**Notes for Next Sunday**

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

Old Testament (Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19). This reading is about the calling of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is to go to the leaders and people of Judah and tell them about the upcoming judgment if they continue to worship idols. Jeremiah, like Moses begs off using his lack of speaking ability as an excuse. But God does not take “no” for an answer. We, too, sometimes feel afraid to take on a task that God seems to be giving to us. But, God supplies all that we need like He did the Biblical leaders He called.

Epistle (1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13). This reading begins at the end of chapter 12 with the words “And now I will show you the most excellent way.” Then Paul launches into the thirteen verses of chapter 13. This chapter is all about how important love is in using one’s gifts in the service of others. He makes this point in verse 1 when he says “but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” Paul also gives a description of what love looks like in verses 4-7.

Gospel (Luke 4:31-44). Jesus went to Capernaum. We may regard it as His home during His earthly ministry. Peter and Andrew lived there fishing on the nearby sea (v. 31). Jesus’ teaching here is received positively. Jesus, in contrast to the rabbis, does not appeal to previous religious authorities (v. 32). Jesus, then encounters a demon possessed man. The demon recognizes that, as the Messiah, Jesus has come to destroy the demons (vv. 33-34). Jesus also heals Peter’s mother-in-law’s fever as well many other people brought to him. The crowd tries to keep Him with them but He reminds them that He “must preach the good news of kingdom of God to the others towns as well.”

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19

**4﻿ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ﻿5﻿ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew﻿ you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” ﻿6﻿ “Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” ﻿7﻿ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ﻿8﻿ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. ﻿9﻿ Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. ﻿10﻿ See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.” ﻿17﻿ “Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. ﻿18﻿ Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ﻿19﻿ They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.**

Jeremiah was called to the unhappy task of announcing the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah. Their kings had been evil and the time for Judah to be led off in exile was coming soon

In verses 4-10 God called Jeremiah to speak His Word to Judah to call them to repentance. Jeremiah was assured that what he was to share were indeed God’s words and the power of the Lord was behind them. The Word of the Lord would be the anchor for Jeremiah’s life, holding him securely in all the fierce tests he would face (vv. 1-4, 8).

Jeremiah claimed inability to be a prophet. God nevertheless made him His spokesman. He wasn’t the first to use this excuse. Moses used it when God asked him to go to Pharaoh. Our sinful nature would have us quickly want to find a reason not to do what God asks (v. 6). Youth and inexperience do not disqualify us when God calls. He equips and sustains those He commissions (v. 7).

In verse 9 God says, “*I have put my words in your mouth.”* Jeremiah’s words are God’s words. Jeremiah repeatedly uses prophetic statements such as “declares the Lord,” “thus says the Lord,” and “the word of the Lord came.”

In verse 10 the first two pairs of verbs are negative, stressing the fact that Jeremiah is to be first a prophet of doom. The last pair is positive, indicating that he is also to be a prophet of restoration. This shows us that whatever God has to do for us helps to build His kingdom.

Verse 17 begins a phrase that literally says, “Tighten your belt around your waist!” God backs this up with His assurance once more of being there with Jeremiah the whole time.

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

**And now I will show you the most excellent way.**

*12:31 the most excellent way.* Paul now shows the right way to exercise all spiritual gifts—the way of love. He does not identify love as a gift; rather, it is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). (CSB)

**If I speak in the tongues﻿ of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ﻿2﻿ If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ﻿3﻿ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames,﻿ but have not love, I gain nothing. ﻿4﻿ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ﻿5﻿ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ﻿6﻿ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ﻿7﻿ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ﻿8﻿ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ﻿9﻿ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ﻿10﻿ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ﻿11﻿ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ﻿12﻿ Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ﻿13﻿ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

*13:1-8*Paul uses “all or nothing” rhetoric throughout this section. “He does not say that we have access to God by our love without Christ as the Atoning Sacrifice, that we receive the promised forgiveness of sins by our love. Paul says nothing about this. He does not, therefore, think that love justifies, because we are justified only when we receive Christ as the Atoning Sacrifice and believe that for Christ’s sake God is reconciled to us” (Ap V 101). (TLSB)

*13:1–3* *tongues … prophecy … faith … give.* Paul selects four gifts as examples. He declares that even their most spectacular manifestations mean nothing unless motivated by love. (CSB)

*13:1 love.* The Greek for this word indicates a selfless concern for the welfare of others that is not called forth by any quality of lovable-ness in the person loved, but is the product of a will to love in obedience to God’s command. It is like Christ’s love manifested on the cross (cf. Jn 13:34–35; 1Jn 3:16). (CSB)

*13:4–7* Poetically balanced between negative and positive statements. Fifteen assertions describe the nature of love in Christ: two positive statements, eight negative statements (the last one adds a positive contrast), then four positive statements. The first assertions are most important (“patient,” “kind”; God’s attributes, and are further defined by the assertions that follow. (TLSB)

*13:13 the greatest of these is love.* Because God is love (1Jn 4:8) and has communicated his love to us (1Jn 4:10) and commands us to love one another (Jn 13:34–35). Love supersedes the gifts because it outlasts them all. Long after these sought-after gifts are no longer necessary, love will still be the governing principle that controls all that God and his redeemed people are and do. (CSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 4:31-44

**31﻿ Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. ﻿32﻿ They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority. ﻿33﻿ In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil﻿ spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ﻿34﻿ “Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” ﻿35﻿ “Be quiet!” Jesus said sternly. “Come out of him!” Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. ﻿36﻿ All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!” ﻿37﻿ And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.**

Jesus went to Capernaum. Many incidents from the life of Jesus took place in Capernaum. We may regard it as His home during His earthly ministry. Peter and Andrew lived there fishing on the nearby sea (v. 31).

Jesus’ teaching here is received positively. Jesus, in contrast to the rabbis, does not appeal to previous religious authorities (v. 32).

Jesus encounters a demon possessed man. The demon itself cried out Jesus’ superior power. The demon recognizes that, as the Messiah, Jesus has come to destroy the demons (vv. 33-34).

The Lord commanded him to keep silent and also come out from the man. The spirit had to obey, but in doing so, he took the last opportunity to injure the poor man (v. 35).

**38﻿ Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. ﻿39﻿ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. ﻿40﻿ When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them, ﻿41﻿ Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.﻿﻿42﻿ At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ﻿43﻿ But he said, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” ﻿44﻿ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.**

From the synagogue Jesus went directly to the home of Simon Peter. Peter lived with his family, to which the mother of his wife belonged. She had a high fever which was a symptom of potential danger. Only Luke, the doctor, says this (v.38). She shows gratitude for her healing by serving those around her (v. 39).

Early Sunday morning Jesus went out to a solitary place. The Sabbath had been long and hard. He had been engaged in bitter warfare with the devil. Now He needed time for meditation and prayer (v. 42).

Jesus explained to them the principal purpose of His ministry. The obligation rests upon Him to bring the Gospel news of the kingdom of God to other cities also (v. 44)