

Notes for Next Sunday
Second Sunday in Lent

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Jeremiah 26:8-15). The people of Judah had turned away from God and were happy with their pagan life. God sent Jeremiah to call them to repentance and to return them to worship Him once again. The response of Jeremiah's hearers, unfortunately, was predictable. Out of their hearts they spoke; out of their hearts they acted. The Lord had rightly evaluated their hearts. They were wholly impenitent from top to bottom, from the priests and prophets, to all the people. Without hesitation they arrested Jeremiah. In the legal hearing that followed they pronounced a death sentence on him. The priests, who were chiefly responsible for seeing that God's covenant was kept, led the charge. (PBC)

Epistle (Romans (Philippians 3:17-4:1). It was important that the Philippians take note of the principles of Christian living that Paul with such care, explains to them here. It was also important for them to choose the right kind of examples to follow as they worked to put these principles into practice. With great affection, and deeply moved by the warning he is now compelled to give, Paul pleads, "Brothers, let me be your example." (PBC)

Gospel (Luke 13:31-35). The importance of this episode in Luke's gospel cannot be overstated. It is possible to structure the travel narrative in such a way that this passage stands at the center of the entire journey. The theme of this text and this section is Jesus, the rejected prophet. This theme was already introduced in Jesus' first sermon, which took place at Nazareth (4:16-30), and has been reiterated throughout his Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50) and his journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:28). Lk 13:31-35 is yet another statement on the rejection of Jesus, the miracle-working prophet who teaches on his journey to Jerusalem (13:22). This passage also restates that Jerusalem is the city of destiny and the place of his final rejection. (CC p. 557)

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 26:8-15

⁸ But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, "You must die!" ⁹ Why do you prophesy in the LORD's name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted?" And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. ¹⁰ When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they went up from the royal palace to the house of the LORD and took their places at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's house. ¹¹ Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and all the people, "This man should be sentenced to death because he has prophesied against this city. You have heard it with your own ears!" ¹² Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people: "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the things you have heard. ¹³ Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the LORD your God. Then the LORD will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴ As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think is good and right. ¹⁵ Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing."

26:8 *priests and prophets*. These very people who should be listening most closely and backing Jeremiah up. They like the religious leaders at Jesus' time had their own thing going and anything from him only messed things up. Jeremiah and Jesus had to go.

26:9 *Shiloh*. This had been a place of worship that the Philistines had destroyed. The Jews of that time and even at Jesus time put their trust in the temple (God's creation) rather than in God (the creator).

26:11 Having assembled, they were ready to hear the case against Jeremiah. The priests and prophets and others sympathetic to them leveled the charge: "He has prophesied against this city." They accused Jeremiah not of false doctrine or of being a false prophet, but of treason. (PBC)

26:12 *The LORD sent me*. Jeremiah seized the chance to respond by repeating the thrust of his previous sermon. Their problem, was with the Lord; he was only the Lord's messenger. They were furious with Jeremiah because he had convicted them of their sin. (PBC)

26:14 *I am in your hands*. Jeremiah did not flinch. He answered his accusers, "Do with me as you will, but know that to silence me will change nothing. You will only make your case worse, for you will pollute the city and make it unclean by shedding innocent blood. The Lord sent me." (PBC)

EPISTLE – Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

3:17 *following my example*. By offering himself as an example, a role model for the Philippians, Paul was not boasting. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he says, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." The Philippians recognized Paul, Timothy and others as spiritually mature believers, whom the Lord Himself had qualified to serve as their examples. (PBC)

3:18 *told you before*. Even in the apostolic Church there were sham Christians. The Apostle uses a severe term to characterize these people. While he had been in Philippi, he had warned against these people orally. But now that he is away, he repeats his warning with tears. (Stoeckhardt)

3:18 *live as enemies of the cross*. In particular, Jews who refused to admit their guilt under the Law and so refused to accept that Jesus' accursed death (crucifixion) was really for their sakes. (TLSB) Paul was probably referring to the Judaizers. By just adding as little (like keeping the law) they were making the cross useless.

3:19 *god ... stomach*. They serve the appetites of their human nature, which are self-destructive. (TLSB)

3:19 *their shame*. It is shameful to do anything that contradicts God's design for human life, but human arrogance actually prides itself on such behavior and flaunts this attitude as though it were something of which to be proud. (TLSB)

4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

4:1 *my joy and crown*. Honor for what one has accomplished. Paul did not gather jewels for a crown that perishes. He gathered souls for eternal life. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 13:31-35

³¹ At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.” ³² He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ ³³ In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! ³⁴ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁵ Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

13:31 *Pharisees came*. On the surface, the Pharisees seem to be positively inclined toward Jesus when they warn him in strong words to “depart from here and continue on your journey, because Herod wants to kill you” (13:31). This would signal a remarkable turn of heart after Jesus' harsh words against them (11:37–52), his accusation concerning “the leaven, which is hypocrisy, of the Pharisees” (12:1), and their equally rigorous attack on Jesus (11:53–54). (CC p. 558)

13:31 *Herod wants to kill you*. Jesus was probably in Perea, which was under Herod's jurisdiction (see note on 3:1). The Pharisees wanted to frighten Jesus into leaving this area and going to Judea. (CSB)

13:32 *reach my goal*. Jesus' life had a predetermined plan that would be carried out, and no harm could come to him until his purpose was accomplished. (CSB)

13:33 *outside Jerusalem*. Irony. Jerusalem was the Judean capital and the site of the temple. Yet, the people had a history of killing God's prophets there (cf Ac 7:51–53, 58). (TLSB)

13:34 *how often ... !* Jesus' lament over Jerusalem embraces both the tragedy of Jerusalem's sin and the method God has chosen to deal with that sin.

13:34 *as a hen gathers*. When a hen senses danger, she draws her chicks together and protects them with her outstretched wings. Cf Ps 36:7 for another image of God offering refuge under His wings. (TLSB)

13:34 *you were not willing*. Like wayward chicks, the people stubbornly resist God's will for their lives. (TLSB)

13:35 *house is left ... desolate*. The people's obstinacy sealed a disastrous fate for Jerusalem. The Romans utterly destroyed it in AD 70, after a Jewish revolt. Jesus would not visit the city again until He triumphantly entered it on Palm Sunday (cf 19:28–44). (TLSB)