

Notes for Next Sunday

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Zechariah 9:9-12). Zechariah's prophetic ministry took place in the postexilic period, the time of Jewish restoration from Babylonian captivity. Prior to our text Zechariah tells of the Jews returning to their land. There is even the prediction of enemies being punished and destroyed. In our text there is a looking ahead to the Triumphant Entry of Jesus on Palm Sunday. Jesus is the ultimate king who only can establish the true and everlasting church unto eternity.

Epistle (Romans 7:14-25a). In these verses Paul recites his frustration concerning him and the Law. He says that no matter how hard he tries to do what the Law demands, he always comes up short. The things he would want to avoid, he still winds up doing. When he tries to do good, he falls woefully short. He comes to the conclusion that he is riddled with sin which totally controls all his actions. In verses 24-25, "*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*" ²⁵ *Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*" Paul totally lay everything he at the cross of Jesus.

Gospel (Matthew 11:25-30). Jesus is speaking words of severe judgment on three cities mentioned in verses 21 and 23. They had refused to repent and to believe in Jesus. When Jesus speaks "*hidden these things from the wise*" (v. 25) Jesus is not saying educated people will be lost and the uneducated will be saved. He is simply speaking about those who wise in their own eyes and reject the invitation of the Gospel. Jesus thanked His Father for revealing the truth of the Gospel to little children rather than having the knowledge of salvation depend on human wisdom. Jesus referred to His followers as the "little ones" (10:42). The rest Jesus promise in verse 28 is the 'labor' and the burden signify the contrition, anxiety, and terrors of sin and death. To 'come to' Christ is to believe that sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. When we are hitched to Jesus, He carries our burden.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Zechariah 9:9-12

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

9:9 gentle. Jesus will bring the rampant forces of evil to unconditional surrender. It takes faith to accept this King now. It will not take faith to believe in Him as King when He returns in the clouds of heaven to claim undisputed rule. (PBC)

9:10 take away the chariots ... war-horses ... battle bow. War tools have no place in the Messiah's kingdom (cf Ps 46:9). (TLSB)

9:10 Ephraim. The former the former represents the 10 northern tribes and the latter is the two tribes of the south (Judah). (PC)

9:11 as for you. God gets personal. He makes it clear that he is talking to his chosen people. They are his because of the covenant he established and he intends to keep his promises. Throughout Scripture the covenant is often pictured as a marriage – an intensely intimate relationship. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

9:11 waterless pit. Symbolizes the hopeless condition of one under the curse of the Law. (TLSB)

9:12 twice as much. In place of despair, the Lord promises a double blessing: a secure stronghold and victory over all enemies. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Romans 7:14-25a

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

7:14 spiritual. The law had its origin in God. (CSB)

7:14 unspiritual. Even a believer has the seeds of rebellion in his heart. (CSB)

7:16 I agree that the law is good. Even when Paul is rebellious and disobedient, the Holy Spirit reveals to him the essential goodness of the law. (CSB)

7:17 no longer I myself who do it. Not an attempt to escape moral responsibility but a statement of the great control sin can have over a Christian’s life. (CSB)

7:18 nothing good lives in me.† A reference to man’s fallen nature, as the last phrase of the sentence indicates. Paul is not saying that no goodness at all exists in Christians, only not in their sinful nature. (CSB)

7:22 I delight in God’s law. Although our fallen nature rebels, the new nature rejoices in God’s truth. (TLSB)

7:24 who will rescue me from this body of death. This enslaving sin merits death. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 11:25-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. ²⁷ “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

11:28 weary and burdened. The burdens mentioned include the subtle (and perhaps not so subtle) burdens experienced in Judaism at that time with its unbalanced emphasis upon the necessity of obedience to all the commands of the Torah – both the written Torah and the expanding corpus of Jewish traditions that comprise the so-called oral Torah. (CC)

11:29 take my yoke. The yoke here has recently been interpreted as implying a rabbinical yoke or set of teachings, but there appears to be little historically to substantiate that interpretation. The meaning of the passage is unchanged, however. It is well worth noting in any case that a yoke often hitched two animals together. Christ invites us to be hitched to him! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

11:29 will find rest. How comforting these words are to us! Weighed down by unrealistic expectations, heavy responsibilities, and nagging guilt of sins committed and imagined, we cannot bear life's demands. Admitting our false sense of wisdom and our failure to shoulder our own burdens, we hear the voice of the Savior.

11:30 my burden is light. Jesus is not saying that life is easy, but afflictions, the cross and suffering simply drive Christian closer to Jesus