**Notes for Next Sunday**

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

The thread that runs through the readings (Epistle is an exception), has the Lord calling His people to repentance for failing to believe in Him. In the Psalm and the Old Testament there is an offer of hope for those who worship Him in truth and purity.

Psalm (Psalm 14). Psalm 14 is a testimony concerning the folly of evil men. These are men who have thoroughly put the Lord aside and even seem to revel in their evil. The Psalmist prays that the Lord would frustrate the plans of the evil doers. The Psalmist ends with thoughts that the Lord would restore the nation of Israel.

Old Testament (Isaiah 29:11-19). In this reading, God through Isaiah is telling His people that they have denied Him. They have rejected God so long that they have become totally deaf to everything that God would have them learn. They made up their own religion and are not interested in Word.

Epistle (Ephesians 5:22-33). St. Paul has been expounding the sanctified Christian life. He is now ready to apply these principles specifically to the relationships between spouses, between children and parents, and between slaves and masters. He puts all these under the umbrella of v 21. Our text focuses the divine spotlight on marriage and the blessed relationship that husbands and wives should and do have in Christ.

Gospel (Mark 7:1-13). The Pharisees and teachers of the law have come as a delegation from Jerusalem. Most likely they want to keep close tabs on Jesus and perhaps to see if they can find some way to discredit him. They latch onto the fact that the disciples are eating their bread “with hands that were defiled.

In verses 9-13, Jesus gives a practical example of how the Pharisees and scribes have used the traditions in order to set aside the clear meaning of God’s Commandments. They do these things in order to legitimize sinful behavior on their part.

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

**Psalm 14**

1﻿ **The fool﻿a﻿ says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. ﻿2﻿ The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. ﻿3﻿ All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. ﻿4﻿ Will evildoers never learn— those who devour my people as men eat bread and who do not call on the LORD? ﻿5﻿ There they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous. ﻿6﻿ You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge. ﻿7﻿ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*14:1 the fool.* By nature we were all fools, no better than the fool described in this psalm. In Romans 3:10-12 Paul uses the words of this psalm as an indictment of the whole sinful human race. These verses prove that no one can ever become righteous in God’s sight by observing the law, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But God did not abandon us in our foolishness. By God’s grace we have come to faith in Christ Jesus. (PBC)

*14:1 in his heart. heart.* In Biblical language the center of the human spirit, from which spring emotions, thought, motivations, courage and action—“the wellspring of life.” (CSB)

*14:1 corrupt.* These are behaviors that betray a particularly profound darkness of the heart and soul. As v 4 attests, abominable deeds usually involve the abuse of others. (TLSB)

*14:3 turned aside.* This is cited by Paul, Rm 3:12. Our works cannot make us righteous before God (cf Rm 3:23). (TLSB)

*14:7 would come.* When Christ returns and appears in the midst of his saints, the ungodly will be overwhelmed with dread. But then it will be too late. What greater foolishness can there be than to throw away the eternal life Christ has won for all people? Let us reject such foolishness and cling to Christ, the wisdom of God. (PBC)

**Old Testament – Isaiah 29:11-19**

**11﻿ For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, “Read this, please,” he will answer, “I can’t; it is sealed.” ﻿12﻿ Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, “Read this, please,” he will answer, “I don’t know how to read.” ﻿13﻿ The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.﻿ ﻿14﻿ Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.” ﻿15﻿ Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, “Who sees us? Who will know?” ﻿16﻿ You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, “He did not make me”? Can the pot say of the potter, “He knows nothing”? ﻿17﻿ In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest? ﻿18﻿ In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. ﻿19﻿ Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*29:11 a book that is sealed*. Because Judah’s actions deeply offended the Lord, He will no longer allow Judah to see or understand what He is doing. (TLSB)

*29:12 I don’t know how to read.* This sealed and closed book benefits neither the reader nor the nonreader. This shows that the fruit of ungodliness is that neither readers nor nonreaders can understand. Paul attacks this in 2 Cor. 3:7 and 4:3, where he speaks of Moses’ veil, which is not on Moses but on the face of the people and on their heart. This is that veil and sealed book. (Luther)

*29:13 rules taught by men.* Where people have once forsaken the Word, it is inevitable that tradition will soon follow; or there is opinion, that is, error, on the part of those who erect their own idols according to their own ideas, and then error soon follows. Meanwhile, however, they always have their supreme boasting, also for these; for he says here “their fear.” (Luther)

*29:14 wisdom … will perish.* Paul cites the second half of this verse in order to demonstrate the folly of the world’s wisdom. In Isaiah’s day—when faced with the approaching Assyrian army—the common wisdom was to form an alliance with Egypt (30:1–3), to rely on their horses, the multitude of their chariots, and in the great strength of their horsemen (31:1) TLSB)

*29:15 Woe.* Isaiah pronounces a woe, or death lament, on those who think they can hide their plans from the Lord. (TLSB)

*29:16 potter*. This is imagery that dates back to the account of God forming Adam (Gn 2:7). For the clay to command the potter turns things upside down, making the creature the Creator (cf Is 41:25; 45:9; 64:8). (TLSB)

*29:17 Lebanon.* Soon Lebanon will be humiliated (2:13; 10:34; 37:24). Illustrates the coming divine reversal, when the exalted will be humbled and the humble will be exalted. (TLSB)

*29:18 deaf will hear … blind will see.* That is, the nations that seem deaf *shall hear the words of a book*, a book that is sealed to the blind Jews. “As Christ says in John 9:39: ‘For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind,’ so you, presumptuous hearers, will be deaf; and the deaf and ignorant, who do not think that they hear, these will hear. Thus the prophet fights against the stubbornness of the ignorant, as the Jews, who boast of their wisdom and of the fact that they hear a great deal, do not hear. The deaf Gentiles, however, who claim nothing for themselves, these hear *the words of a book*, that is, the Scripture. So in our time the Gospel is heard by those who acknowledge their error. (Luther)

*29:19* *Holy One of Israel.* Isaiah loves this term for God. Isaiah encountered this Holy One of Israel in the temple when the doorposts shook and the angels sang, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty” (6:3). It is a miracle of God’s power that sinful human hearts are turned from sin and rebellion against the Lord to faith, love, and joy in the Lord. This miracle occurs through the means of grace – the gospel. (PBC)

**Epistle – Ephesians 5:22-33**

**22﻿ Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ﻿23﻿ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ﻿24﻿ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ﻿25﻿ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ﻿26﻿ to make her holy, cleansing﻿ her by the washing with water through the word, ﻿27﻿ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ﻿28﻿ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ﻿29﻿ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ﻿30﻿ for we are members of his body. ﻿31﻿ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”﻿ ﻿32﻿ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ﻿33﻿ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*5:22 Wives, submit.*† An aspect of the mutual submission taught in v. 21. To submit meant to yield one’s own rights. It is a relationship that grows out of Christian faith and encourages mutual love. (CSB)

*5:23 head of the wife.* Headship is not tyranny, but pictures one’s leader and source (1 Cor. 11:3-12). If we think of the husband as the head of a marriage and the wife as the heart of a marriage (Paul uses “body”), we see that one is not more important than the other – neither can survive alone. Paul demonstrates their vital yet distinct roles. (TLSB)

*5:23 as Christ.* The analogy between the relationship of Christ to the church and that of the husband to the wife is basic to the entire passage. (CSB)

*5:23 as Christ.* The church’s submitting to Christ is not a demeaning thing but something that brings great blessing. Such is the case also in a marriage where the wife accepts the headship of her husband. (PBC)

*5:25-27* Husbands demonstrate mutual submission differently. Where the wives were directed with a participle, the Scriptures instruct husbands with an imperative. “Husbands, love your wives.” They are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, even to the point of laying down their lives (v 25), and they are to love their wives as their own bodies, nurturing and caring for them just as Christ cares for the Church (v 28.)

*5:27 without stain or wrinkle.* He will present the Church to Himself glorious. The word is explained by the words which follow it. "Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" is figurative, explained by the words which follow. These following words "holy and blameless" are literal. Here look at Ephesians 1:4. When a bride presents herself to her husband she is to be immaculate, spotless, clean. And on the last day when the flesh of all Christians will forever have been put away, the Church as one person will be presented to Jesus as His bride. (Buls)

*5:28-30*The apostle repeats the command and adds the imperative “ought.” Husbands are morally obligated as redeemed sinners to love their wives. Christ’s nurturing and care for the Church provides the example. One could misunderstand Paul to be saying that a husband should care for his wife just as he cares for his own physical needs. The point is rather that he and his wife are one body (v 31). Not to care for her would mean not caring for part of his body.

*5:31-32*Paul now demonstrates that we are members of Christ’s Body by pointing back to the institution of marriage in creation. The mystery is not the one-flesh union of man and woman. Nor is the mystery an inscrutable thought. Rather, it was a mystery that has now been revealed in Christ. The mystery is that the union of a man and woman as one flesh in marriage actually reflects the relationship of Christ and the Church.

*5:33 However each one* *love … respect.* That love is one that loses itself in another, that sacrifices itself. It is a love that is willing to die for another. (LL)

**Gospel – Mark 7:1-13**

**The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and ﻿2﻿ saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. ﻿3﻿ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ﻿4﻿ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.﻿5﻿ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?” ﻿6﻿ He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ”‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ﻿7﻿ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’﻿ ﻿8﻿ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.” ﻿9﻿ And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe﻿ your own traditions! ﻿10﻿ For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’﻿ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. ﻿11﻿ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), ﻿12﻿ then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ﻿13﻿ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*7:4 marketplace.* This is where Jews would come into contact with Gentiles, or with Jews who did not observe the ceremonial law, and thus become ceremonially unclean. (CSB)

When coming back from market especially, where they might unknowingly have touched something unclean, the strict Jews were most inexorable and oppressive in their demands for cleanliness, a thorough washing of the hands and arms, if not of the whole body, being a prime requisite at that time. This care had become so excessive that it extended to the dishes and the furniture of the house as a matter of Levitical purification. They had received, and adhered most firmly to, the tradition regarding the washing of drinking-cups, of wooden and brazen vessels, and even of couches or sofas. The word used here for utensils of brass is really a Latin word, meaning a Roman measure equal to about 1 1/2 pints. Earthen vessels are not mentioned, since they had to be broken if defiled, Lev. 15, 12. Thus the whole life of the Jews, down to the most minute performances of every-day life, was governed by such laws and precepts. (Kretzmann)

*7:6-8*Jesus does not answer by becoming defensive about the practices of his disciples. Instead, Jesus responds by quoting Is 29:13 (from today’s Old Testament Reading) and applying it to the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. Their hypocrisy consists of the fact that while giving lip service to the authority of God’s Word, they have in fact elevated “the tradition of the elders” (v 3) to a place equal to or even above the Scriptures.

*7:11 Corban*. The transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “offering.” A *Corban,* in the sense that Jesus was using it here, was a religious vow. According to the text, a son who wanted to get out from under the financial burden of caring for his aging parents could dedicate his wealth to God. That act of dedication was called a *Corban*. The son could then claim that his wealth was already dedicated to God and couldn’t be used to care for his parents. Yet even though his wealth had been dedicated to God, the son was under no obligation to use it for the temple or synagogue or some other religious purpose. He was free to use it for his own wants and needs. The *Corban* was simply a way to use the “traditions” to excuse his failure to keep the Fourth Commandment to honor his mother and father.