years.) Jesus with strong words tells Peter that he is a stumbling block to God's plan of salvation. Jesus goes on to teach all who were present what it will take to be a true follower of Jesus.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 15:15-21

¹⁵ You understand, O LORD; remember me and care for me. Avenge me on my persecutors. You are long-suffering—do not take me away; think of how I suffer reproach for your sake. ¹⁶ When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty. ¹⁷ I never sat in the company of revelers, never made merry with them; I sat alone because your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation. ¹⁸ Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable? Will you be to me like a deceptive brook, like a spring that fails? ¹⁹ Therefore this is what the LORD says: "If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them. ²⁰ I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to rescue and save you," declares the LORD. ²¹ "I will save you from the hands of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the cruel."

15/15 You understand. The Lord is aware of what Jeremiah has suffered (see v. 10). (CSB)

15:16 your words ... I ate them. As food is assimilated by the body, so God's words permeated Jeremiah's innermost being, bringing him joy and delight. (TLSB)

15:18 why What Christian has not asked this question with Jeremiah? We often assume that when God calls us to do his work, all will go smoothly. Jeremiah may have assumed that since he was a prophet of the Lord, the people would listen; and if the people did not listen, then certainly the Lord would promptly punish them. Since neither has happened (yet), Jeremiah is severely wounded and finds no healing.

15:18 deceptive brook. Jeremiah is tempted to think that “the fountain of living waters” (2:13; 17:13) has become as “treacherous as a torrent-bed” (Jb 6:15), which quickly runs dry. (TLSB)

15:19-21 God does not fail to come to the rescue of His blustering spokesman. Without explaining the mystery of divine providence, the Lord beckons Jeremiah to return from the wasteland of doubt to an implicit trust in Him and in the promises He made to the prophet when He called him. It will not be a life of ease, for evil men will continue to fight against him. Yet the Lord will save and deliver him. (TLSB)

15:19 spokesman. He is to continue but this time with confidence in God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

15:20 I will make you a wall. The vocabulary is similar to Jeremiah’s call (1:18-19), so that God is affirming Jeremiah in his position. Therefore the verse is akin to Jesus affirming Peter three times after the resurrection. God promises to be with Jeremiah, to save him and to deliver him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

EPISTLE – Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

12:9 sincere. This love is not concerned with whether it receives anything in return. (TLSB)

12:10 brotherly love. Love within the family of God. (CSB)

12:10 Honor one another above yourselves. Implies to go out ahead first; do not wait to be loved first. (TLSB)

12:11 spiritual fervor. Lit, “boiling over with the Spirit,” who fills our lives and flows out from us to others. (TLSB)

12:12 patient. † Enduring triumphantly—necessary for a Christian, because affliction is his frequent experience. (CSB)

12:13 practice hospitality. Lit, “love of strangers.” (TLSB)

12:14 Bless those who persecute you. Speak well of and pray to God on their behalf; follow Jesus' example (Mt 5:44; Lk 23:34). (TLSB)

12:16 not be conceited. Don't think too highly of yourself. (TLSB)

12:17 Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. Preoccupy yourself with doing excellent things before all people that they may also glorify God (Mt 5:16). (TLSB)

12:18 If it is possible ... live at peace. Peace may not always be possible, but believers should never intentionally cause hostility. (TLSB)

12:19 do not take revenge. A Christian repaying evil for evil is a sorry witness to the world. (Franzmann)

12:21 evil with good. If the Christian allows his natural impulse to carry him away and responds to evil with evil, that is a defeat for him.

GOSPEL – Matthew 16:21-28

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life^a will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. ²⁸ I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

16:21 at the hands of. These are spiritual leaders, the very people who should be leading the people to the Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

16:21 must be killed. This grabbed the attention of the disciples, who caught their collective breath, looking at each other in disbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

16:21 third day be raised. The disciples were still thinking about what had just been said. “Must be killed” was still going through their minds, not hearing the “third day be raised to life.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

16:23 get behind me Satan. Jesus addressed Peter as Satan's spokesman because his counsel would keep Jesus from fulfilling God's purposes. (TLSB)

16:24 deny himself. There probably is no limit to the specific application of what it means to deny oneself as Jesus here teaches and commands. There are so many sinful desires in our hearts! The context here in Matthew 16, however, emphasizes two related tendencies that are alive and well in every fallen human creature who, by God's gracious invitation, wants to be Jesus' disciple. (CC)

16:24 take up his cross. In the most general terms, then, the daily struggle with sin and self-denial is a form of taking up the cross. More specifically, however, as Jesus' disciples live their lives and speak in His name, they will come up against the trouble and evil in this world. By eschewing the way of power in

these situations, Jesus' disciples will open themselves to various kinds of attack and shame and harm, depending on the context. (CC)

16:25 want to save his life. This is a paradox. Reject death of this world for a life everlasting. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

16:27 repay. Those who lose their life for Jesus' sake will receive public vindication on the Last Day (25:31–46). (TLSB)