

Notes for Next Sunday

Easter Sunday

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 25:6-9). On Mount Zion, the Lord of hosts will prepare a feast and will swallow up death forever. Death is what we deserve as the just penalty for our sin. No human efforts or resources can shelter us from this reproach. By Jesus' resurrection, death has been swallowed up in victory (1Co 15:54). As we await the day of our own bodily resurrection, we are invited to eat and drink with the Lord in His Holy Supper, a foretaste of the feast to come.

Epistle (1 Corinthians 15:1-11). Because of zeal for more knowledge, the Corinthians have neglected what has first importance: the simple truths and application of the Gospel. How great is the temptation for us to overlook the Gospel today! A multitude of contemporary issues can crowd out the Gospel of life and forgiveness in Jesus until it grows unclear in our minds. Praise God for the wonderful creeds that our forebears have handed down across the centuries, which take up Paul's very words, summarize the Holy Gospel, and etch it into our memories.

Gospel (Mark 16:1-8). Three women undertake the job of properly preparing Jesus' body for burial, which the press of time prevented earlier. When they arrive at the tomb, they find it empty and hear the wonderful (and temporarily paralyzing) message that Jesus has risen from the dead and the tomb is empty. In spite of Jesus' clear predictions on at least three occasions (8:31-32; 9:31; 10:33-34), His disciples do not believe. Jesus rises from the dead, proclaiming His victory to all creation and providing for all believers a resurrection to eternal life on the Last Day.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. ⁷On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ⁸he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. ⁹In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”

25:6 on this mountain. The place where God dwells and dispenses his grace through his appointed means. On Mount Calvary, God dwelling in Christ, procured grace for us. In our present age Zion⁷ equivalent is the church, wherein the means of grace are found. Here the Lord will exhibit his victorious reign before his people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

25:6 feast ... banquet. God's people eat of this banquet of grace every time they hear the gospel or receive the sacraments. As God's people read and study the Word, they eat from God's banquet table and receive nourishment for their souls. (PBC)

25:6 rich food. In the ancient Near East, where starvation was a constant threat, fatty and rich foods were the most desirable. (In Job 21:24, “bones rich in marrow” described a prosperous, satisfied person.) This fine meal fully satisfies the members of God's household, even amid our earthly sorrow and cares (cf also Ps. 36:8). The parallels to the Lord's Supper are obvious. This banquet is the end-times meal Jesus promised after instituting the Lord's Supper, when he will dine with us anew (Mt. 26:29; cf 1 Cor. 11:26) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

25:6 *aged wine*. Wines that have been left to stand on their lees (Sediment settling during fermentation, especially in wine dregs) have a richer flavor. (Concordia Bible)

25:7 *shroud ... sheet*. The pall on a coffin represents the clothing of Christ's righteousness, given in Holy Baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

25:8 *swallow up death*. Now, death “swallows” life. On that day, death itself will die. (TLSB)

25:8 *wipe away the tears*. This is often applied to those who have lost loved ones. However the “tears” are our tears caused by the disgrace and sin committed against God for the Gospel is that despite all this He remains faithful toward us by removing our disgrace by His grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

25:9 *we trusted ... he saved*. It means “wait for, trust in.” His salvation may seem a long time in coming. It did for Israel as she awaited the Messiah. Our lives may be prolonged in suffering. But those who wait for the Lord will not be disappointed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance ^a: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, ^b and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹ Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

15:1 *I want to remind you*. Lit, “make known.” He is “recalling it into memory” because they had learned it before. (TLSB)

15:2 *if you hold firmly*. *if you hold firmly*. You will stand and find salvation only if you cling to the Gospel. (CC p. 550)

15:2 *believed in vain*. † Not persevering in the Christian faith (cf. Judas Iscariot, who eventually showed that he did not remain a believer). (CSB)

15:3 *what I received I passed on to you as of first importance*. Though Paul had much to teach the Corinthians, nothing was more important than the Gospel. This is always true. The Gospel predominates in Christian teaching. (TLSB)

15:3 *that Christ died ... with the Scriptures*. These words form the heart of the Apostles' Creed, which summarized the Gospel for the early Christians. “He suffered, died, and was buried so that He might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owe” (LC II 31). (TLSB)

15:4 *on the third day*. Cf. Mt 12:40. The Jews counted parts of days as whole days. Thus the three days would include part of Friday afternoon, all of Saturday, and Sunday morning. A similar way of reckoning time is seen in Jn 20:26 (lit. “after eight days,” NIV “a week later”); two Sundays are implied, one at each end of the expression. (CSB)

15:6 more than five hundred ... at the same time. Scripture records numerous appearances of Jesus over the 40 days after the resurrection. Paul recounts six examples here. Apostles were not always alone when Jesus visited them (cf Lk 24:33; Ac 1:14–15; 13:31). Paul does not specifically appeal to the women who first saw Jesus after the resurrection. This may be because in Roman culture the testimony of women was not regarded as fully reliable. (TLSB)

15:6 James ... apostles. James, Jesus' half brother, is singled out because he came to lead the Jerusalem churches. (TLSB)

15:8 one abnormally born. Medical term for a premature birth, including stillbirth, miscarriage, and abortion. Possibly this insult was used by Paul's opponents to tear down his authority. Earlier, Paul asserted his authority; now he purposely humbles himself to emphasize God's grace (cf v 10). (TLSB)

15:11 so we preach. Paul now ranks himself with the other apostles, demonstrating unity with them despite conflicts about his apostleship. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" ⁸Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

16:1 Sabbath was over. About 6:00 P.M. Saturday evening. No purchases were possible on the Sabbath. (CSB)

16:1 MARY MAGDALENE – Mary of Magdala (Magdalene). She was a leader among these women because she had received more than all the rest, and therefore her measure of devotion and love was greater. Fourteen times Mary is mentioned by name. In eight of these her name leads the list.

Somehow the name of this woman has come to be associated with fallen womanhood the world over largely because some scholars chose to identify her with the unnamed sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50. There is no evidence in the Bible to support this thought.

16:1 Mary the mother of James. This was James the younger. (CSB)

16:1 Salome. She was the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John – Sister of Mary mother of Jesus.

16:1 spices. Sweet-smelling ointments were usually wrapped around corpses in strips of cloth before entombment. (TLSB)

16:4 Who will roll the stone away ... ? Setting the large stone in place was a relatively easy task, but once it had slipped into the groove cut in bedrock in front of the entrance it was very difficult to remove. (CSB)

16:5 As they entered the tomb. Inside the large opening of the facade of the tomb was a forechamber, at the back of which a low rectangular opening led to the burial chamber. (CSB)

16:5 young man dressed in a white robe. An angel. Angels typically appear in the form of young, adult males. (TLSB)

16:6 He has risen! The climax of Mark's Gospel is the resurrection, without which Jesus' death, though noble, would be indescribably tragic. But in the resurrection he is declared to be the Son of God with power (Ro 1:4). (CSB)

16:7 and Peter. Jesus showed special concern for Peter, in view of his confident boasting and subsequent denials. (CSB)