

## Notes for Next Sunday

Third Sunday after Pentecost

### The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (1 Kings 9-21). The background to this reading is that Elijah, one of God's greatest prophets and only 1 of two humans that never saw death, has confronted King Ahab about the Baal worship that Ahab's wife, Jezebel, promoted. Elijah had brought things to head when he challenged the prophets of Baal to have Baal send down fire on their offering. When Baal couldn't, God did send fire that consumed Elijah's watered down offering. Elijah then proceeded to have the prophets of Baal killed. At this Jezebel threatened to have Elijah killed. In spite of the incredible miraculous act of God just witnessed, this sent Elijah into deep depression and he ran away into the desert. That is where our text picks up. In spite of Elijah's cowardly action, God does not give up on him. God comes to Elijah in a gentle whisper, God reminds Elijah that there are still 7000 thousand faithful followers, and God sets in motion to provide leaders that will continue Elijah's work. Elisha was found to succeed Elijah. Elisha made a powerful commitment by burning his oxen and farming equipment and immediately following Elijah.

Epistle (Galatians 5:1,13-25). This is an issue of Christian freedom that Christ has won for us and how to use it properly. Paul urges the Galatians to stand firm (v. 1) in their faith. They are to use Christian freedom to serve one another (v. 13). He counsels them to live by the Spirit which will help them to avoid that which their sinful nature keeps bringing up in their daily lives (v. 16). Paul then goes on to list a number of sinful behaviors that are to be eschewed (vv. 19-21). Next we find the fruit of the Spirit delineated (v. 22-23). Paul finishes his admonitions by pointing to value of keeping step with Spirit thereby avoiding the sinfulness of their world.

Gospel (Luke 9:51-62). This text opens by Jesus resolutely committing to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die and rise again. The OT precedents offer further illumination on the significance of the fact that Jesus "set his face." God made Ezekiel's forehead as hard as flint so that the prophet could endure the hostility of rebellious Israel (Ezekiel 3:8-9). Verses 57-62 cite the cost of being a disciple of Jesus. Jesus tells one man that following Him means not having the pleasure of a home. To another Jesus tells him that he needs to drop everything and not get tangled up in earthly issues. And to a last man Jesus tells him follow immediately and not look back but keep his eye on the goal ahead.

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

#### OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Kings 19:9b-21

<sup>9</sup> There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." <sup>11</sup> The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>14</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." <sup>15</sup> The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint

**Hazael king over Aram. <sup>16</sup> Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. <sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. <sup>18</sup> Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”**

*19:9 What are you doing here, Elijah?* The question implies that Elijah had come to Sinai for his own misguided reasons and not because the Lord had sent him. (CSB)

*19:10 only one left.* Elijah reveals the extent of his loneliness and sense of abandonment. (TLSB)

*19:12 gentle whisper.* Elijah found no comfort and no assurance in God’s power manifested in nature through the wind. Rather, when God’s Word came to instruct him in a quiet voice, then the prophet found truth and strength. (TLSB)

*19:16 anoint Jehu.* Jehu was a military commander under Ahab and Joram, Ahab’s son (2Ki 9:5–6). He was anointed king over Israel by a “man from the company of the prophets” at the instruction of Elisha (2Ki 9:1–16), with the mandate to destroy the house of Ahab. (CSB)

*19:16 Elisha.* Elisha’s name means “God is salvation” or “God saves” and) was the essence of his ministry. His name evokes memory of Joshua (“The LORD saves”). (CSB)

*19:18 seven thousand.* A round number, no doubt symbolic of the fullness or completeness of the divinely preserved godly remnant (Ro 11:2–4). In any case Elijah had been mistaken in his conclusion that he alone had remained faithful. (CSB)

**<sup>19</sup> So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. <sup>20</sup> Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother good-by,” he said, “and then I will come with you.” “Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?” <sup>21</sup> So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.**

**19:21 slaughtered them ... burned the plowing equipment.** By killing his oxen he was saying with his actions that he was done with farming and was going to be Elijah’s successor even though it must have overwhelming. This is reminiscent of when Jesus called some of his disciples. (PBC)

#### EPISTLE – Galatians 5:1, 13-25

**It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

*5:1 freedom.* Freedom of conscience because of Christ’s forgiveness. (TLSB)

**<sup>13</sup> You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. <sup>14</sup> The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>15</sup> If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.**

*5:13 do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature.* Lit, a base of operations, as in military contexts. Freedom in Christ ought not become a basis for pandering to the desires of the fallen human nature. (TLSB)

*5:15 biting and devouring each other.* A vicious dogfight to the death, animals snapping at one another with bared fangs, portrays the ugliness of bitter partisan strife in the congregation. (TLSB)

**<sup>16</sup> So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. <sup>17</sup> For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. <sup>19</sup> The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

*5:16 live by.* † Present tense of the imperative mood—“go on living” (used of habitual conduct). Living by the promptings and power of the Spirit is the key to conquering sinful desires. (CSB)

*5:18 led by the Spirit.* Led not by coercion but by a gentle and loving grasp, as when a child puts her hand into the hand of a beloved and trusted father. (TLSB)

*5:22–23* † For other lists of virtues see 2Co 6:6; Eph 4:2; 5:9; Col 3:12–15. Christian character is produced by the Holy Spirit, not by the mere moral discipline of trying to live by law. Paul makes it clear that justification through faith does not result in libertinism. The indwelling Holy Spirit produces faith and Christian virtues in the believer’s life. (CSB)

#### GOSPEL – Luke 9:51-62

**<sup>51</sup> As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup> And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; <sup>53</sup> but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” <sup>55</sup> But Jesus turned and rebuked them, <sup>56</sup> and they went to another village.**

*9:52 a Samaritan village.* Samaritans were particularly hostile to Jews who were on their way to observe religious festivals in Jerusalem. It was at least a three-day journey from Galilee to Jerusalem through Samaria, and Samaritans refused overnight shelter for the pilgrims. Because of this antipathy, Jews traveling between Galilee and Jerusalem frequently went on the east side of the Jordan River. (CSB)

*9:54 call fire down.* The disciples expected that harsh judgment would come down on the Samaritans. The request by James and John was perhaps inspired from the ministry of the prophet Elijah (2Ki 1:9–12) and also by centuries-old antagonism between Jews and Samaritans. (TLSB) James and John were sometimes known as the “Sons of Thunder.”

**<sup>57</sup> As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” <sup>58</sup> Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” <sup>59</sup> He said to another man, “Follow me.” But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” <sup>60</sup> Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” <sup>61</sup> Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.” <sup>62</sup> Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”**

*9:58 no place to lay His head.* During Jesus' ministry, He had no home of His own. He depended on hospitality, just as the apostles did when He sent them out. (TLSB)

*9:59 bury my father.* If his father had already died, the man would have been occupied with the burial then. But evidently he wanted to wait until after his father's death, which might have been years away. Jesus told him that the spiritually dead could bury the physically dead, and that the spiritually alive should be busy proclaiming the kingdom of God. (CSB)

*9:60 dead bury dead.* The kingdom is so important that its proclamation pushed even venerated duties and traditions into the background. (TLSB)

*9:61 say good-by.* Greetings, blessings, and salutations were very important in the ancient world, particularly those spoken on the road, as one first arrives at a house, and as one takes leave of the house. Jesus overturns some of these priorities. Here he discourages a would-be disciple from going back to give his family the customary departing benediction. (CC p. 432)