**Notes for Next Sunday**

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

**The Point of this Week’s Reading**

Except for the Epistle, the readings are about deliverance by the Lord.

Psalm (Psalm 116:1-9). The first two verses tell the story of this psalm. The psalmist is devoted to thanking the Lord because the Lord has delivered him from danger. By remembering the past he receives assurance and dedication for the present and the future. (PBC)

Old Testament (Isaiah 50:4-10). This is the third of the four Servant Songs. The Servant Songs are all about Jesus’ saving work. This text is Jesus, the Servant of the Lord speaking. He is going to do what Israel failed to do as God’s chosen people. Jesus will be obedient to what God the Father wants done.

Epistle (James 3:1-12). James explains the power the tongue has in a person. It may be small but it controls the whole body. It is like a rudder on a ship that is very small but controls a large sea going vessel. He compares it to a small fire which can destroy the whole body. It is often restless and full of poison. It is especially important as leaders to guard their speech.

Gospel (Mark 9:14-29). From the heights of the Transfiguration Jesus and Peter, James and John descended to the realities of life with all its sin and sorrow. The nine were having real difficulty in defending themselves against the Teacher’s of the law and the man with the demon controlled son. Both sides recognized the disciples’ inability to heal this demon-possessed lad. After healing the boy Jesus explains to the nine that they had tried to heal the boy by their own power.

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

**Psalm 116:1-9**

**1﻿ I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. ﻿2﻿ Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. ﻿3﻿ The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave ﻿ came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. ﻿4﻿ Then I called on the name of the LORD: “O LORD, save me!” ﻿5﻿ The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. ﻿6﻿ The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. ﻿7﻿ Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. ﻿8﻿ For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, ﻿9﻿ that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. ﻿**

Although this psalm is not quoted in the NT as a Messianic psalm, nevertheless, because the whole Passover experience points to the work of Christ, it is appropriate to see this psalm as a reflection of Christ’s confidence that he would be delivered from death. (PBC)

The psalmist is briefly reviewing the help he received from the Lord. He was delivered from the physical danger of death, but also from the spiritual danger of excessive grief and uncertainty which tried his faith. Death and the grave had been relentless enemies who carried him to the brink of despair. He had felt crushed by great affliction. His distress was apparently made worse by false accusers who implied that he was getting the punishment his sins deserved. He realized that he could not count on men to help, so he turned to the Lord alone. (PBC)

**Old Testament – Isaiah 50:4-10**

**4﻿ The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. ﻿5﻿ The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. ﻿6﻿ I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. ﻿7﻿ Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. ﻿8﻿ He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ﻿9﻿ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up. ﻿10﻿ Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*50:4 instructed tongue*. It was a trained tongue or a well-taught tongue. Christ did nothing of Himself; only as the Father had taught Him, so He spoke (John 8:28). (PC)

*50:4 word that sustains the weary.* Jesus’ words have the power to convert “weary” souls. His very words are sheer “spirit and life.”

*50:4 wakens my ear.* While rebellious Israel turned a deaf ear to God, the Servant would “speak just as the Father taught” Him (John 8:27–29). Therefore, a word from Him sufficed to sustain the weary. (TLSB)

*50:5 opened my ears.* This is a sign of obedience. The Servant eagerly desires to be directed by the Lord in all His ways. Jesus obediently fulfilled this predicted attitude of the Servant as told by Paul. (Phil. 2:5-8)

*50:5 I have not drawn back.* The Servant (Jesus) knows that there will be problems but keeps going just the same.

*50:6 my back to those who beat me.* This offers a first look at the suffering the Servant must undergo. The eternal Word of life that the Servant brings to His people will come at a great cost to Him. It will cause Him great suffering and anguish. Describing Christ in this role, Luther said” “Christ is the first to undergo a host of afflictions because of the Word”

*50:6 pulled out my beard.* Pulling out of a beard showed contempt and disrespect for the person (cf 2Sm 10:4–5; Ne 13:25). (TLSB)

*50:6 mocking and spitting.* This behavior showed hatred (Job 30:10) or insult or disgrace (Dt 25:9; Job 17:6; Mt 27:30). This treatment of the servant anticipates his ultimate suffering in 52:13–53:12. (CSB)

*50:7 my face like flint.* Like the prophets, the servant will endure with great determination. In Luke 9:51 we find this phrase: “Jesus “resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” (CSB) By this Jesus is saying “Thy will be done.”

*50:9 wear out like a garment; the moths.* The Servant’s enemies will be as fragile and vulnerable as cloth, which even a tiny moth can destroy. (TLSB)

**Epistle – James 3:1-12**

**Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ﻿2﻿ We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. ﻿3﻿ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ﻿4﻿ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ﻿5﻿ Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ﻿6﻿ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. ﻿7﻿ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ﻿8﻿ but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ﻿9﻿ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. ﻿10﻿ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ﻿11﻿ Can both fresh water and salt﻿a﻿ water flow from the same spring? ﻿12﻿ My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*3:1 teachers*. This was an office in the Early Church. Its work, along with that of apostles and prophets, was eventually carried out by pastors (cf Ac 13:1; 1Co 12:28–29; Eph 4:11). Nevertheless, these warnings apply to all who claim to teach (cf Lk 11:45–46, 52). (TLSB)

*3:1 judged more strictly.* This is so because false teaching can destroy the faith of those being taught (cf Gal 1:8–9). Therefor there is a stricter standard of judgment and a harsher punishment for teachers. (TLSB)

*3:3 bit.* That little piece of steel in a horse’s mouth, when managed properly, can control a two thousand-pound animal. (PBC)

*3:5 makes great boasts.* As everlasting consequences depend upon the use of the tongue, all, and especially ministers of the gospel, should earnestly pray that they may always so speak as shall tend most to honor God and benefit their fellow-men. (CB)

*3:5 fire by a small spark.* Under control, a spark can make a small fire to warm cold travelers and cook their food. Out of control, a spark can cause a conflagration that can reduce thousands of acres of mighty trees to blackened, smoking stumps. (PBC)

*3:8 no man can tame the tongue.* The tongue does not operate itself. What James is really getting at is that it is the brain that regulates the tongue. Here is another example of real faith for real life – people who claim to be believers must not let their mouths get out control. Real faith in the Savior welcomes the power of the Spirit to bite back lies, sarcasm, ridicule, gossip, evil suggestions, and praise for evil deeds. Real faith uses the Spirit’s real power to build up other people, speak the truth, compliment, forgive, and comfort. Real faith also knows when to command the tongue to be silent. (PBC)

*3:9 in God’s likeness.* All people deserve respect because they are made in the image of God. (TLSB)

**Gospel – Mark 9:14-29**

**14﻿ When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ﻿15﻿ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. ﻿16﻿ “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. ﻿17﻿ A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ﻿18﻿ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” ﻿19﻿ “O unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” ﻿20﻿ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. ﻿21﻿ Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. ﻿22﻿ “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” ﻿23﻿ ”‘If you can’?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for him who believes.” ﻿24﻿ Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” ﻿25﻿ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil﻿ spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ﻿26﻿ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” ﻿27﻿ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. ﻿28﻿ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” ﻿29﻿ He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.﻿”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*9:19* how long shall I stay with you. He was now well into the third year of instructing His disciples and thus wondered out loud when they would ever learn. How much longer would it take? (PBC)

*9:24* *I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!* The father cried out with faith but struggled with his son’s burden and the failure of the disciples. “Worthiness does not depend on the greatness or smallness, the weakness or strength of faith. Instead, it depends on Christ’s merit, which the distressed father of little faith enjoyed as well as Abraham, Paul, and others who have a joyful strong faith” (FC SD VII 71). (TLSB)

*9:29 This kind.* There are different types of demons with different powers. The disciples’ had had earlier success in exorcism (6:13). But it had either not prepared them for this case or made them overconfident in their own work. (TLSB)

*9:29 only by prayer.*† The disciples apparently had taken for granted the power given to them or had come to believe that it was inherent in them. Lack of prayer indicated they had forgotten that their power over the demonic spirits was from Jesus. Faith works through prayer. (CSB)