

Notes for Next Sunday

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Exodus 16:2-15). God meets Israel's need for food with bread from heaven. However, when the Israelites ignore God's simple rules for its collection and consumption, they provoke an exasperated rebuke from God (vv 28–29). Israel does not understand at the time, but God is blessing them through this experience, training them in the rhythms of work and Sabbath rest. These rhythms still apply for us today because we require both physical rest and rest from our sins through the righteous labors of Jesus.

Epistle (Ephesians 4:1-16). Paul highlights the gifts of Christ that make us His Body; as one Body, we are protected from the dangers of our times. Modern individualism and consumerism make it easy to treat the Church as “all about me.” Thanks be to God, the Church is all about Jesus, who provides for our salvation and edification.

Gospel (John 6:22-35). This reading comes after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-14). This is the only miracle that is included in all four Gospels. St. John alone provides the account of Jesus' speech regarding Himself as the Bread of Life. This text was occasioned by the aftermath when the people wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him a king – their kind of king, an earthly “bread king” (6:15).

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

² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.” ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.” ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?” ⁸ Moses also said, “You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.” ⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” ¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud. ¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’” ¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.

16:2 grumbled. Collectively, the nation once again showed its lack of confidence in God's chosen leaders. (TLSB)

16:3 died by the hand of the LORD. Israel tested God with illogical, unwarranted faultfinding. (TLSB)

16:4 I will rain down bread. Without rebuke God answers. This is often the pattern in Jesus' ministry as well. He ignores the silly and stupid requests with loving responses often teaching (usually spiritually) people as he supplies their needs. By using this phrase he was pointing out that this food was not coming from anything man produced on earth but from above (God). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

16:4 test. God set simple rules about when and how to gather the bread to test Israel's confidence in His daily care for them. (TLSB)

16:5 sixth day ... twice as much as they gather on the other days. The people were to gather twice as much on the sixth day so that they would not have to gather food on the seventh day of the week, which was the Sabbath. (TLSB)

16:9 Come near before the LORD. How this happened is not entirely clear. It seems that the Lord drew near to them in the cloud. (TLSB)

16:13 quail came. Small game birds that migrate through this area in large numbers. Their migration was a mark of God's providence. (TLSB)

16:15 What is it? Literally a "whatness that is called manna. Much like an object lesson, the food illustrates the reality of God's loving kindness. This, again, proves that the help came from God and no human.

EPISTLE – Ephesians 4:1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it ^a says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

4:1 to live a life worthy of calling. Because the Ephesians have this new life in Christ, Paul can expect a proper response from them. (PBC)

4:2 Paul lists four qualities, divided into two pairs. (PBC)

4:3 make every effort. This means a burning desire or blazing zeal for the cause of unity.

4:3 keep the unity. We are truly one because God's Spirit made the Church one in Christ. True unity is neither created nor destroyed by our actions. Rather, Paul exhorts us to treasure this unity and act accordingly. (TLSB)

4:8 captives. Satan and hellish hosts, and he sees in Christ's ascension a triumph over the forces and powers of darkness. (Stoeckhardt)

4:9 ascended ... descended. Paul's emphasis in this section is on Christ's exalted return to heaven. Hence it seems somewhat more likely that the apostle's reference is to Christ's state of humiliation. (PBC)

4:11 apostles. Means to be a "sent one." Someone who is delegated to be an ambassador (special messenger) of the Gospel. Acts 1:21-22 defines an apostle as someone who: (1) was with Jesus the whole time and (2) witnessed his resurrection. In a broader sense Paul was also an apostle (Ephesians 1:1).

4:11 prophets. Probably not of the OT, but those in the apostolic age to whom special revelation was given. (TLSB)

4:11 evangelists. While the other gifted people helped the church grow through edification, the evangelists helped the church grow by augmentation. Since the objective mentioned in v. 12 is "to prepare God's people for works of service," we may assume that evangelists, among their various ministries, helped other Christians in their testimony. (CSB)

4:11 pastors and teachers. † Because of the Greek grammatical construction (one article with two nouns; also, the word "some" introduces both words together), it is clear that these two nouns describe one office. Those who have pastoral care for God's people (the image is that of shepherding) will naturally provide "food" from the Scriptures (teaching). They will be especially gifted as teachers. (CSB)

4:12 to prepare God's people for works of service. Those mentioned in v. 11 were not to do all the work for the people, but were to train the people to do the work themselves. (CSB)

4:12 so that the body of Christ may be built up. The purpose of this work is for the perfecting, for consummation of the saints. (Stoeckhardt)

4:13 mature ... fullness of Christ. † Not only the maturity of doctrinal conviction just mentioned, nor a personal maturity that includes the ability to relate well to other people (cf. vv. 2-3), but also the maturity of the perfectly balanced character of Christ. (CSB)

4:14 infants. Reborn through Baptism, Christians should not remain like infants, for false doctrine always threatens them. (TLSB)

4:14 cunning ... craftiness ... deceitful scheming. No specific false teaching is mentioned, but Paul is probably referring to pagan Greek philosophies and Judaizing. (TLSB)

4:15 speaking the truth in love. Concern for true doctrine and love for one another are not alternatives, but belong together. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – John 6:22-35

²² The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. ²³ Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that

endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”³⁰ So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”³¹ Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”³² Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”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.

6:26 I tell you the truth. The expression "in very truth I say to" occurs here and in verse 32. Jesus uses it here because the people themselves did not know their own true character so well as did Jesus. For their own good He tells them. Their motive is utterly carnal. Note that Jesus did not answer their question. (Buls)

6:27 Father has placed His seal of approval. To put a stamp of approval on something to verify that in this case Jesus is the one who bring eternal life. This verb speaks of something that has taken place in the past and that was at Jesus' Baptism.

6:28 What must we do ... ? They missed the point that eternal life is Christ's gift and were thinking in terms of achieving it by pious works. (CSB)

6:29 work of God. Believing in Jesus Christ is the indispensable “work” God calls for—the one that leads to eternal life. (CSB)

6:31 manna. A popular Jewish expectation was that when the Messiah came he would renew the sending of manna. The crowd probably reasoned that Jesus had done little compared to Moses. He had fed 5,000; Moses had fed a nation. He did it once; Moses did it for 40 years. He gave ordinary bread; Moses gave “bread from heaven.” (CSB)

6:34 Give us always our daily bread. The people continue to understand daily bread as something physical, as something separate and distinct from the person of Jesus/God. We too eagerly go after that which nourishes the body; but we have a greater need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)