

Notes for Next Sunday

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 55:10-13). The really important message in this text can be found in verse 11. This is the heart of this passage. It promises that God's Word is always, always effective. God's Word is more powerful than armies, treaties, chariots, horses, as well as every other human might. Only His Word directs history, and this proves that He alone is the true God. The centurions confession echoes this same confidence in God's Word made flesh in Jesus: "only say the word and my servant will be healed" (Mt. 8:8). (CC) Verse 12-13 use personification to show how even nature rejoices at the message in verse 11.

Epistle (Romans 8:12-17). Here has a freeing message. He is telling the Roman Christians that they are no longer slaves to sin and no reason to be obligated to serve their sinful nature. They have freed from the slavery of sin by the Holy Spirit. Paul says they have received the Spirit of sonship meaning they can address our Father in the most intimate of way. Paul goes on to say that this sonship leads to be co-heirs with Christ. That means that if they share in Christ's suffering the Romans will also share in His glory.

Gospel (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). These verses are the narrative of parable "The Sower." Verses 1-9 cover the actual parable and verses 18-23 give Jesus' explanation as to the meaning of parable. The point of the parable is take heed how you hear. As in the Isaiah reading the Word will do its work in spite of difficulty. Jesus exhorted in verse 9, if you are able to hear, then really listen, take to heart, believe, and obey.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 55:10-13

¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. ¹² You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."

55:10 rain and snow. They water the earth in order to replenish it. These elements can sometimes be the cause of great destruction and flooding, but here they are considered blessings. Rain is life giving, and snow is occasionally used in the OT as a symbol of purity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

55:10 making it bud and flourish. When rain and snow come down, they water the ground and make it bud and flourish. When God's Word comes to sinners, it too works. (PBC)

55:11 achieve the purpose. See 46:10–11 and note; cf. 40:8; Heb 4:12. – It will accomplish what God desire and that is the salvation of his people. (CSB)

55:12 go out in joy. Picture of captives returning to Jerusalem. (TLSB)

55:13 thornbush ... pine tree ... briars ... myrtle. A picture of paradise restored. In Gn 3:18, the Lord tells Adam that “thorns and thistles” will inhabit the land. Now, because of the Lord’s salvation, the plants of Eden will spring up again, and the Lord’s people will be invited back into the lush garden. (TLSB)

55:13 everlasting sign. Just as creation became corrupt in Adam’s fall (cf Rm 8:19–21), in Christ it will be restored to its pristine beauty, a sign of God’s redemption. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Romans 8:12-17

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

8:12 not to live according to the sinful nature. We dare not go the way of the flesh again, for that would be to nullify His work in us. (Franzmann)

8:13 misdeeds. The practices of the body,” therefore is synonymous with “the works of the sinful nature and carries with it the idea of an ongoing behavior. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

8:14 sons of God. Expression broadly means “children of God” (v 16; Gal 3:26; cf 2Co 6:18). (TLSB)

8:15 sonship. Those baptized into Christ (ch 6) receive full status as God’s children. (TLSB)

8:15 Abba. Aram “Father.” Conveys childlike intimacy and confidence (Mk 14:36; Gal 4:6). Perhaps an expression from the baptismal liturgy. Jesus gave us the privilege of addressing God as our dear Father (“Abba!”) when He gave us the Lord’s Prayer (cf Mt 6:9–13). (TLSB)

8:16 testifies with our spirit. The Spirit causes us to believe in our gracious Father, to whom Christ has given us access. (TLSB)

8:17 co-heirs with Christ. Everything really belongs to Christ, but by grace we share in what is his. (CSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear.” ¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. ²²The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it

unfruitful. ²³ But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

13:1 that same day. This was to be one of the busiest days of which we have any knowledge in the life of our Lord, from the time when he was besieged by the multitudes upon his return to Capernaum until late in the same day, when he rested his weary head in the rocking bed of a storm-tossed ship on the Sea of Galilee.

13:3 sow his seed. Fields in Palestine were quite small plots. The seed was cast by hand. There were no fences.

13:9 has ears let him hear. Jesus exhorted. If you are able to hear, then really listen, take to heart, believe, and obey. (PBC)

13:19 does not understand it. They rejected it. Jesus is picturing the ancient and modern Pharisees noted in verses 14-15. Luther says: “it went in one ear and out the other.”

13:19 sown along the path. The seed that falls on the hard ground of the footpath points to those people who go through the motions of hearing the Word of God but almost immediately let the devil take it away from them. The devil calls God a liar, and many believe his lies and go with him to eternal destruction. God wanted to save them and invited them into His kingdom, but they simply declined His gracious invitation. They preferred to live this life according to the ignorance and evil lusts of their sinful flesh. God does not drive or drag anyone into His kingdom by force. (PBC)

13:20 on rocky places. The shallow ground describes the person who gladly hears the Word of God and believes it. He is very enthusiastic about being received into God’s kingdom and into membership in a Christian congregation. He expects that His Christian faith will exempt him from the troubles that other people experience in this life. He looks for success and prosperity, good health and uninterrupted happiness. The troubles that are an inescapable part of living as sinful people in a sinful world come into this person’s life. He even faces some forms of persecution, some hardships that are inflicted upon him because of his Christian faith. He was unprepared for such developments, and he gives up his faith without much of a struggle. (PBC)

13:22 among thorns. Thorns represent “the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth.” The seed sown among thorns grows for a while but never really thrives. This kind of hearer is still be concerned about material things and the problems of this life. He has great difficulty trusting God to provide for all his bodily needs. He imagines that if he can only accumulate enough money and all the things that money can buy, then he will be perfectly happy. If he gets rich and still is not happy, he imagines that the solution is to get even richer, and he never has enough. Mammon is his god, and he becomes Mammon’s slave, so he never produces fruits of faith to glorify God. (PBC)

13:23 understands. The fourth soil represents the proper receptive attitude as in the disciples. In them the seed produces fruit; but there is a difference in the fruit in accordance with the dissimilarity in gifts, in qualifications, in faithfulness in the use of the Word, conditions in life, etc. When reference is made to the “good soil,” it is evident to anyone familiar with the Scriptures that this is not a word-picture of the soil as it is found by the Word. The Word itself must, through its divine and inherent power, produce the good soil. Of unwilling hearts it must create hearts that are willing, as our Confession declares. (Ylvisaker)