

Notes for Next Sunday

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Leviticus 19:9-18) Here God gives the Israelites laws that are meant to be helpful for their fellow Israelites. They are tilted toward caring for the disadvantaged and poor. Verse 9 points to leaving some of the harvest behind so that poor people could glean food for themselves. An example of this can be found in chapter two of Ruth. At the end of several verses we find the sentence “*I am the Lord.*” This sentence is meant to emphasize the fact that the Lord has made and given all that is on earth and therefore He is to be respected and obeyed.

Epistle (Colossians 1:1-14). The first two verses are a standard introduction a letter of that time. Paul establishes his credentials for his office and why they should pay attention to what he has to say. Paul sets a great example for all Christians by beginning his prayer for others by giving thanks for their spiritual qualities (VV. 4-6). Paul especially thanks God for how the grace of God had done its work through the faith that had been worked in their hearts. He also thanks God for how this faith will lead to them enjoying an eternity in God's presence.

Gospel (Luke 10:25-37). This text is the story of the Good Samaritan. The Jewish leaders ranked people according to their economic, religious, and social status. Samaritans didn't even qualify among the ranks given. The lawyer who asks the question was a member of the Pharisaic party, would exclude some people, sinners who were ignorant of the Law, from his definition of “neighbor.” He would also exclude Samaritans and any other outsiders, particularly Gentiles. Jesus parades a priest and a Levite as models of the indifferent, unmerciful, and loveless. The last person the lawyer would expect to be held before him as an example of one who fulfills the Law by loving his neighbor as himself is the hated Samaritan! Thus the story is a powerful illustration of the Great Reversal theme that runs throughout Luke's gospel.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Leviticus 19:9-18

⁹“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. ¹¹“Do not steal. “Do not lie. “Do not deceive one another. ¹²“Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. ¹³“Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. “Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight. ¹⁴“Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD. ¹⁵“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. ¹⁶“Do not go about spreading slander among your people. “Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD. ¹⁷“Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. ¹⁸“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

The four units in this section consist mainly of prohibitions. By these prohibitions the Lord covered the members of His holy community with the canopy of His holiness and protected them from abuse by their associates. The prohibitions deal with those kinds of abuse and injustice that could not be treated in a normal court of law, but could only be judged by God. By prohibiting them, God made these acts of injustice sins against Himself and His holiness. (CC)

EPISTLE – Colossians 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

1:1 Christ. Paul is very Christ-centered, as seen by this short letter, in which he uses the title “Christ” 26 times and the title “Lord” (alone) 7 times. (CSB)

1:1 by the will of God. Paul did not choose to be an apostle but was called by God. (TLSB)

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— ⁵the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel ⁶that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth. ⁷You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. ⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1:6 hope. Most people in the Greco-Roman world lived without hope (cf Eph 2:12). Hope can be thought of as faith directed toward the future. (TLSB)

1:7 Epaphras. A native (4:12) and probably founder of the Colossian church, and an evangelist in nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis (4:13)

GOSPEL – Luke 10:25-37

²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” ²⁷He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ ²⁸; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ²⁸“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” ²⁹But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was;

and when he saw him, he took pity on him.³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins^c and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Central Point – Christianity is a way of life.

The dispute between Jesus and the lawyer is this: *Jesus sees the Torah as part of the God-given means (Scripture) to eternal life, and this life comes purely by grace through faith, which is active in love (Gal 5:6).* Conversely, the lawyer attempts (and fails) to justify himself by twisting the Torah into a legalistic system (Rom 10:5; Gal 3:10, 12) that would excuse him from showing love to all others. That is his motivation for asking, “Who is my neighbor?” (10:29). *Jesus correctly interprets the Torah, which teaches that God elected Israel solely out of his love and redeemed her in fulfillment of his gracious promises; Israel’s obedience to his commands was a response in faith, motivated by love, created by the Gospel of God’s salvation (e.g., Deut 4:37–40; 7:7–9; 10:12–22).* This proverb, then, would apply to Jesus: “The Torah/instruction of a wise man is a fountain of life, to turn [others] away from snares of death” (Prov 13:14). The conclusion to Jesus’ story about the rich man and Lazarus also points to the unity of Jesus and the Torah: if people do not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe when Jesus rises from the dead (Lk 16:31). (CC p. 450)

10:31–33 priest ... Levite ... Samaritan. It is significant that the person Jesus commended was neither the religious leader nor the lay associate, but a hated foreigner. Jews viewed Samaritans as half-breeds, both physically (see note on Mt 10:5) and spiritually (see notes on Jn 4:20, 22). Samaritans and Jews practiced open hostility (see note on 9:52), but Jesus asserted that love knows no national boundaries. (CSB)