

Notes for Next Sunday

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Genesis 18:1-14). By this time Abraham and Sarah were 99 and 89 years old. Their hope of having an heir was quickly fading. The setting is the hot time of the day which was nap time. Three men appear on the scene, Jesus is one and the other two are angels. Abraham springs into action doing everything a super host would do to welcome these strangers. Jesus in the form of one of the men has a message for Abraham and Sarah that in a year from this visit they will have the son that God had promised them. When Sarah laughs Jesus reminds both of them that there is nothing that is impossible for God to do.

Epistle (Colossians 1:21-29). In verses 21-24 Paul reminds them of their former state as unbelievers. Then he goes on to say that now that they have been brought to faith and if they stay steadfast in that faith they will have eternal life. In verses 24-29 Paul relates the physical and mental beatings he has taken because he has fearlessly proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles. The mystery that he speaks of here is that God's salvation is for all people. Once it had been hidden but now it is to be proclaimed openly.

Gospel (Luke 10:38-42). This is the story of Mary and Maratha. These two sisters and their brother opened their home to Jesus and His disciples as they traveled. This took place in the village of Bethany which was two miles from Jerusalem. There was preparation to be done to feed around 15 or more people. Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to what He was teaching. Maratha lets the preparation activities overwhelm her and have her lose sight of what was most important in the life of a Christian. This was especially vital because Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to suffer and die.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 18:1-14

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. ² Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. ³ He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say." ⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread." ⁷ Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. ⁹ "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he said. ¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

18:2 hurried. The story in vv. 2–8 illustrates Near Eastern hospitality in several ways: 1. Abraham gave prompt attention to the needs of his guests. 2. He bowed low to the ground. 3. He politely addressed one of his guests as “my lord” and called himself “your servant,” a common way of speaking when addressing a superior. 4. He acted as if it would be a favor to him if they allowed him to serve them. 5. He asked that water be brought to wash their feet, an act of courtesy to refresh a traveler in a hot, dusty climate. 6. He prepared a lavish meal for them. 7. He stood nearby (v. 8), assuming the posture of a servant, to meet their every wish. (CSB)

18:8 curds. Curds are what we would call cottage cheese. (PBC)

18:9 in the tent. Women may have eaten separately, after the men, a custom still observed in some Near Eastern cultures. (TLSB)

Epistle – Colossians 1:21-29

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. ²⁴ Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵ I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

1:24 fill up ... what is still lacking. Does not mean that there was a deficiency in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Rather, it means that Paul suffered afflictions because he was preaching the good news of Christ’s atonement. Christ suffered on the cross to atone for sin, and Paul filled up Christ’s afflictions by experiencing the added sufferings necessary to carry this good news to a lost world. (CSB)

1:27 perfect.† Employed by the mystery religions and the Gnostics to describe those who had become possessors of the secrets or knowledge boasted of by the particular religion. But in Christ every believer is one of the perfect, as a result of God’s grace and Jesus’ atonement. (CSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” ⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

10:40 was distracted. This literally means “she was dragged around.” This could mean that she really wasn’t into doing this but felt obligated.

10:40 do you not care. Note her implied rebuke and criticism of Jesus. She expected Him to be sensitive to the workload that His arrival created. (TLSB)

10:40 tell her. In Martha's eyes, Mary should be helping. This, of course, is a reasonable expectation. (TLSB)

10:42 one thing is needful. This is the listening to Jesus in his Word. This is not to be taken for granted by even the most ardent Christians. In the parable of the Sower the devil used the worries to take away faith. Many a new Christian who comes into the church with great enthusiasm can quickly be sidetracked and soon lose that faith. It can also happen to long time Christians who have been active and then slowly drift. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)