**Notes for Next Sunday**

Third Sunday in Lent

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

All of the readings deal to some extent with the value of the Scriptures.

The Psalm (Psalm 19) is a hymn extolling “the glory of God” (v. 1) as revealed to all by the starry heavens (vv. 1–6) and “the law of the Lord” (v. 7), which has been given to Israel (vv. 7–13). The “Law” here includes not only the Ten Commandments but also all the covenant promises which were fulfilled in Jesus.

In the Old Testament (Exodus 20:1-17) we find God giving the children of Israel the Ten Commandments. In verse 2 God reminds them of His mighty saving acts by bringing them out of Egypt. Then there is a special emphasis on the first commandment. That is followed up by the punishment for worshiping anything other than the true God as well His incredible love for those who do trust only in Him.

In the Epistle (1 Corinthians 1:18-31) Paul points to the power of God’s Word for those who believe it. There are always going to be people who refuse to accept and believe it. That was true in Corinth at the writing of this epistle.

In the Gospel (John 2:13-25) we find the “Jesus clearing the Temple” narrative. What lies behind that action is that the Temple had become a place of business and not a place where people could connect with the Word. Jesus, in fact was that Word as pointed out in John 1. Like in the epistle lesson people had become distracted by other things.

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

**Psalm – Psalm 19**

﻿1﻿ **The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ﻿2﻿ Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. ﻿3﻿ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.﻿﻿4﻿ Their voice﻿b﻿ goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, ﻿5﻿ which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. ﻿6﻿ It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat. ﻿7﻿ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ﻿8﻿ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ﻿9﻿ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. ﻿10﻿ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. ﻿11﻿ By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. ﻿12﻿ Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. ﻿13﻿ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. ﻿14﻿ May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Luther states: “A prophecy. It speaks of how the Gospel would spread to all the world, as far as the heavens extend. Day and night it would be spread, not only in Hebrew but in all languages” (*PIML*, p 27). (TLSB)

Most of the psalms surrounding Psalm 19 are prayers for deliverance or thanksgiving for deliverance. Psalm 19 is an interlude of praise which momentarily sets aside David’s concern with his enemies and directs attention to the glory of God. The Lord deserves our praise, not only for delivering us from enemies, but simply because of the majesty and glory which are His by His very nature. This glory is revealed by creation, by God’s word and by his power in the believer’s life. (PBC)

The pagan who worships the stars instead of their creator, the astrologer who seeks wisdom from the stars instead of from their creator, and the atheistic evolutionist who worships the order of the cosmos instead of the creator who established that order are all condemned by the silent testimony of the universe and left without excuse (Romans 1:18-24). (PBC)

The sky is called the sun’s tent or pavilion, because to us it looks like a blue canopy over our heads. The sun is compared to a groom after his wedding night or to a racer crossing the finish line. (PBC)

The psalmist lists six names of God’s Word, (law, statutes, precepts, commands, fear and ordinances) six attributes of that word, (perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure and sure) and six blessings that Word (righteous, endure forever, give light and guidance, give joy to the heart, give wisdom, reviving the soul) gives to believers. (PBC)

These attributes describe both God’s Law and His Gospel, since His whole Word is holy and perfect. The six blessings from the word listed in these verses may come from both the Law and the Gospel insofar as the believer is concerned. (PBC)

However, these terms apply primarily to the Gospel, through which forgiveness and life are offered and delivered to the believer. This is especially true of the first blessing, “reviving the soul.” Only the Gospel can make a soul dead in sin alive again. (PBC)

God’s revelation marks the way that leads to life (Dt. 5:33). But man’s moral consciousness remains flawed and imperfect; hence he errs without realizing it and has reason to seek pardon for hidden faults (v. 12). (CSB)

**Old Testament – Exodus 20:1-17**

**And God spoke all these words: ﻿2﻿ “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ﻿3﻿ “You shall have no other gods before me. ﻿4﻿ “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ﻿5﻿ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ﻿6﻿ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. ﻿7﻿ “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. ﻿8﻿ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ﻿9﻿ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ﻿10﻿ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ﻿11﻿ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ﻿12﻿ “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. ﻿13﻿ “You shall not murder. ﻿14﻿ “You shall not commit adultery. ﻿15﻿ “You shall not steal. ﻿16﻿ “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. ﻿17﻿ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” ﻿**

Only these words were spoken by God from Mount Sinai directly to the Israelites, without the mediation of Moses. After God spoke these words the people trembled and asked Moses to serve as God’s spokesman and mediator (vv. 18-19), which he did from then on.

By proclaiming the Ten Commandments to the Israelites Himself, and in circumstances of awful solemnity, God showed their fundamental importance, and took a course adapted to impress upon all men their obligations to perfectly to obey these commandments. (CB)

This text reflects the structure of royal treaties. There would be a preamble where the king would identify himself (v. 2). Next would be the listing his previous gracious act toward his people (v. 2). Then the treaty would be set forth (vv.3-17)

God is associated with term for “zealous” and “passionate.” God saw His relationship with His people like that of a marriage. God prohibits worshiping other gods because, as in any good marriage, the relationship does not admit third parties. This was not sinful jealousy, but a righteous desire for His people to be faithful. (TLSB)

Keeping the Sabbath involves far more than just the worship service. We also keep this commandment when we believe the Gospel that we hear and when we honor and uphold God’s Word by living in a way that is in agreement with it and when our own attitudes toward others display the forgiveness, love, and consideration God has shown us in Jesus. (LL)

Whereas the first set, or “table,” of commandments (vv 3–11) describes a person’s actions toward God, the second set, or “table,” describes one’s actions toward others. (TLSB)

**Epistle – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

**18﻿ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ﻿19﻿ For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”﻿20﻿ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ﻿21﻿ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ﻿22﻿ Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ﻿23﻿ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ﻿24﻿ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ﻿25﻿ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength. ﻿26﻿ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ﻿27﻿ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ﻿28﻿ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ﻿29﻿ so that no one may boast before him. ﻿30﻿ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ﻿31﻿ Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”**

Paul has been arguing that reliance on one’s skill as a speaker can rob the cross of Christ of its power. He now sets out to cure the Corinthians of their fascination with rhetoric. After all, they should know that no matter how well they dress up the word of the cross, the world will always find it unpalatable (v. 1). The word of the cross to them is foolishness which in English means “moron.” The world marches to a different drummer. (CC)

Our salvation is accomplished by “the power of God” effective in “the word of the cross,” It is the power for salvation” (Rom 1:16).

In verse 23 we hear that Christ crucified is a “stumbling block to Jews.” The Greek for that is *skandalon*, a cause for offense and rejection, as in English “scandal.” (TLSB) The Jews had in mind that the Savior would be a powerful conqueror. To have a crucified Savior was offensive to them.

In the cultural context, one ought to remember that many early Christians were slaves or lower-class people. That relates to verse 26 and the Corinthians’ status.

Verses 27-31 point out that God does not do things the way the world would. Jesus’ birth is a prime example of that:

* God chose a teenage girl of little power to give birth to Jesus
* God chose Joseph, a common laborer to be Jesus’ earthly father.
* Jesus birth was first announced to shepherds who were of a low social class.
* God used Gentile wise men to bring the news of Jesus’ birth to Jewish leaders

**Gospel – John 2:13-25**

**12﻿ After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. ﻿13﻿ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ﻿14﻿ In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ﻿15﻿ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ﻿16﻿ To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!” ﻿17﻿ His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”﻿18﻿ Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” ﻿19﻿ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” ﻿20﻿ The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” ﻿21﻿ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ﻿22﻿ After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. ﻿23﻿ Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. ﻿24﻿ But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. ﻿25﻿ He did not need man’s testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.**

In verses 13-16 Jesus cleans the Temple of all the business transactions that were getting in the way of worship itself.

Some exchanges during Passover were legitimate, as foreign currency was involved and some travelers found it impractical to transport animal sacrifices. God had provided for this (Dt. 14:24–26).

In some cases, though, the money changers would discard worthy animals brought by worshipers and require purchase of a temple animal. The cost was often exorbitant. Hence the temple had become a warehouse. Jesus cleared out both man and animals.

Some scholarship suggests that the selling took place in the Gentiles’ courtyard, robbing even earnest Gentiles of the opportunity to approach the true God. Jesus did not want anyone to be deprived of being able to worship and be strengthened by God’s Word.

Not only did the merchants complain but they were also joined by the religious leaders in their protest. For them it was all about control, something they did not want to give up. They ask for a sign (v. 18). They wanted visible proof.

In verses 19-20 the unbelieving Jews were so consumed with the temple building that they missed the Lord, the true Temple.

Jesus did miraculous signs and some people believed (v. 23). The religious leaders did not believe and later again asked for a sign from Jesus.

The Lord now looked into the hearts of the many who believed on His name (v. 24). He saw weak faith, and fickle faith. He saw people impressed primarily with His miracles. He saw people who wanted Him to give them a better life on earth but did not see Him as the Son who came to prepare heaven for them. To this day, some who profess trust in Jesus have reservation or misdirected expectations. There are hypocrites in our churches. Now, as then, other people cannot adequately judge who they are. But Jesus knows their hearts. (PBC)