

Notes for Next Sunday

Palm Sunday

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Deuteronomy 32:36-39). The people of Israel had left God their “rock” and gone to worship idols. The good foods they had offered in sacrifice to the idols were worthless when the Israelites needed help. God wanted them to return to Him. He would hide His face, and would stir them to jealousy by employing foreign nations to turn them back to Him. God would rule His people with compassion when they returned.

Epistle (Philippians 2:5-11). The Epistle for today is pivotal, providing a bridge from death to life while giving us both promise and reason for following where Christ leads. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Gospel (John 12:20-43). The reading begins with some Greeks coming to Philip (his was a Greek name) asking to see Jesus. Philip went to his brother Andrew and together they went to Jesus. Then Jesus goes on to tell the people present about His up-coming death. The Father confirms Jesus' proclamation. He goes on from there teaching them things they need for the days ahead. HOWEVER, there is segment of Jews who refuse to believe in Him.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Deuteronomy 32:36-39

³⁶The LORD will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free. ³⁷He will say: “Now where are their gods, the rock they took refuge in, ³⁸the gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up to help you! Let them give you shelter! ³⁹“See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

32:36 Lord will judge. Remembering His covenant, the Lord will deliver His people. God does not desire punishment for punishment's sake but for the purposes of discipline and growth in faith (Ezk 18:23; cf. 1 Tim 2:3-4; 2 Pt 3:9). (TLSB)

32:36 strength is gone. This is when all the earthly props of Israel's power upon which it relied are taken away. (Kretzmann)

32:37 He will say. God goes to great lengths to show people the folly of not worshiping him.

32:39 I put to death and I bring to life. The Lord kills and wounds so that sinners blinded by pride might see the reality that they are wounded and dead in their sin and trust the Lord, who alone heals and makes alive. Luther states, “God wants us to regard the evils that we experience as coming to us with His permission....God permits evil to come to us; for it is His will that, when we have been chastened, we cast ourselves at His mercy.” (AE 13:135) (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even

death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2:5 Your attitude ... the same as ... Christ. In spite of all that is unique and radically different about the person and work of Christ. Christians are to have his attitude of self-sacrificing humility and love for others (see vv. 2–4; Mt 11:29; Jn 13:12–17). (CSB)

2:5 something to be grasped. † Something to be forcibly retained—the glory Christ had with the Father before his incarnation. But he did not consider that high position to be something he could not give up. (CSB)

2:7 made himself nothing. Lit. “emptied himself.” He did this, not by giving up deity, but by laying aside his glory and submitting to the humiliation of becoming man (see 2Co 8:9). Jesus is truly God and truly man. Another view is that he emptied himself, not of deity itself, but of its prerogatives—the high position and glory of deity. (CSB)

2:10-11 bow ... confess. All created beings must and will confess Jesus as Lord: The saints and angels in heaven, all human beings on earth, even the demons and the damned in hell. (PBC)

GOSPEL – John 12:20-43

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. ²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. ²⁷ “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?” ³⁵ Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. ³⁶ Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

12:20-33 The mood of the text is one of somber anticipation. Chronologically, the text occurs between the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet. The narrative is rapidly moving to the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, so there is an ominous expectancy in this passage. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

12:20 Greeks. Probably “God-fearers,” people attracted to Judaism by its monotheism and morality, but repelled by its nationalism and requirements such as circumcision. They worshiped in the synagogues but did not become proselytes. (CSB)

12:23 glorified. Jesus was speaking about his death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection and exaltation. (CSB)

12:24 if it dies, it produces. The principle of life through death is seen in the plant world. The kernel must perish as a kernel if there is to be a plant. (CSB)

³⁷ Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.” ⁴¹ Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him. ⁴² Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

12:37 they still would not believe. God's ancient people should have responded when God sent his Messiah. They should have seen the significance of the signs he did. (CSB)

The faith of many on Palm Sunday was fickle. Although Jesus had done His miraculous signs in their presence, including the raising of Lazarus, they continued not to believe in Jesus. (PBC)

12:39 could not believe. Many of these people, especially the Jewish leaders, had become hardened in their hearts against Jesus. They didn't acknowledge the arm of God at work in His miracles. Finally, as He once did with Pharaoh at the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt, God blinded the eyes of those who refused to see and closed the hearts of those who had locked Jesus out. (PBC)

12:42 many ... leaders believed. John does not give a picture of unrelieved gloom. Many Jewish leaders believed. E.g., Nicodemus (3:1-21) and Joseph of Arimathea (19:38). (TLSB)

12:42 because of the Pharisees. Pharisees controlled Jewish synagogues. Few dared to oppose them, for fear of being ostracized. (TLSB)