**Notes for Next Sunday**

Reformation Sunday

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

The common theme that runs through these readings is having a faith that trusts in the gospel message that Jesus died to save the world from its sins. It protects, empowers and sets us free to serve Him.

Psalm (Psalm 46). The psalm begins with a promise of refuge and strength and help in trouble. Throughout the psalm nature and nations are in an uproar but this is countered by the promise from God’s great might to over-come everything. It ends with showing the Almighty God as our fortress. The Reformation hymn “A Mighty Fortress is our God” written by Martin Luther is based on this psalm.

Frist Reading (Revelation 14:6-7). God sends one of His powerful angels with the eternal gospel. This gospel keeps God’s children safe for eternity. This gospel gives glory to God for His saving Word. This gospel is so awesome that it invites worship from His believing children.

Epistle (Romans 3:19-28). The Law can only control and set limits, BUT it can’t save. There is a righteousness that is apart from the Law which can save. It is made known by God. It is the righteousness that comes through the work of Jesus Christ to all who believe. Verse 28 is the heart of this reading and the Reformation when it declares, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”

Gospel (John 8:31-36). Here Jesus is teaching the Jews that if they hold to His teaching they will know the truth and it will set them spiritually free. They balk at this, claiming their heritage as Abraham’s descendants and that they have never been slaves. That claim is contradicted by the fact that they are currently under Roman rule. They also forget that it was Abraham’s faith in Christ that was counted to him as righteousness. Only Jesus and His Word can save us.

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

**Psalm 46**

**God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ﻿2﻿ Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ﻿3﻿ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. *Selah* ﻿4﻿ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. ﻿5﻿ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. ﻿6﻿ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. ﻿7﻿ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah* ﻿8﻿ Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. ﻿9﻿ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. ﻿10﻿ “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” ﻿11﻿ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah***

Believers can remain calm even in the midst of the greatest calamities, since God is their strong fortress. His help is ever-present even to the end of the world. These verses will be fulfilled literally and completely on the last day, when the universe is destroyed by fire. (PBC)

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*46:2**earth gives way.*Any turmoil that threatens body or soul (e.g., a tsunami, cancer, death of a loved one, satanic assaults). Ultimately, it is a glimpse of the final judgment. (TLSB)

*46:3 selah.* Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

Selah may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the though appears. (Leupold)

*46:10 Be still.* Here, the Hebrew for this phrase probably means “Enough!” as in 1Sa 15:16 (“Stop!”). (CSB)

**First Reading – Revelation 14:6-7**

**6﻿ Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ﻿7﻿ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*14:6–13*† The three angels. A message of comfort after the warning (13:11–18) against false teachings. The vision assures the church that false teachers will never silence the preaching of the gospel. (CSB)

Three angels in succession (14:6, 8, 9) now announce the judgment of God on the two beasts conjured up by the dragon. Each angel is introduced as “another [ἄλλον] angel.” This indicates that they are not from among the seven trumpet-angels. They are among the many angels who appear throughout Revelation who are not part of the seven (e.g., the angels in 5:2; 7:1, 2; 10:1; 18:1; 19:17). (CC)

*14;:6 eternal gospel.* Not a new Gospel, since there is only one (Gal 1:6–8). The messenger proclaims the enduring message of deliverance from evil, just as the new song (v 3) proclaims redemption anew. (TLSB)

*14:7 give Him glory.* Here is a clear definition of the purpose of proclaiming the eternal message of God.

**Epistle – Romans 3:19-28**

**19﻿ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ﻿20﻿ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*3:19 the law.* Here the purpose for God giving His Law is that it would show us our sin. The Law was never intended by God to serve as the basis for one to prove his own righteousness standing before God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 4)

**21﻿ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ﻿22﻿ This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ﻿23﻿ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ﻿24﻿ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ﻿25﻿ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement,﻿ through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ﻿26﻿ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. ﻿27﻿ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ﻿28﻿ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. ﻿**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*3:21 but now.* Paul revealed our unrighteousness; now he reveals the righteousness of God, which is Christ Jesus. (TLSB)

*3:21 apart from the Law.* Jesus’ sacrifice fulfills the OT Law. Paul now defines righteousness and the righteous community, functions formally held by the Torah in Israel. God’s righteousness is not earned by our works. (TLSB)

*3:25 sacrifice of atonement.* In the Old Testament the Ark of the Covenant’s cover was where the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices. As the blood sacrifice covered the Ark of the Covenant, so Christ’s righteousness covers the sinner. He is the sacrifice for sin. (TLSB)

*3:27 where, then is boasting?* No one deserves salvation; all receive it by grace. (TLSB)

*3:27 on what principle.* The Law does not save; it shows our need for God’s redemption, which is received through faith. (TLSB)

*3:28 justified by faith.* It is separated from the Law. Luther says it means by grace alone.

**Gospel – John 8:31-36**

**31﻿ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ﻿32﻿ Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ﻿33﻿ They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants﻿ and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” ﻿34﻿ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ﻿35﻿ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ﻿36﻿ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*8:31 if you hold.* Speaking to those whose belief in Him was superficial, Jesus explained that discipleship meant accepting all of His teaching and remaining faithful to it. (TLSB)

*8:31 My teaching.* This is God’s Word, the Scriptures.

*8:32 free.* Only in Jesus and His teaching will anyone be free from sin, death, and Satan’s rule, and thus free to serve God with a pure heart. In contrast, Judaism taught that study of God’s Law made a person free. (TLSB)

*8:34 a slave to sin.* Since the fall, all people are sinners and enslaved to sin, bond to self-centeredness, doomed to death, and blind to their slavery. (TLSB)