

Notes for Next Sunday

Third Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Exodus 19:2-8). As the consecrated priests would stand between God and His people, so the people of Israel would act as priests to the world, set aside by God for service, witness, and prayer. Israel would be a priest to all the nations of the world. Today, Jesus perfectly mediates between sinners and God; the Church also intercedes (1Pt 2:9). Luther: "Do not despair after sin, but lift your eyes on high to where Christ intercedes for us. He is our Advocate. He intercedes for us and says: 'Father, I have suffered for this person; I am looking after him.' This prayer cannot be in vain" (AE 30:236). (TLSB)

Epistle (Romans 5:6-15). At God's chosen time (*kairos*) that we could not do for ourselves, Christ did for us by his death: he reconciled us to God. We could not redeem ourselves for, as the heaping up of descriptive terms demonstrates, we were powerless (literally, "weak") and ungodly (v 6), sinners (v 8), and enemies of God (v 10). Paul concedes that for a good man some noble person might give his life. But Jesus gave his life for sinners—despite and even because of their sin—since no other deliverance was possible for them. The uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice is contrasted with the noblest sacrifice of other humans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Gospel (Matthew 9:35-10:8). Mt 9:35 is the back end of a bracket that Matthew has placed around the entire section from 4:23 to now. Jesus, the Messiah of word and deed, has spoken grace and truth with authority in Israel (especially chapters 5–7), and he has been doing deeds of mercy with that same rightful power (especially chapters 8–9). Some have been called to be disciples. Many in the crowds are marveling, but most do not believe. And some—the Pharisees—have begun to set themselves in violent opposition to Jesus and to the reign of God. Despite this varied response, Jesus remains true to his ministry of compassion and salvation, and he keeps on traveling in Israel, fulfilling his purpose. (CC)

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Exodus 19:2-8

² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." ⁷ So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. ⁸ The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.

19:2 *Rephidim ... wilderness of Sinai.* Southeastern Sinai Peninsula. Modern surveys of the area have suggested the Er-Raha plain as a potential place for a large Israelite encampment. The peak Gebel Musa stands close by. The traditional site is marked today by St Catherine's Monastery. This remains the best possible site, though the absolute location where Moses received the covenant cannot be determined. (TLSB)

19:3 *went up to God.* Ascended the mountain to talk with God. (TLSB)

19:4 *I carried you on eagles' wings.* The description best fits the female golden eagle. (CSB)

Metaphor for their speedy salvation and rescue from Egypt. (TLSB)

19:6 *kingdom of priests.* Israel was to constitute the Lord's kingdom (the people who acknowledged him as their King) and, like priests, was to be wholly consecrated to his service (see Isa 61:6; cf. 1Pe 2:5; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). (CSB)

19:7 *elder.* Hbr *zaqen*; term related to "beard." Used for various levels of tribal leadership. A body of 70 elders led Israel, representing the tribes (e.g., Ex 24:9; c six elders per tribe). Elders were often associated with religious leadership and acted as counselors to rulers. Each city typically had elders who acted as judges. (TLSB p. 228)

19:8 *We will do everything the LORD has said.* The people promised to accept the terms of the covenant (see 24:3, 7; Dt 5:27). (CSB)

The people are confident they can fulfill the Law. Chemnitz: "God restrains this arrogance by manifesting their sin and His wrath by the voice of the Law" (*LTh* 2:458). (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Romans 5:6-15

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

5:6 *the right time.* The appointed moment in God's redemptive plan (Mk 1:15; Gal 4:4). (CSB)

POWERLESS – Greek term describes someone afflicted with illness, one who is completely powerless. (TLSB)

Christ died for the ungodly. Christ's love is grounded in God's free grace and is not the result of any inherent worthiness found in its objects (mankind). In fact, it is lavished on us in spite of our undesirable character. (CSB)

This designates the moral unworthiness and the impotence of mankind. Our problem was and is sin, and we were/are utterly incapable of coping with it. (Stoekhardt)

5:7 *righteous man ... good man.* We were neither righteous nor good, but sinners, when Christ died for us (see v. 8; 3:10–12). – The former means the just man who rarely benefits anyone whereas the good man does good things for other people and therefore someone might dare to die in his stead if the need arises. We were neither righteous nor good. (CSB)

5:10 *God's enemies.* † The hostility between God and man must be removed if reconciliation is to be accomplished. God brought this about through the death of his Son (see v. 11; Col 1:21–22). (CSB)

¹²Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— ¹³for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. ¹⁵But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

5:12 An overview of various commentaries gives the impression that more is written on 5:12 than any other verse of the letter: "On account of this, just as sin entered into the world through one person and death through sin, and thus death passed through to all people on this [reason], that all sinned" (5:12). (CC)

5:13 *sin is not taken into account.* In the period when there was no (Mosaic) law, sin ("breaking a command," v. 14) was not charged against man (see 4:15). Death, however, continued to occur (v. 14). Since death is the penalty for sin, people between Adam and Moses were involved in the sin of someone else, namely, Adam (see note on v. 12). (CSB)

5:15 GIFT IS NOT LIKE THE TRESPASS – God's grace in Christ. (TLSB)

Adam's sin. Adam, with his sin, is not a perfect parallel to Christ with His grace. (TLSB)

the many. The same as "all men" in v. 12 (see Isa 53:11; Mk 10:45). (CSB)

Rabbinic form of logic uses contrast to show that one man saved everyone. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 9:35-10:8

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "**The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.**"

9:35 This second summary leads into the calling of the 12 apostles (10:1–4) and the missionary discourse (10:5–42). (TLSB)

9:36 HAD COMPASSION ON THEM – *splagchnizomai* – This refers to the inner organs – heart, kidneys, liver, intestines, lungs – and later spoke of them as the seat of emotions such as anger and anxious desire. The Latin literally means to "suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another." Compassion comes from identifying closely with another.

Lit, "moved with pity"; based on a term referring to the belly, regarded as the seat of the emotions. (TLSB)

harassed – Has the meaning to be flayed – skin torn off which sometimes happened when sheep go through brambles or rocks.

Helpless – To be thrown prone or exhausted. When sheep have a lot of wool on them it is easy for them to fall and not be able to get back up.

like sheep without a shepherd. The people had spiritual leaders like the Pharisees, who charged Jesus with being a pawn of Satan (v 34). (TLSB)

9:37 *disciples.* Not just the Twelve (10:1), but a larger group. (TLSB)

9:38 *ask the Lord...send workers* – The plentiful harvest continues to require our prayers for workers today. It also calls us to bear witness ourselves. (TLSB)

He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: **“Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.**

10:1 *called* – Face to face meeting.

Authority...evil spirits...heal – Jesus granted His disciples the kind of power that He had abundantly demonstrated (7:29; 9:6, 8; Mk 1:21–28). The spiritual authority Jesus grants them anticipates their role and calling as leaders in the Early Church. (TLSB)

10:4 *the Zealot.* Either a description of Simon’s religious zeal or a reference to his membership in the party of the Zealots, a Jewish revolutionary group violently opposed to Roman rule over Palestine. (CSB)

JESUS SENT – Prayer is good but is not a substitute for action. Those who pray should be prepared in case the Lord, to whom they present their requests, selects them to be his active agents in answering the prayer.

Do not go. The good news about the kingdom was to be proclaimed first to Jews only. After his death and resurrection, Jesus commanded the message to be taken to all nations (28:19; cf. 21:43). (CSB)

Samaritans. A mixed-blood race resulting from the intermarriage of Israelites left behind when the people of the northern kingdom were exiled and Gentiles brought into the land by the Assyrians (2Ki 17:24). Bitter hostility existed between Jews and Samaritans in Jesus’ day (see Jn 4:9). (CSB)

10:6 *lost sheep of Israel* – *lost.* Jesus had observed the spiritual misery of the house of Israel during His own tour through Galilee. He recognized how necessary it was for laborers to proclaim “the gospel of the kingdom” (9:35–38). (TLSB)

sheep. Jesus would train the apostles as shepherds, from which the office/title of “pastor” would come (cf Jn 21:15–16; Eph 4:11; 1Pt 2:25; 5:1). (TLSB)

10:7 The disciples’ message would be identical to that of Jesus and John the Baptist (Mk 1:14–15). (TLSB)

the kingdom of heaven is near – It was clearly the preaching of repentance, sin and grace. Hggiken means “it has drawn near and therefore is now here.” This is not eschatological. Jesus was the embodiment for the Kingdom of Heaven. In others words, the twelve were to preach Christ.

10:8 *heal...cleanse...drive out* – Cf v 1. Jesus lists four ways the disciples are to use their authority. These miracles were signs of the nearness of God's kingdom. (TLSB)