

Notes for Next Sunday

Last Sunday of Church Year

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Malachi 3:13-18). In this reading we see that the Israelites were complaining about the unfairness concerning how the wicked people prospered while God's children did not. They seem to blame God for this inequity. However, the faithful people talked to God and He listened. He responds by assuring them that they are his dear children and that he has compassion on them and that on Judgment Day all unjust acts will be taken care.

Epistle (Colossians 1:13-20). In this reading there is also unfairness. Paul is in chains up for things he did not do. BUT, we don't find him complaining about his situation. He is instead totally focused on the gospel being preached. Paul points out that some people are doing it for the wrong reasons BUT the gospel is being shared. While Paul expresses some hope of being delivered from his imprisonment, he also is okay with deliverance may also come through his dying and going to heaven.

Gospel (Luke 23:27-43). The ultimate injustice is described in this reading, the Crucifixion of Jesus. In the process Jesus is humiliated in just about every way possible. Dying on a cross was the worst of the many ways the Romans had of terminating someone's life. When suffering the indignities Jesus thinks of all of His enemies when He states: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*" (v. 34). In spite of all that He had to endure He continues to look for souls to save by promising the thief next to Him that the thief would be with Him in paradise.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Malachi 3:13-18

¹³“You have spoken arrogantly against me,” says the LORD. “Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’ ¹⁴“You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? ¹⁵ But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.” ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. ¹⁷ “On the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

3:14 what did we gain. Rhetorical question implying that there was no gain for them in following the requirements of God's Law. Cf Ps 73:1–12. (TLSB)

3:15 arrogant. Those who do evil and despise the Lord seem to have His blessing (2:17). (TLSB)

The answer to this whole unfair discussion – on unfairness! – is simply, “The Lord is fair! Judgment Day will be the grand final show of God's fairness. No one will be able to contest the outcome of that day. (PBC)

3:16 talked with each other. In the face of the widespread complaining against God (vv. 14–15), they sought mutual encouragement in fellowship. (CSB)

3:16 listened and heard. The Lord was not pleased with many of the hard words spoken against Him (3:13), but He responded positively to the words of these believers. (TLSB)

3:16 scroll of remembrance. This is comparable to the Book of Life (Rv 21:27). God will remember and deliver those who fear Him. (TLSB)

3:17 compassion. The word here for “compassion” is the same word used in Hebrew to describe Pharaoh’s daughter’s feelings as she peered into the little ark and saw crying baby Moses. How comforting to have a God of compassion! “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...” (Hebrews 4:14). The sympathy comes because God is our Father. He feels for us because we are his. Isaiah 49:15 points to the strongest kind of love we know: “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you.” (PBC)

EPISTLE – Colossians 1:13-20

¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

1:14 redemption. Paul puts these (redemption and forgiveness) teachings together. This may have been in contrast to the idea that forgiveness was a preliminary step of salvation, a teaching held by later Gnostics. “No one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words say, that he ‘be saved.’ We know that to be saved is nothing other than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil” (LC IV 24–25). (TLSB)

1:16 by him all things were created. See Jn 1:3. Seven times in six verses Paul mentions “all creation,” “all things” and “everything,” thus stressing that Christ is supreme over all. (CSB)

1:16 thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. Names common to Judaism and the NT of angelic or demonic powers that were thought to control the universe. The false teachers apparently assigned to them power independent of Christ (2:8) and held them to be objects of worship (2:18). (TLSB)

1:20 making peace. Jesus’ death makes peace possible by faith, but it is also His victory over all who continue to oppose Him. Cf. Eph 2:14–16. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – LUKE 23:27-43

²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. ²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then ”“they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”” ³¹ For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” ³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.” ³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” ³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁹ One of

the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

23:27 mourned and wailed. To “strike oneself” as a sign of mourning is typical in the Mediterranean world even today. (CC p. 914)

23:28 weep for yourselves and for your children. Because of the terrible suffering to befall Jerusalem some 40 years later when the Romans would besiege the city and utterly destroy the temple. (CSB)

23:29 Blessed are the barren. Ordinarily, childlessness was a shame in Israel (Gn 30:23; Lk 1:24–25), but is preferred to the coming suffering. (TLSB)

23:30 Fall on us! An appeal to be killed quickly. (TLSB)

23:34 divided up his clothes. Executioners received a victim’s clothing. Casting lots involves chance, yet God foresaw the outcome. (TLSB)

23:36 wine vinegar. A sour drink carried by the soldiers for the day. Jesus refused a sedative drink (Mt 27:34; Mk 15:23) but later was given the vinegar drink when he cried out in thirst (Jn 19:28–30). Luke shows that it was offered in mockery. (CSB)

23:38 written notice. The victim’s crime was usually posted, but Pilate stated Jesus’ title as a fact to mock the Jews. (TLSB)

23:42 come into your kingdom. Statement of true faith. He alone sees Jesus’ messianic kingship, which welcomes sinners. (TLSB)