

Notes for Next Sunday

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Genesis 18:17-33). This text is about Abraham pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah. As the men (in reality Jesus and two angels) who had visited Abraham and Sarah got up to leave Jesus speaks of telling Abraham about what is to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah in the coming days. Jesus reasons, since Abraham will become a great a power, that Abraham should be let in on what is about to happen. Abraham's concern for these two cities might also be impacted because his nephew Lot and his family are living there. Abraham's prayer is courageous and bold just as our prayers should also be. Another example of a good prayer he leaves the result in the hand of God. The TLSB suggests the following: "Perhaps considering that God had not spared the world from the flood for the sake of eight people (Noah's household), Abraham did not press his defense further."

Epistle (Colossians 2:6-19). The Colossian people were bombarded by many heretical groups that greatly distorted biblical truths. One of the Colossian heresies, which, in part, taught that for salvation one needed to combine faith in Christ with secret knowledge and with man-made regulations concerning such physical and external practices as circumcision, eating and drinking, and observance of religious festivals. (CSB) Paul once more reminds them that they once had been caught in those practices but had freed from all of them by the forgiveness Christ had won for them by dying on the cross.

Gospel (Luke 11:1-13). The transition from the previous passage makes sense when one understands that the story of Mary and Martha taught the proper way to worship. It is natural that Jesus should then teach the proper way to pray. This lesson is Jesus teaching His disciples how to pray. He urges them to pray what we know of as the Lord's Prayer. His teaching was in response to His disciples' asking Him to teach them how to pray. What motivates the disciple's request is the model of regular prayer by Jesus. Jesus begins by telling them to call God "Father." That means they and we are God's children. By this Jesus has put up in the same relationship He has with God, and relationships are everything when it comes to prayer. Honest prayers are a petition of God knowing that He doesn't need anything from us. The last lesson in this text is to be persistent as illustrated by the story Jesus shares with them.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 18:17-33

¹⁶ When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." ²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous

people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes,²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.”²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.”³⁰ Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.”³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

18:20 outcry. Sodom’s wickedness already well known, cried out for God’s judgment. (TLSB)

18:21 see. Not a denial of God’s infinite knowledge but a figurative way of stating that he does not act out of ignorance or on the basis of mere complaints. (CSB)

18:24-31 what if there are. Abraham’s requests do not seem to try the patience of God. So our frequent prayers also are not anointing to him.

18:32 ten. Perhaps considering that God had not spared the world from the flood for the sake of eight people (Noah’s household), Abraham did not press his defense further. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Colossians 2:6-19

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross, ¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. ¹⁸ Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ¹⁹ He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

2:7 rooted and built up. Both metaphors, one from nature and the other from construction, point to something that is firm and enduring. God’s Word makes this way of life in Christ possible. (TLSB)

2:8 basic principles of this world. False teachings that are constructed from the basic elements of the fallen universe. In Col, they are closely related to fallen angels (vv 18–20). (TLSB)

2:13 dead. All people are born spiritually dead. Though they bear God's image, they are separated from Him. (TLSB)

2:13 forgiven us. Trespasses bury those who are spiritually dead. But those who are made alive in faith are delivered from the condemnation of their trespasses. (TLSB)

2:14 written code. The debtor kept a handwritten bill of indebtedness; in this case, it is the record of all our violations of God's Law. This record is wiped away by Jesus' death on the cross. (TLSB)

2:15 having disarmed. Not only did God cancel out the accusations of the law against the Christian, but he also conquered and disarmed the evil angels (powers and authorities, 1:16; Eph 6:12), who entice people to follow asceticism and false teachings about Christ. The picture is of conquered soldiers stripped of their clothes as well as their weapons to symbolize their total defeat. (CSB)

2:15 rulers and authorities. These are created by God and yet often corrupted by sin. They can be personal (such as angels) or impersonal (such as governments, economic systems, educational institutions). They might also be demons masquerading as idols or false gods. Cf 1:16; 2:9. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 11:1-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”² He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.³ Give us each day our daily bread.⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”⁵ Then he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,⁶ because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’⁷ “Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.⁹ “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.¹¹ “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

11:3 daily bread. This includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body. Give means that it is a gift and not something we deserved or earned and teaches us that God is the sole source. We say “our” because we should ask for that bread only which is honestly our, and because we should also pray for our neighbor and share with him when he is in need. We are to say “daily” and “this day” because we should be satisfied with what we need each day, and because it is foolish and sinful to worry about the future. Luke says “each day” and “daily” to teach us that God takes care of us every moment. (Chemnitz p. 64) The children of Israel had manna for each day. And their shoes never wore out.

11:13 though you are evil. This little phrase teaches our fallen nature. Even fathers who give good things to their children are evil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 22, Part 3)

God is a giver of good gifts (cf. Mt 7:11, “good things”). He is eager to give (Deut 30:9). (CC)

