

Notes for Next Sunday

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Amos 8:4-7). The poor, widows and fatherless children were a very high priority for God. He was very displeased when any of the above three were abused. Amos lists some specific ways that the people—especially the wealthy—pervert justice and oppress the poor. Amos levels similar charges in 2:6–7; 5:11–12. (TLSB)

Epistle (1 Timothy 2:1-15). In this whole chapter Paul instructs Timothy, as young pastor, about proper behavior in Christian worship. Paul writes on organization and order for the public services of the churches. Corporate prayer and worship were not only first among the practical issues raised by Paul in this Epistle, but they are also first (primary) importance for fulfilling the charge to Timothy outlined in chapter 1. (TLSB)

Gospel (Luke 16:1-15). This is a very unique story about an unrighteous steward. This illustrative story functions in the same way as a parable. Interpreters differ over this difficult parable, unlike the clearer symbolism of parables in chapter 15. It seems impossible that the rich man can be commended for integrity while at the same time the manager is praised for self-interest. Instead of viewing elements of this parable symbolically, it is best to stress Jesus' main point in v 9 of "making friends." (TLSB) Making friends by means of unrighteous mammon no doubt refers to almsgiving in fulfillment of Jesus' exhortation to "sell your possessions and give alms" (12:33). Those who receive the alms become your friends because you are merciful to them in times of want, even as the Father in heaven is merciful to you (6:36). Just as the lord in the parable was known as a man of mercy, the steward imitated his lord's mercy in the settling of his accounts. He used mammon mercifully, and that is why he was praised as prudent. The reward for those who make such friends by sharing possessions is an eternal one: instead of only being received into the homes of the friends, as in 16:4, they will be received into the eternal tents of the merciful Father. Jesus is not teaching works-righteousness here when he says "make." Rather, he is enjoining the display of merciful generosity by those who have been shown generous mercy by God. (CC pp. 618-619) That the Pharisees were "lovers of money" makes for the transition from 16:13 to 16:14. There is an overall flow to the thought: "Sons of light" are prudent about the coming of the kingdom, and the Pharisees would be too, if they heeded the witness of Moses and the Prophets to the kingdom and the King. (CC p. 612)

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Amos 8:4-7

⁴Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, ⁵saying, "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?"— skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, ⁶buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat. ⁷The LORD has sworn by the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done.

8:4 hear this. This is an attention-getting alert letting people know that important news is coming. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

8:4 trample. Means to totally crush. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

8:5 Sabbath means to finish, cease, do away with work. These people hypocritically cease work on the Sabbath, then during the rest of the week they make the poor cease to exist. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

8:5 *dishonest scales*. Scales of deceit. When the wheat was on one side of the balance, the dishonest merchant would put the lighter stone on the other side, but when the customer put his payment on the scale, the merchant would balance it with a heavier weight. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

8:6 *buying poor*. Some in Israel stooped to trafficking in slave trade. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Timothy 2:1-15

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone —² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior,⁴ who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.⁷ And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.⁸ I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.⁹ I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

2:2 *kings and all those in authority*. See Jer 29:7. The notorious Roman emperor Nero (A.D. 54–68) was in power when Paul wrote these words. (CSB)

2:2 *peaceful lives*. A stable civil government allows Christians to carry out their vocations unhindered and without harassment. The uncommon prosperity and peace of the Roman Empire (the so-called *Pax Romana*) opened many doors for Paul to carry out his ministry throughout the Mediterranean world. Paul himself was a citizen of Rome (Ac 22:22–29). (TLSB)

2:5-6 “The Scriptures do not teach that we are to call on the saints or to ask the saints for help. Scripture sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Atoning Sacrifice, High Priest, and Intercessor [1 Timothy 2:5–6]. He is to be prayed to. He has promised that He will hear our prayer [John 14:13]” (AC XXI 2–3). (TLSB)

2:9 *braided hair*. Elaborate hairstyles and ornate jewelry in the first century were expressions of vanity and sexual promiscuity. (TLSB) Not a total ban on the wearing of jewelry or braided hair. Rather, Paul was expressing caution in a society where such things were signs of extravagant luxury and proud personal display. (CSB)

2:12 *must be silent*. She was not to interrupt the sermons or doctrinal discussions in public services by questions or remarks of her own, she was in no way to interfere with, or take part in, the public teaching of the congregation as such. Her position is indeed, in many questions pertaining to the household, one of coordination, in the public.

2:13 *Adam was formed first*. Paul appeals to the priority of Adam in creation, which predates the fall. Thus he views the man-woman relationship set forth in this passage as grounded in creation. (CSB)

2:15 *she ... they*. Paul’s argument shifts from the consideration of one woman’s (Eve’s) sin to the salvation provided for all women by the birth of a child, Jesus, who would defeat Satan on behalf of all women. (TLSB) Women are not saved by giving birth. Through faith in the child Jesus, women are saved

as they live out their God-given vocations. Childbearing is an example of a most noble, exclusively feminine vocation. (TLSB)

2:15 *faith ... self-control*. Although these virtues apply to both sexes, Paul applies them specifically to women here. These qualities characterize the life of every Christian woman (vv 9–10). (TLSB)

GOSPEL Luke 16:1-15

Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’ ³ “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— ⁴ I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ ⁵ “So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ “‘Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’ ⁷ “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ ⁸ “‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’ ⁹ “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ¹⁰ I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. ¹¹ “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹² So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹³ And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? ¹⁴ “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” ¹⁵ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.

16:4 *I know what I will do*. The steward had probably been over charging people. It was not uncommon at that time to do that. It was a way of getting around the Mosaic law the prohibited taking interest from fellow Jews. Now he would under charge them and win their favor.

16:6 The lord is a perfect example of Jesus’ exhortations in the Sermon on the Plain to be generous and merciful: “Do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return” (6:35) and “Become merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (6:36). (CC p. 615)

16:10 *trusted with much*. Cf. 19:17; Mt 25:21. Faithfulness is not determined by the amount entrusted but by the character of the person who uses it. (CSB)