**Notes for Next Sunday**

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

There is a progressive theme of God caring for His own by sending good shepherds. He replaces the bad shepherds (OT Reading). In Psalm 23 there is care right into eternity. The Gospel lesson has Jesus literally feeding the 5000 plus crowd.

Psalm (Psalm 23). Psalm 23 is a very well-known Psalm of comfort. It is intended to convey solace to every believer of all times and under all conditions. The Psalm recalls to believers, in general, the mercy and loving kindness of God. This alone makes for encouraging reading. “The Lord is my Shepherd” is the outburst of a confident, consoled child of God.

Old Testament (Jeremiah 23:1-6). The prophet Jeremiah lived at the end of the period of Israel’s monarchy, through the destruction of Jerusalem, and into the beginning of the exile.

The central message of this text is that in the age to come, God will reverse the fortunes of His people by raising up leaders for His people who will do what the leaders of the prophet’s day have failed to do: nurture God’s people and lead them righteously and justly.

Epistle (Ephesians 2:11-22). From the salvation of individuals, Paul moves to another aspect of salvation in which God reconciles Jews and Gentiles, previously hostile peoples, not only to Himself but also to each other through Christ (vv. 11–16). Even more than that, God unites these now reconciled people in one body, a truth introduced in vv. 19–22. (CSB)

Gospel (Mark 6:30-44). The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels (Matt 14:13–21; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–15). Exodus 16 tells of the feeding of Israel in the wilderness which manifested God’s grace. Elijah too was fed miraculously in the wilderness (1 Kings 19:4–8).

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

**Psalm 23**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*23:1 not be in want.* The obvious meaning in this connection is, since the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall have abundance and lack nothing that is good.

*23:2 leads me.* He leads us through His Word and Sacrament, where we find nourishment and rest for their souls.

*23:2 quiet waters.* When sheep are well filled with luscious grass and have been refreshed from the sparkling clear water, they lie down to rest. Thus also the sheep of Jesus, well-nourished in body and soul, find complete rest, peace, and contentment in the Lord, their Good Shepherd. Stoeckhardt)

23:3 *restores my soul.* God revives our spirit through His gifts of Word and Sacrament.

*23:3 guides me in paths of righteousness.* Or, “the right path.” Shepherds lead sheep alone safe paths, on the proper destination. Jesus Himself is the way, the righteous path (John 14:6). (TLSB)

*23:4 valley of the shadow of death*. It may be translated “the darkest valley.” This verse may, therefore, refer to all the dangers a Christian faces, not only death. (PBC)

*23:5 prepare a table before me*. This is an emblem of hospitality and trust. In Christ, God gives us not only ordinary food but also the gift of Christ’ body and blood in the Lord’s Supper. (TLSB)

*23:5* *anoint my head with oil.* A banquet guest might be given oil to put on his head as a sign of hospitality. The oil acted like lotion, soothing the skin. Shepherds carried such oil in cattle- or ram- horn containers. (TLSB)

*23:6 will follow me all the days of my life.* God does not give His blessings once; His goodness and mercy are continually given to His children. (TLSB)

*23:6 dwell in the house of the Lord.* This is more than worship in the tabernacle. God’s people not only know His blessings in this life but will live with Him is heaven forever. (TLSB)

**Old Testament – Jeremiah 23:1-6**

**Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. ﻿2﻿ Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD. ﻿3﻿ “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. ﻿4﻿ I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD. ﻿5﻿ “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ﻿6﻿ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*23:1* *sheep.* The people of Judah

*23:4 I will place shepherds.* Men like Ezra and Nehemiah.

*23:5 Branch.* The Lord will shape history so that “the days are coming” when He will establish His messianic kingdom on earth. From the root of David’s lineage, He will let spring forth a branch, or descendant. Unlike Israel’s kings, He is righteous in His person. (TLSB)

*23:6* *Judah … and Israel.* Israel and Judah, reunited to become one nation, are a pledge of the spiritual unity of the messianic kingdom. Saved from extinction in Babylon, the people of Israel foreshadow the perfect bliss awaiting the new Israel, the Church. The rule of good shepherds reaches its fullness when Jesus Christ will affect justice and righteousness (v 5). (TLSB)

**Epistle – Ephesians 2:11-22**

**11﻿ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)— ﻿12﻿ remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ﻿13﻿ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ﻿14﻿ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ﻿15﻿ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ﻿16﻿ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ﻿17﻿ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ﻿18﻿ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ﻿19﻿ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, ﻿20﻿ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ﻿21﻿ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ﻿22﻿ And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*2:12 separate from Christ … without God.* Before Christ Gentiles had no promise of a Messiah, no legacy of prophets foretelling the Promised One. For Gentiles, schooled in Greek thought, history was a matter of cycles going nowhere. The Hebrew notion of a linear history with a plan and terminus was foreign to Greeks. For them history would cycle and recycle, destine to repetition and redundancy. (LL)

*2:14 barrier … dividing wall.* In Herod’s temple at Jerusalem, a wall separated the (inner) court of the Jews from the (outer) court of the Gentiles. Here, it symbolizes the Law (Eph 2:15). In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are no longer divided in their worship of God or reception of His gifts (Jn 4:21–24). (TLSB)

*2:15 abolishing … the law.*† Since Mt 5:17 and Ro 3:31 teach that God’s moral standard expressed in the OT law is not changed by the coming of Christ, what is abolished here is the effect of the specific “commandments and regulations” in separating Jews from Gentiles, whose nonobservance of the Jewish law renders them ritually unclean. (CSB)

*2:15 dogs*. The term “dog” in the East was used for impure and profane persons. The Jews utterly despised the Gentiles; they considered them dogs, vile, unclean. The Gentiles reciprocated in kind and hated the Jews.

*2:15 far away … near.* Paul uses a word for “reconcile” that is used of enemies making friends. We were God’s enemies. In Christ we have become God’s friends. The means of reconciliation is the cross. The hostility between Jew and Gentile disappear as both come under the influence of the immense sacrifice of Christ. (LL)

*2:19 citizens … household.* In Caesarea, where Paul was imprisoned, there was open hostility between Jews and Gentiles over the right of citizenship. Unlike other early Christian leaders, Paul strove to make the Gentile believers welcome in the largely Jewish churches of the first century. Paul points to their joint membership in the kingdom of heaven. (TLSB)

**Gospel – Mark 6:30-44**

**30﻿ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ﻿31﻿ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” ﻿32﻿ So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ﻿33﻿ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ﻿34﻿ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. ﻿35﻿ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. ﻿36﻿ Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” ﻿37﻿ But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” ﻿38﻿ “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.” ﻿39﻿ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ﻿40﻿ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ﻿41﻿ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ﻿42﻿ They all ate and were satisfied, ﻿43﻿ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ﻿44﻿ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.**

The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. It continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey and their excitement about they had accomplished. Following the disciples are five thousand men and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for Him on the other side. He wanted to mourn in solitude, but instead He was surrounded by people.

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*6:37 eight months of a man’s wages.* Keep in mind that Philip has been forcing out demons and healing the sick (Mark 6:13). He seems to forget that power that was at work during their recent trip.

*6:39* *green grass.* Grass is green around the Sea of Galilee after the late winter or early spring rains. (CSB) Only Mark records this detail, possibly a vivid recollection from the disciple’s memory. (TLSB)

*6:42 all ate and were satisfied.* The Lord’s superabundant provision was such that, despite the overwhelming number of people, no one went away hungry. (TLSB)

*6:44 men.* Lit. “males,” as in all four Gospels. Matthew further emphasizes the point by adding “besides women and children” (Mt 14:21). (CSB) Women and children were fed but not included in the number. (TLSB)

*6:44* *five thousand.* The size of the crowd is amazing in light of the fact that the neighboring towns of Capernaum and Bethsaida probably had a population of only 2,000–3,000 each. (CSB)