

Notes for Next Sunday

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Amos 6:1-7). Amos begins with the word “woe.” This Hebrew expression was used as a wail of grief over the dead. Prophets used it to predict divine judgment. Although Amos spoke primarily to Israel, Judah (Zion) also deserved his rebuke (cf. 2:4–5), for Israel properly comprised all 12 tribes. (CSB) Here Amos has a message for the complacent. They considered themselves safe because they occupied mountain dwellings (Jerusalem was on a hill) and Judah trusted in their temple to protect them. Unfortunately when Babylon came neither their altitude or their temple could save them. They also reveled in their wealth.

Epistle (1 Timothy 3:1-13). Paul continues his teachings concerning those who may teach and properly exercise authority in a church. (TLSB) An overseer was a man who oversees a local congregation. The equivalent word from the Jewish background of Christianity is “elder.” The terms “overseer” and “elder” are used interchangeably. The guidelines Paul set down concern every aspect of their lives, public and private. Paul also addresses the initial qualifications.

Gospel (Luke 16:19-31). This is the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus. It provides a fitting conclusion to this chapter on the attitude toward possessions in view of the life of the age to come and the Gospel preaching to prepare people for it. The account has two parts, but there is no doubt as to its unity and its intent. The first part (16:19–26) describes love of worldly wealth and failure to heed the witnesses (cf. 16:14–15), and the second part (16:27–31) presents the importance of the testimony of the Law and the Prophets (cf. 16:16–18). (CC p. 632) It also gives insights about life after death concerning both heaven and hell.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Amos 6:1-7

Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! ²Go to Calneh and look at it; go from there to great Hamath, and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours? ³You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror. ⁴You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. ⁵You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. ⁶You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. ⁷Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

6:1 Samaria. Capital of Israel. Here, it stands for the whole Northern Kingdom. (TLSB)

6:1 notable men. Those to whom the people came for advice, leadership, and an example to follow. It is doubtful that they were advising as they ought, i.e., the nation needed to heed Amos's warnings and repent. (TLSB)

6:4 ivory. Symbols of luxury. Numerous pieces of furniture inlaid with ivory in the Phoenician style have been unearthed in Israel. (TLSB)

6:5 strum away. The idle rich frittered away their days singing and making merry. (TLSB)

6:6 *wine by the bowlful*. Not just cups, but bowls of wine were consumed. Bowls mentioned here were used in the temple for sprinkling sacrificial blood on the altar, which implies abuse by the priests or Levites. (TLSB)

6:6 *finest lotions*. Hebrew *mashach*, associated with ritual anointing. Hedonistic excesses were ironically dressed up in religious garb. (TLSB)

6:7 *first to go into exile*. Additional irony. The rich, whose attitude was famously “me first,” will have the distinction of being punished first. They will be at the head of the column of deportees, leading the march into exile. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Timothy 3:1-13

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. ⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. ¹² A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

3:2 *husband of but one wife*. Many new converts would have come from a background of polygamy or sexual immorality. The qualification is phrased in terms of sexual fidelity within a monogamous marital relationship.

3:4–5 *children submissive*. Not a requirement that the pastor must have children, but that when he does, they should be obedient. See SC, Fourth Commandment, p xxxv. A pastor must teach and uphold this commandment within his family. (TLSB)

3:6 *recent convert*. The Greek word used to describe newly planted trees. The phrase does not preclude relatively young men, such as Timothy, from serving as pastors but rather those who have not attained a satisfactory level of spiritual maturity since their conversion to Christ. (TLSB)

3:8–13 Deacons and deaconesses were faithful people, entrusted with special responsibilities for service to their fellow Christians. Christians today are also privileged to serve others through special congregational offices and service organizations.

GOSPEL – LUKE 16:19-31

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of

his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’²⁵ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’²⁷ “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house,²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’²⁹ “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’³⁰ “No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’³¹ “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

16:19 purple and fine linen. A rich, royal woolen cloak worn over a delicate undergarment. (TLSB)

16:20 Lazarus. Not the Lazarus Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11:43–44). If this is a parable, it is the only one in which Jesus gave a name to one of the characters. (CSB)

16:21 eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Ancient people generally ate with their hands. When they wanted to clean their hands they wiped them on bread and threw the bread away (under the table for dogs or other scavengers). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 4)

16:21 dogs...licked sores. He is helpless to keep the dogs from his undressed wounds. (TLSB)

16:22 Abraham’s side. Lit, “Abraham’s bosom.” Perhaps the place of honor at the heavenly banquet (cf Mt 8:11; Jn 21:20). (TLSB)

16:25 cool my tongue. The thought of such minimal relief moves him to beg, so great is the torment. (TLSB)

16:26 chasm...fixed. Nothing can bridge the gap after death (cf Heb 9:27). (TLSB)