

Notes for Next Sunday

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 62:1-5). God will not keep silent even though there are many ungodly people, even among the children of Israel. But the Lord will find a small number of people that are willing to believe in God and worship Him. This text is proof of God's willingness to send His enlightening Word into the souls of people again and again.

Epistle (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Among the many things the Corinthians had gotten wrong, were spiritual gifts. They had been using the abilities they had to show off and put others down. In this text Paul is teaching them that the talents and strength given by God were to be used build up the church. The thread that runs through these verses is that the Spirit of God is the one who gives them and it is He who determines who has what gift each person is to possess. It is also the Spirit who determines the use that is made of each and every gift.

Gospel (John 2:1-11). This describes the beginning of Jesus' ministry which includes His first miracle. In verses 3-4 there is dialogue between Jesus and Mary concerning the timing of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is reminding Mary that what He does and when is determined by God the Father. Mary does not take offense but shows great faith when she confidently tells the servants to do what Jesus tells them. The miracle is discovered when the master of the banquet finds that the good wine is being served last.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 62:1-5

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. ² The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. ³ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. ⁵ As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Zion and Jerusalem refer to the Church of God. It is the invisible Church, the assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. Isaiah has taken a lot of heat for his prophecy. He is probably weary by now. But he knows that God's Word does not fail and therefore goes on prophesying. The prophet describes the rise of the Gospel as torches and rays of the sun (v. 1)

When things were not working the way God had laid them out he would make new covenants. He would also rename some people like Abraham, Sarah and Jacob (v. 2).

Since the Lord holds the Church, pictured as this crown, in His hand, the Church is His work of art – His creation, which He desires to display to the world (v. 3)

When the people of Israel are led off in captivity the land they occupied is left desolate. Strangers took it over. The word Hephzibah (name of Hezekiah's wife) means "my delight is in her." Beulah means "the wedded one." Both are a stark contrast to "Deserted" (v. 4).

If God had not taken pity on His fallen creatures, their fate would have been like that of an unfaithful wife, abandoned by her husband to live out her days amid the ruins of her wrecked life (v. 5).

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Paul points out that spiritual gifts were given by God. They are to be used to help fellow Christians to grow in their faith. They are also to be used to bring others to the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ.

12:1 I do not want you to be ignorant. He wanted to teach the proper use of spiritual gifts, just as he had given them the right information about the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

12:1 spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are more than the natural abilities we may inherit from our parents or learn about from our teachers. They are not something we can fully develop and use on our own through effort and experience. Each of us is born with talents and strengths given by God. The Holy Spirit can cultivate and develop those gifts, and even give us new ones. God may help develop these gifts through the instruction and influence of other Christians. (LL)

12:2 led astray to mute idols. At one time the Corinthians had been led by various influences to worship mute idols (cf. 10:19–20), but now they are to be led by the Holy Spirit. (CSB)

12:3 “Jesus be cursed”... “Jesus is Lord.” Perhaps someone in Corinth who claimed spiritual authority in the congregation voiced this evil confession. (TLSB)

12:4-6 same Spirit ... same Lord ... same God. These verses, reflecting the Trinity, show the diversity and unity of spiritual gifts. (CSB)

12:7 to each one the manifestation ... given for the common good. Every member of the body of Christ has been given some spiritual gift that is an evidence of the Spirit’s working in his life. All the gifts are intended to build up the members of the Christian community. They are not to be used for selfish advantage, as some in the Corinthian community apparently were doing. (CSB)

12:9 faith. Not saving faith, which all Christians have, but faith to meet a specific need within the body of Christ. (CSB)

12:11 as he determines.† The Holy Spirit determines which gift or gifts each believer should have. (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 2:1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."⁴ **"Dear woman, why do you involve me?"** Jesus replied. **"My time has not yet come."**⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus said to the servants, **"Fill the jars with water";** so they filled them to the brim.⁸ Then he told them, **"Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."** They did so,⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."¹¹ This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

In today's Gospel, Jesus performs his first miracle at the wedding at Cana and begins to reveal His glory as the Son of God to His disciples and to all Israel with even greater things to come.

In the ancient Near East, a typical wedding began when the bride was brought by her relatives and friends to the groom's house in a procession. The festivities could last seven days or even two weeks (v. 1). Since Jesus and his mother had been invited, it is possible that the wedding involved one of their relatives (v. 2)

Wine was the symbol in the OT of physical and spiritual joy, future hope and abundance. Running out of wine or having wine of poor quality at a wedding was a social blunder.

The wine had begun to run short, and Jesus' mother approached him with her concern. Jesus' answer is not a disrespectful. Rather, Jesus is indicating that Mary need not concern herself. This will be Jesus' responsibility. He acts in His Father's time in accordance with His Father's will (vv. 3-4)

When Mary says, "do whatever he tells you," she is showing her great faith. This is consistent with how he replies in Luke 1:38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said" (v. 5).

In rabbinic thought, stone did not attract impurity, so the jars could be properly cleansed and reused. Jews became ceremonially defiled during the normal circumstances of daily life, and were cleansed by pouring water over the hands. For a lengthy feast with many guests a large amount of water was required for this purpose (v. 6)

The "master of the feast" (in charge of the physical needs) did not know where the wine came from, the servants and Mary knew, and, implicit in v 11, the disciples knew as well. Therefore, they believe in Jesus. (Jesus had created 120 gallons of wine.

John always refers to Jesus' miracles as "signs," a word emphasizing the significance of the action rather than the marvel (v. 11).