**Notes for Next Sunday**

Second Sunday after Pentecost

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

All of the readings, with the exception of the Epistle lesson, have to do with the importance of the correct utilization of the Sabbath.

The Psalm (Psalm 81:1-10) is possibly a festival song. It speaks of a time when Israel was not involved in war or any other major activity like the Exodus. There are references to the Exodus in verses 5 and 10. The Psalm suggests specific actions on how the Israelites are to praise the Lord as well as the reason why they are to laud and honor Him.

The Old Testament (Deuteronomy 5:12-15) points to the “what” and “why” and of how the observance of the Sabbath Day was to take place in the life of the Israelites. While this reading is a part of the re-statement of the Ten Commandments its text differs from Exodus 20:8-11. The aspect of “rest” on the Sabbath does not so much have to do with the cession of labor but how to use this time to contemplate what God has done for them and praise Him in response.

The Epistle (2 Corinthians 4:5-12) has Paul pointing out that while he preaches the Gospel he has nothing to boast about. He is not to preach himself but the true gospel of Jesus Christ. While here on earth Paul always has physical death looming in the future. However, Paul delights in that he has this treasure of God (Gospel) which has an all-surpassing power. It sustains him during all his difficult times.

The Gospel (Mark 2:23-28, 3:1-6) is about Jesus pointing out to the rulers of His day that the Sabbath is more than fulfilling a number of rules and regulations. On two different occasions of today’s readings Jesus does things that are helpful for His disciples and the man with the shriveled hand. The religious leaders jump on Him because these actions are against their laws even though they are a caring act. Jesus tells them that “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath and that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.”

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

**Psalm 81:1-10**

**Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! ﻿2﻿ Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. ﻿3﻿ Sound the ram’s horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our Feast; ﻿4﻿ this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. ﻿5﻿ He established it as a statute for Joseph when he went out against Egypt, where we heard a language we did not understand.﻿ ﻿6﻿ He says, “I removed the burden from their shoulders; their hands were set free from the basket. ﻿7﻿ In your distress you called and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. *Selah* ﻿8﻿ “Hear, O my people, and I will warn you— if you would but listen to me, O Israel! ﻿9﻿ You shall have no foreign god among you; you shall not bow down to an alien god. ﻿10﻿ I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*81:2* *tambourine.* This insturment was used on joyful occasions like following a military victory. (CSB)

*81: harp and lyre.* These instruments were to accompany the praise of the Lord at his temple in the celebration of deliverance.). (CSB)

*81:3* *ram’s horn.* The new moon which marked the start of the seventh month was celebrated with blowing of the ram’s horn.

*8:3 our Feast.* Probably the Feast of Tabernacles, often called simply “the feast/festival.” As the great seven-day autumn festival, beginning on the 15th of the month (full moon), it followed shortly after the Day of Atonement (observed on the tenth of the month, Lev 16:29), recalled God’s care for his people during the desert journey (see Lev 23:43), served as a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest (see Lev 23:39–40; Dt 16:13–15) and marked the conclusion of the annual cycle of religious festivals that began with Passover and Unleavened Bread six months earlier.. Every seventh year at this festival the covenant law was to be read to all the people. The first day of this month (New Moon) was commemorated with trumpets. It later came to be known as New Year since the seventh month marked the end of harvest and the beginning of the rainy season, when the new crops were planted. (CSB)

*8:5 when he went out against Egypt.* Some believe this indicates that the festival referred to is Passover and Unleavened Bread. More likely it serves as a reference to the whole exodus period, while highlighting especially God’s triumph over Egypt by which he had set his people free. (CSB)

*8:5 heard a language we did not understand.* There were aliens in a foreign land.

*81:6–10* Israel was invited to worship God, but they were also warned of the consequences of disobedience. Israel’s main motive for obeying God’s command to worship only him was to be the love they had for him because of what he had done for them. However, God also encouraged them with promises of continued blessing. How tragic it was that Israel forgot the past blessings and threw away the future blessings by turning from the Lord to idols.

**Old Testament – Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

**12“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 13Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*5:12 as the Lord your God has commanded you.* This clause reminds the people of the divine origin of the Ten Commandments 40 years earlier. (CSB)

*5:14 seventh day*. Chemnitz: “God has willed that in the observances of the Sabbath there be a memorial of the article of creation … that the people may be instructed by this teaching device to pray to God and to await His blessings, and that thus faith be strengthened. (TLSB)

*5:15 you were a slave*. Moses adds a reminder of how the Israelites are to treat their slaves on the Sabbath; both male and female slaves are given rest on each Sabbath, just as the Israelites. (TLSB)

**Epistle – 2 Corinthians 4:5-12**

**5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.  6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.  8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;  9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.  10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.  11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.  12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*4:5 we do not preach ourselves.* The false teachers were puffed up with self-importance. Paul does not lord it over their faith, for there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, and He is the theme of Paul’s preaching. (CSB)

*4:6 Let light shine out of darkness.* God said this at the creation, and God says it again in the new creation or new birth as the darkness of sin is dispelled by the light of the gospel. (CSB)

*4:6 the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.* The light that now shines in Paul’s heart (qualifying him to be a proclaimer of Christ) is the knowledge of the glory of God as it was displayed in the face of Christ—who has come, not just from an earthly tabernacle, but from the glorious presence of God in heaven itself. (CSB)

*4:7 this treasure.* The gospel.

*4:7 jars of clay.* It was customary to conceal treasure in clay jars, which had little value or beauty and did not attract attention to themselves and their precious contents. Here they represent Paul’s human frailty and unworthiness. (CSB)

*4:7 all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.* This is God’s overwhelming, all-encompassing power in His grace toward the world, in contrast to human incapability. (TLSB)

*4:10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus.* The frailty of the “clay jar” of Paul’s humanity (v. 7) is plainly seen in the constant hardships and persecutions with which he is buffeted for the sake of the gospel and through which he shares in Christ’s suffering. (CSB)

*4:12 given over to death*. Paul and his companions were persecuted, beaten, and threatened with death. Believers are not exempt from pain and suffering. When earthen vessels are broken, they even more clearly reveal the treasure of God’s power and grace within. (TLSB)

**Gospel – Mark 2:23-28, 3:1-6**

**23﻿ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ﻿24﻿ The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” ﻿25﻿ He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ﻿26﻿ In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” ﻿27﻿ Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ﻿28﻿ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*2:23-28*Mark reports that Jesus was often followed by the Pharisees as he traveled throughout Galilee. Unfortunately, their purpose was not to join Jesus’ “followers,” but to trap him with questions or catch him violating the Torah.

*2:23-24*Walking through a grain field on the Sabbath, the hungry disciples picked the ripened grain, shucked the skins, blew them to the wind, and ate the kernels. The Mosaic law recorded in Deut. 23:25 permits the disciples’ actions: “If you enter your neighbor’s grain field, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain.” In this way God provided food for the hungry traveler while also protecting the farmer from a thief who might try to harvest a significant part of his crop. Surely the Pharisees would have known of the Torah’s approval, but they object to these actions *on the Sabbath*. The Torah prohibited labor on the Sabbath.

*2:25-26*Jesus calls attention to an incident recorded in 1 Sam 21:1–6, which involved David, whom the Pharisees held in high regard. David broke a divine ceremonial stipulation of the Torah, not just a human interpretation. Fleeing from Saul, he asked the priest for food, but the only food available was the holy bread (showbread) in the tabernacle. Twelve loaves were made each week and placed on the golden table in front of the Holy of Holies. Each week these were replaced, and the old ones were to be eaten by the priests. But the priest allowed David and his men to eat the showbread. Jesus assumes that the Pharisees, familiar with this story, will agree with him that David did right by eating the showbread even though the Torah set apart this sacred bread for priests alone.

*2:27-28*Jesus drives home his point by saying that even the Sabbath is subservient to the greater divine purpose of grace. In fact, today’s OT Lesson affirms that the purpose of the Sabbath is to remind God’s people of his grace in delivering them. Now Jesus has come to accomplish the final deliverance of God’s people, so “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” Jesus brings in full the blessings of grace, peace, and rest which Israel received only in part through the institution of the Sabbath and the deliverance from Egypt.

**Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there.  2Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath.  3 Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.” 4 Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent. 5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.  6 Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.**

While it continues a focus upon Sabbath day activity (see 2:23–28) and upon healing (see 1:29–34) and is thus connected to previous verses, this text is best seen as primarily an introduction to a new subsection that focuses upon open and growing hostility to Jesus, both from his enemies (3:1–6, 22–30) and from those closest to him, including his family (3:21, 32–35). Now (already) in 3:6 Jesus’ enemies begin their plot to destroy him. The pattern of tenses in these verses is typical of the first portion of Mark’s Gospel (main verb tense pattern 1), as is the obvious lack of express subjects. (CC)