

Notes for Next Sunday

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (1 Kings 19:1-8). Elijah becomes a wanted man, as Queen Jezebel seeks to kill him. He flees into the wilderness to Mount Horeb, where centuries earlier, Moses had received the Ten Commandments. At times, believers may feel the need to flee from those who would destroy them because of their Christian faith and their profession of that faith. Will it come to that in our land? Even if it does, we can be sure that the Lord will always be with us, patiently blessing us with His love, mercy, and grace.

Epistle (Ephesians 4:17-5:2). Paul describes the new life that results from the Gospel. Yet, the Law also continues to apply because of our sinful nature. As Luther explains the Ten Commandments in the Catechism, the Law both forbids sinful behavior (“shall not”) and urges good works (“shall”). As we inevitably fail to live up to such demands, forgiveness preserves and restores the harmony of the Church.

Gospel (John 6:35-51). The bread of life discourse occurs in a Passover context (6:4), bringing to mind the sacrifice this Incarnate One will offer to atone for sin. By giving his flesh for the life of the world, Jesus declares this atonement is universal and not particular.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Kings 19:1-8

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”³ Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there,⁴ while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”⁵ Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.”⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

19:2 May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely. A curse formula. (CSB)

19:4 broom tree. This was Desert bush that grows to 10-12 feet. Hebrew text has “one broom tress,” empathizing scarcity of vegetation in that desolate area. (TLSB)

19:4 prayed that he might die. He felt that he had lived long enough, that he had done his duty; he was tired of his prophetic office and longed for rest. (Kretzmann)

19:7 angel of the LORD. Ministering angel acts in a comforting, gentle manner. Typically, the appearance of an angel evokes fear. (TLSB)

19:7 *the journey is too much for you.* The Lord who fed Elijah miraculously at the Kerith Ravine (1 Kings 17:5) and has numbered the hairs on our heads acted once again. When Elijah opened his eyes, there was some freshly baked bread and some water. (PBC)

19:8 *forty days and forty nights.* Sustained by the Lord as Moses had been for the same length of time on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:18; 34:28) and as Jesus would be in the desert (Mt 4:2, 11). (CSB)

19:8 *Horeb, the mountain of God.*† An alternate name for Mount Sinai (see Ex 3:1; 19:1–3), located in the desert apparently about 250 miles south of Beersheba. (CSB)

EPISTLE – Ephesians 4:17-5:2

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. 20 You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. 21 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

4:17 *I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord.* It is important to realize that the holiness Paul is advocating is not done in order to gain favor with God or improve our standing before Him. Our redemption and salvation have been completely taken care of by Christ’s work. (PBC)

4:18 *darkened in their understanding.* There is a progression here. Darkened suggests a blurring of moral distinctions. Repeated doing of what we know is wrong results in ceasing to think of those things as wrong at all.

4:18 *hardening of their hearts.* The word translated “hardened” here carries the picture of a rock harder than marble. With such a hardened heart, God cannot get through to us. Hardened hearts make for untouchable consciences, immune to the appeals of God. It’s hard to give life to a stone. The result is a daily life that will not be touched by God’s convicting law or his appeals of love. It is reminiscent of Pharaoh in Exodus 7-11. (LL)

4:19 *having lost all sensitivity.* Being past feeling, they have lost all feeling of shame, having lost their sense of right and wrong, having lost all sensitivity, having become callous. (Buls)

4:23 *made new.* Reborn, re-created (2 Cor. 5:17), which happened in Baptism (Titus 3:5) and continues daily (2 Cor. 4:16). (TLSB)

4:23 new self, created to be like God. In the Early Church, candidates for Baptism stripped and were baptized naked, after which they were clothed in white. This pictured the removal of the sinful nature and the re-clothing with Christ in Baptism. (TLSB)

4:26 In your anger. Christians do not lose their emotions at conversion, but their emotions should be purified. Some anger is sinful, some is not. (CSB)

4:26 Do not let the sun go down. No anger is to outlast the day. (CSB)

4:27 a foothold. Sometimes we make it easy for the devil. We put ourselves into situations where sin is more likely. Give the devil an inch, and he will take a mile. (LL)

5:1 Be imitators. The traditional chapter division is unfortunate. The chief way to imitate God is to forgive and to love in a sacrificial way. These acts flow from being re-created in God's image. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – John 6:35-51

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." ⁴¹ At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?'" ⁴³ "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

6:35 I am. The first of seven self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by "I am." In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Ex 3:14. (CSB)

6:35 bread of life. At this point Jesus becomes clear and emphatic. "Do you understand? I am the bread of life. If you receive Me by faith, you will have eternal life. You will be in a loving, saving relationship with Me and with My Father. And that relationship will never end. Even death will not end it. (LL)

6:35 come to me. "Comes" can be interchanged with "believe" and "hungry" with "thirsty." In Jesus all spiritual hunger and thirst is satisfied. WE have that blessing from Jesus as long as we believe in Him. (PBC)

6:39 I shall lose none. Salvation of the believers is secure in Christ, who let's none of His own slip through His fingers. (TLSB)

6:44 draws.† People do not come to Christ on their own initiative; the Father draws them. (CSB)

6:45 Everyone who ... learns from him comes. This is from a section in Isaiah, where the prophet foretells Zion's future glory when the Messiah will rule His people. (TLSB)

6:49 they died. The Jews themselves had referred to the manna in the wilderness and had called it bread from heaven. But what lasting value could be in food which did not sustain life beyond the few years of this earthly existence? Their fathers had died. (Kretzmann)

6:51 I am the living bread. For the third time Jesus says: "I am the life-giving bread." Here we have a repetition of the thought in verse 50, except that this time He speaks of eternal life. (Buls)

6:51 my flesh, which I will give. Looking forward to Calvary. Providing eternal life would be costly to the Giver. (CSB)