

Notes for Next Sunday

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 55:1-5). In chapter 53 Isaiah speaks of the Suffering Servant (Jesus) whose suffering and death bring victory to all who believed in Him. Now the news goes out about the salvation achieved by Christ. The word “listen” is a cry arousing attention – “this is important.” They had been eating the spiritual “food” of idols which was costly and provided no value. Yahweh has prepared a victory feast (55:1–2) and has invited all to be incorporated into David’s everlasting covenant (55:3). The result is that the guests become his witnesses to the world (55:4–5).

Epistle (Romans 9:1-5). Far from being anti-Semitic in his dealing with the members of the Jewish race, Paul suffers “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” in his heart because of their rejection of the Promised Messiah. Paul emphasizes that thought with a tripe assertion: I am speaking the truth; I am not lying; the Holy Spirit has instructed my conscience. The real proof of his love for the Jewish nation comes when he says he is willing to be cursed. That would mean to be delivered over to the wrath of God. Moses had made similar offer in Ex. 32:32. This being a prayer in which Paul lifts up his fellow Jews that they might believe in Christ as their Savior.

Gospel (Matthew 14:13-21). The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. It continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey. Following the disciples are five thousand men and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for him on the other side. He wanted to mourn in solitude, but instead he was surrounded by people. The *Gospel* is the feeding of the 5,000. This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. According to Matthew, the crowd is hungry and helpless in a lonely place. Jesus gives them “manna” in the way that God provided for Moses and his people in their wilderness wanderings. The Messiah has compassion on the crowd and turns scarcity into abundance.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 55:1-5

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. ⁴ See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. ⁵ Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.”

55:1 waters. Figurative for spiritual refreshment. (CSB) Though readily available in many parts of the world, water was most precious in dry Israel. (TLSB)

55:1 wine and milk. Wine and milk are figurative representatives of spiritual revival, re-creation and nourishment. These terms stand as symbols of impending salvation.

55:1 without money. The death of the Jesus paid for the free gift of life. (CSB)

55:2 what is not bread. Perhaps the husks of pagan religious practices.

55:2 *richest of fare*. Jesus reiterates this invitation: “Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life” (Jn. 6:27). He goes on to promise: I am the bread of life. The one of who comes to me will never hunger, and the one who believes in me will never thirst” (Jn. 6:35). (CC)

55:4 *witness to the peoples*. † A reference to David’s Son, the Messiah, who was a light to the nations (CSB)

55:5 *you will summon nations*. Many nations, esp those thus far unknown, will stream to Israel because of the deeds of the Lord. This envisioned worldwide outreach begins with the Lord’s summons to Abram (Gn 12:1–3). (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Romans 9:1-5

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen

9:1 *conscience confirms*. Paul’s clear conscience provides testimony to his truthfulness; he feels a deep compulsion to speak. (TLSB)

9:3 *brothers*. This is the only place where Paul uses this term for Jews, his kinsmen by race. (TLSB)

9:4 *people of Israel*. Sacred name that marks the Jews as elect and favored recipients of the revelation, the grace, and the promises of God (cf Eph 2:12). Spanning the OT, Paul gives a compact summary of the magnificent privileges belonging to God’s people. (TLSB)

9:5 *forever praised! Amen*. These words were a common devotional language of Jews, who daily prayed the “Eighteen Benedictions” or blessings. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” ¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” ¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. ¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

14:13 *followed him on foot*. People came in droves on foot from the surrounding towns. The Gospel message had attracted them like it does in Luke 15.

14:14 *had compassion on them*. This refers to the inner organs – heart, kidneys, liver, intestines, lungs – and later spoke of them as the seat of emotions such as anger and anxious desire. The Latin literally means to “suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another.” Compassion comes from identifying

closely with another. He had this desire because they were as sheep without a shepherd, going about aimlessly and lost.

14:15 a remote place. It means “deserted” in the sense that no people live there.

14:16 give them something to eat. Very plainly he is expecting them to find help in Him.

14:17 five loaves and two fish. Staple foods in Galilee, especially for the poor, but barely enough to feed the 12 disciples and Jesus. (TLSB)

14:19 looking up to heaven. Jesus probably spoke a traditional Jewish blessing such as “Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe! You bring forth bread from the earth.” At the Last Supper, Jesus likewise spoke a blessing before giving the bread. (TLSB)

14:19 gave them. The customary time for eating had passed. Middle Easterners ordinarily partook of two meals per day—a simple breakfast between 10 and 11 in the morning, and a large meal in the late afternoon, around four o’clock. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 3)

14:20 all ate. No one was overlooked.

14:20 were satisfied. All of the people had enough to eat, and none went hungry. (TLSB)

14:20 picked up twelve basketfuls. The left-overs amounted to many time more than the original five loaves and two fishes. One commentator makes an interesting point here that each disciple had a basketful and each then ate from his own basket for then or for the next day.

14:21 besides women and children. Matthew alone notes this. He was writing to the Jews, who did not permit women and children to eat with men in public. So they were in a place by themselves. (CSB)