**Notes for Next Sunday**

Seventh Sunday of Easter

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

These readings have to do with what has to be done after Jesus ascends into heaven.

The Psalm (Psalm 1) points to the blessing that is given when God’s children avoid evil and evil people. Instead they are to mediate on the Word of God day and night. Then they will prosper like a tree planted near a stream.

The First Reading (Acts 1:12-26) has the disciples preparing for the ministry that Jesus said was coming in 1:8. As they wait they fill the void left by Judas’ betrayal and death. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit they appoint Matthias to make their number complete once more.

The Epistle (1 John 5:9-15) has John reminding his hearers that they have the testimony of God that Jesus has given them eternal life. This leads to the “confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

The Gospel (John 17:11b-19) we hear Jesus praying for His disciples. Jesus knows that when He ascends into heaven they will be left without His protection. So, He prays for their protection as they carry out the ministry that He, Jesus, has given them. Jesus asks the Father to make the disciples holy through the Word of God. This will not only protect them but also empower them to do the work He has for them.

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

**Psalm 1**

**1﻿ Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ﻿2﻿ But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ﻿3﻿ He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. ﻿4﻿ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ﻿5﻿ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ﻿6﻿ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*1:1 walk…stands…sits.* Each of these leads to the next. If we let sin walk into our lives, it will soon stand there firmly planted, and will eventually sit down and make it home with us.

*1:1 counsel of the wicked.* This means “getting loose from God and falling into evil.”

*1:1 way of sinners.* The “way of sinners” is their tendency to do wrong, their evil way of life.

*1:1 seat of scoffers.* These are they who ridicule God and defiantly reject his law. (CSB)

*1:2 law. “*Law” here refers to the whole word of God, both law and gospel. (The first five books of the Bible then – whole Scripture now) The Hebrew word here means “teaching” or “instruction.” Christians find their greatest joy in the gospel, which tells them of God’s forgiveness of their sins.

*1:2 meditates.* This is a half-aloud reading and rereading or the process of musing or meditating as it may be practiced in the Orient. It is obviously not an unwholesome absorption with the Scriptures, but a healthy interest in them and knowledge of their real content, which continually influence and affect the man so devoted to this holy treasure.

*1:2 day and night.* It means constantly. Luther: “This blessed man has his love, the Law of God, always in his mouth, always in his heart and, if possible, in his ear” (AE 14:298). (TLSB)

*1:3 prospers.* In such a life that God is crowning the man’s endeavors with success. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Even negative things help the faith to grow.

*1:4 chaff that wind drives away.* Winnowing farmers harvested the grain and, on a breezy evening, would throw it into the air. Since the chaff was lighter than the grain, the breeze would blow the chaff away. Accumulated chaff was burned - vivid picture of the end of a life divorced from God. (TLSB)

**First Reading – Acts 1:12-26**

**12﻿ Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk﻿a﻿ from the city. ﻿13﻿ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ﻿14﻿ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. 15﻿ In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ﻿16﻿ and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—﻿17﻿ he was one of our number and shared in this ministry.” ﻿18﻿ (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ﻿19﻿ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ﻿20﻿ “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the book of Psalms, ”‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’﻿ and, ”‘May another take his place of leadership.’﻿d﻿ ﻿21﻿ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ﻿22﻿ beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” ﻿23﻿ So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ﻿24﻿ Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ﻿25﻿ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” ﻿26﻿ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*1:14 constantly in prayer.* Jesus had told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit (1:5). Now they are doing so pray-fully with undivided attention. Their hearts and minds were open to receive the promised Spirit.

*1:16 Scripture had to be fulfilled*. There is a divine necessity that Scripture must be fulfilled. However, God did not decree the betrayal; He merely foretold it. Judas fulfilled that prophecy of his own free will.

*1:20 may another take his place.* The fact that the number of apostles must be twelve according to the original choosing of Jesus appears to have been taken for granted. That this was necessary in order to match the 12 patriarchs, the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 12 thrones awaiting them to judge these 12 tribes was undoubtedly also the basis for this decision.

*1:21 went out with us.* He was a witness to the whole public activity of Christ, up to the resurrection. “in and out” is a Hebrew idiom encompassing everything Jesus did. (TLSB)

*1:24 then they prayed.* Luke emphasizes the importance of prayer here and also throughout his gospel.

*1:26 cast lots.* By casting lots they were able to allow God the right of choice. The use of rocks or sticks to designate the choice was common. This is the Bible’s last mention of casting lots. (CSB)

**Epistle – 1 John 5:9-15**

**9﻿ We accept man’s testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ﻿10﻿ Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ﻿11﻿ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ﻿12﻿ He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.13﻿ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ﻿14﻿ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ﻿15﻿ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*5:9* *God’s testimony.* God Himself testified to this man, Jesus of Nazareth (Mt 17:5; 2Pt 1:17). (TLSB)

*5:10**testimony in himself*. God testifies within every believer to the truth of His Word concerning His Son. (TLSB)

*5:6–12* The testimony of the apostles, the life of Jesus, and the work of the Spirit testify that God has given us life in His Son. This testimony is in stark contradiction to all who teach that God’s Son did not suffer in the flesh or that He comes to us apart from the flesh of His humanity. (TLSB)

*5:13* *that you may know*. Knowing this gives us confidence before God and boldness before men. (TLSB)

The purpose of all the Scriptures is to strengthen the faith of Christians, reassuring them of the prize of eternal salvation. Christians are to draw spiritual nourishment from the Scripture again and again, so that their faith may increase and they be fortified against all temptations of life. All Christian doctrine seeks to nourish and promote the Christian faith.

**5:14** *if we ask anything according to his will.* And this faith has another effect in us: And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. The prayers of the believers, the real prayers, are always heard, they never return unanswered. This cheerful assurance, this frank boldness, we hold. We enter into the very presence of the Lord with the calm certainty that our petitions will be heard as we make them in faith, in firm reliance upon the sonship which was given to us in Christ. It is self-evident that we, as children of God, will ask only such things as are in accordance with the will of our heavenly Father.

**Gospel – John 17:11b-19**

**and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ﻿12﻿ While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ﻿13﻿ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ﻿14﻿ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ﻿15﻿ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ﻿16﻿ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ﻿17﻿ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ﻿18﻿ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ﻿19﻿ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*17:11 they are still in the world.* Now Jesus was going to leave the world and go to the Father, but the disciples had to remain in the world, so Jesus prayed for them, placing them in the Father’ care.

*17:11 Holy Father.* "Holy" is applied very frequently to the third person of the Trinity, less often to the Son, and only here to the Father. Not only is He holy in Himself but, like the Son and the Spirit, causes holiness in the life of the believer, as is immediately explained.

*17:11 protect them by the power of your name.* His name is his revelation, his Word.

*17:12* *I protected them.* As long as Jesus was present in the world, in the flesh, so long He personally tended to the keeping of His disciples in the faith. He taught, He admonished them day by day; He always revealed anew to them the name of the Father, in the Gospel which He proclaimed. And His Gospel-work had been most successful. He had kept all of the disciples whom the Father had given Him, His watchful guiding and warning had not been in vain but only in one single case, that of the son of perdition, of the traitor.

*17:12 except one.* This can mean either "except" or "but." Jesus is not saying that His keeping and preserving was ineffective in one case. "The son of perdition" is, of course, Judas. Judas was not lost because Jesus' Word could not or did not preserve him. He left of his own free will.

The purpose clause at the end of this verse cannot mean that Scripture foreordained that Judas would be lost but that no one caught God (in the person of Jesus) off guard. John 6:70.71; 13:26 make it clear that Jesus warned Judas again and again. What he did, he did deliberately, a warning to us all.

*17:13 I say these things.* This refers to Jesus’ audible prayer, which the disciples heard clearly. Why did Jesus pray in their hearing? Luther answers: “In order that through the Word, caught with the ears and held in the hearts, they be comforted, joyfully rely upon it, and be able to say: See, this is what my Lord Christ said . . . this have I heard from his mouth.”

*17:14 given them your Word.* The word "gift" in its various forms and always denoting a gift, occurs seventeen times in this chapter, unparalleled in the New Testament. And "world" in its various meanings occurs eighteen times, also unparalleled. Note emphatic "I have given" denotes a lasting gift, perfect tense.

*17:14 the world.* There is a constant tension between the mind of Christ and the spirit of the world. The world hates Christians because Christian values are different from those of a sinful world. If we do not cooperate by joining the world in sin, we are seen as accusers and judges, true adversaries to Satan.

*17:17* *Sanctify.* It means to set apart for God and to devote only to Him. The Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, as soon as faith had been worked in their hearts.

*17:17* *by the truth; your word.*† Christians are sanctified (made holy) by the word of God, a means by which the Holy Spirit produces faith. Sanctification and revelation (as recorded in God’s word) go together. (CSB)

*17:18* *As you sent me … I have sent them.* Jesus sends his disciples on a mission. The disciples are to complete the work that Jesus started. The mission was proclaiming the Gospel to the entire world.

*17:19 I sanctify myself.* In the midst of the unbelieving world Christ wanted to build His Church. And in order that this might be accomplished, in order that the work of the disciples might be done with the feeling of free and full consecration, Jesus consecrates Himself, gives Himself as a sacrifice for the whole world. He is about to enter upon His Passion now to work a perfect redemption.