

Notes for Next Sunday

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 66:18-23). Since the beginning of chapter 65 God has been speaking judgment on His people because of idol worship. In this reading Isaiah is speaking hope for those who repent of their sins. They become missionaries to the nations around them resulting in world-wide outreach. From the Gentiles will come those who will take the lead in worship replacing the priests of Levites who were unfaithful in their duties. At the end of this reading the final judgment is spoken of as forming a “new heavens and the new earth.”

Epistle (Hebrews 12:4-24). Verses 4-13 speak of being willing to endure the discipline that Lord brings into our lives as we struggle with sin. The writer reminds them that any son who is truly loved is disciplined by his father. This will only make him stronger. Verses 14-22 warn against refusing God. Some of the specific concerns are that no one misses the grace of God or become a stumbling block. Verse 22 speaks of the heavenly city awaiting all believers.

Gospel (Luke 13:22-30). Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to suffer, die and rise again. Jesus was attracting large crowds but many of them were not loyal followers. They came more for the healing and other miracles. So when the question is asked about few being saved, Jesus refocuses the issue on looking inwardly in self-reflection. Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation (John 14:6). All other hopes are misplaced. The time to repent and receive the Lord is fleeting. Accordingly, people need to make entry into God's kingdom their first priority, before the door to life suddenly slams shut. The Jews wanted Jesus all to themselves but refused to believe that He was the Christ. Therefore people from all over the world who did believe would take a place at Jesus' table of feast.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 66:18-23

¹⁸ “And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory. ¹⁹ “I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. ²⁰ And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels,” says the LORD. “They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. ²¹ And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites,” says the LORD. ²² “As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure. ²³ From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says the LORD.

66:19 sign. The banner of the Servant (11:10–12) and the sign of the Son of Man (Mt 24:30) will call all to the holy mountain (cf Is 2:1–5). (TLSB)

66:22 new heavens ... new earth. As lasting as the new creation is the crown of His creation, His restored people. For the servants of the Lord, life goes on eternally in the presence of the Lord with a share in His glory. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Hebrews 12:4-24

⁴In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” ⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. ¹²Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³“Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

12:4 not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. Though they had suffered persecution and loss of possessions (10:32–34), they had not had to die for the faith. (CSB)

12:5 the Lord’s discipline. Suffering and persecution should be seen as corrective and instructive training for our spiritual development as his children. (CSB)

12:7 treating you as sons. God’s discipline is evidence that we are his children. Far from being a reason for despair, discipline is a basis for encouragement and perseverance (v. 10). (CSB)

¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears. ¹⁸You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” ²¹The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.” ²²But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

12:22 Mount Zion. Not the literal Mount Zion (Jerusalem, or its southeast portion), but the heavenly city of God and those who dwell there with him

12:23 spirits of righteous men made perfect. † For the most part, these were pre-Christian believers such as Abel (11:4) and Noah (11:7). They are referred to as “spirits” because they are waiting for the resurrection and as “righteous” because God credited their faith to them as righteousness, as he did to Abraham. (CSB)

12:24 a better word than the blood of Abel. Abel’s blood cried out for justice and retribution, whereas the blood of Jesus shed on the cross speaks of forgiveness and reconciliation. (CSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 13:22-30

²² Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. ²³ Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” He said to them, ²⁴ “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. ²⁵ Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ “But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ ²⁶ “Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ ²⁷ “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’ ²⁸ “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. ²⁹ People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. ³⁰ Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

13:27 away from me you evildoers. Lit, “workers of injustice.” Without faith in Jesus Christ, it is impossible to produce works that please God (Heb 11:6). (TLSB)

13:28 there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Refers to the torment of eternal separation from God and His goodness—hell. (TLSB)

13:29 People ... from east and west and north and south. From the four corners of the world and from among all people, including Gentiles. (CSB) Those redeemed by Christ through faith. (TLSB)