

Notes for Next Sunday

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Jeremiah 28:5-9). Jeremiah was sent by God to preach repentance and point out the consequences if there would be no penitence. This made him very unpopular because people don't like to hear critiques of themselves. In our reading the prophet Hananiah preached peace and security which were not true in that situation. Jeremiah's response was marked by restraint. Nothing would have pleased him more than to affirm the prediction of an immediate deliverance of the people he loved so dearly.

Epistle (Romans 7:1-13). Luther says: In chapter 7 (Paul) supports the (freedom) with an analogy from married life. When a man dies, his wife is also alone, and thus the one is released entirely from the other. Not that the wife cannot or ought not take another husband, but rather that she is now for the first time really free to take another – something which she could not do previously, before she was free from her husband. So our conscience is free, and the one is released from the other. Not that the conscience is to do nothing, but rather that it is now for the first time really free to hold fast to Christ, the second husband, and bring forth the fruit of life. (TLSB)

Gospel (Matthew 10:34-42). At first glance this saying sounds like a contradiction of Isa 9:6 (“Prince of Peace”), Lk 2:14 (“on earth peace to men”) and Jn 14:27 (“Peace I leave with you”). It is true that Christ came to bring peace—peace between the believer and God, and peace among men. Yet the inevitable result of Christ's coming is conflict—between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between Christ's children and the devil's children. This conflict can occur even between members of the same family (vv. 35–36). (CSB)

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 28:5-9

⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. ⁶He said, “Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. ⁷Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: ⁸From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true.”

28:7 Nevertheless. Though in sympathy with what Hananiah is predicting, Jeremiah reminds him that their true predecessors were basically prophets of doom (see v. 8). (CSB)

28:8 early times. Isaiah, Joel, Hosea, Amos, and others. (Kretzmann)

EPISTLE – Romans 7:1-13

Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ²For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. ⁴So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of

Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. ⁵ For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, ^a the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶ But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. ⁷ What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” ⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. ¹³ Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

7:1 *law*. Either Jews or Gentiles familiar with the Law would know the laws of marriage (vv 2–3). (TLSB)

7:2-3 This view of marriage reflects teachings of the Torah, but would also have been familiar to most Gentiles. (TLSB)

7:4 *So*. The Law was fulfilled by Jesus’ obedience and sacrificial death. United to Him in Baptism (6:3–5), we are now free from the Law’s condemnation. (TLSB)

7:4 *might bear fruit*. Our lives are devoted to God’s service. (TLSB)

7:7 *I would not have known what sin was*. The law fulfilled the important function of revealing the presence and fact of sin. (CSB)

7:9 *Once I was alive*. Paul thought that he was alive and keeping the Law, but he was really dead in sin (Eph 2:1-2). He realized sin and guilt had been in him all along. (TLSB)

7:12 *the law is holy*. The Law’s effect shows a problem in us, not in the Law. God’s Law remains good, even though we cannot keep it. (TLSB)

7:13 *become utterly sinful*. Sin is not inconsequential. We are not to excuse our sins; we are completely sinful. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 10:34-42

³⁴ “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn ” “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— ³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household. ³⁷ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ⁴⁰ “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will

receive a righteous man's reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

10:35 man against father. The family is the most intimate group of people known to man. God wants families to be at peace. But spiritual differences, owing to the sinfulness of human nature, cause the sharpest and deepest conflicts so that those who ought to be closest are set against each other the most.

10:37 loves ... more than Me. More important than loving parents and other family members is loyalty to Christ. (TLSB)

10:38 take his cross. The cross represented death; it was common for Romans to crucify criminals. Jesus expected His followers to be willing to die, if necessary, rather than to give up their commitment to Him. (TLSB)

10:39 find his life will lose it...loses his life for my sake will find it. Contrasts earthly and eternal life. Clinging to earthly life forfeits eternal life, but losing one's life for Christ's sake gains real life. (TLSB)

10:40 receives me receives the one who sent me. The disciples were authorized messengers of Jesus. To receive them was the same as receiving Christ and the Father who sent Him (cf v 14). (TLSB)

10:41 prophet. John was the last prophet of the old covenant. (CSB) Not only the apostles but also others served as Gospel witnesses. (TLSB)

10:42 little ones. Jesus was likely gesturing to young children, but may have been referring also to those who believe in Jesus with a simple, childlike faith (cf 18:1-14). (TLSB)

10:42 cup of cold water ... reward. Someone who performs even a small act of love will be rewarded. (TLSB)