

Notes for Next Sunday

Third Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Genesis 3:8-15). With the words that God speaks to the serpent, to Eve, and to Adam after their disobedience, He sets the course for the rest of biblical history. Here there is judgment for sin, but also the first hint that the effects of the fall will one day be undone. There is no way back to Eden. The only way for Adam and Eve and their descendants is forward to the cross. The long story culminates in Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman, but it does not end there. Today, we are part of the unfolding story. We have received God's grace through the Seed of the woman, and now we are sent out to the ends of the earth to bear witness to the completion of God's plan of redemption and to offer His grace in Jesus Christ to all the descendants of Adam and Eve.

Epistle (2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1). Living and sharing the life of Christ with others often has a cost. Paul instructs us to look beyond the momentary affliction to the eternal glory of salvation in Jesus. He tells us to look to the treasure, not to the earthen vessel, for our confidence with God. God's promises of life and salvation are the most real things in our lives. Because that is true, believers can look at afflictions and struggles purposefully as opportunities that make God's power more evident to those around them. Afflictions are temporary nuisances that will surely give way to the glory of life eternal with our Savior.

Gospel (Mark 3:20-35). Those who refuse to recognize Jesus as God's Son and acknowledge His works as manifestations of the Holy Spirit remain under the dominion of Satan. But Jesus has overcome Satan. Those baptized into Christ have received not only Him but also His promised Holy Spirit. In verses 31-35 loyalty to God takes precedence over loyalty to blood relations. This is still hard to hear today, as the temptation to put relationships with family and friends above God can be overwhelming. But the Lord wants us to have both relationships, and have them as healthy as they can be. He stands first in our lives because He placed Himself last, to humbly bear our sins and make us children of God.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 3:8-15

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." ¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

3:8 cool of then day. Hebrew indicates that it was the time of the day when the breeze blows, probably evening. (TLSB)

3:8 hid themselves. Just covering themselves gave physical expression to their awareness of separation from each other, so their attempt to hide from God gives physical expression to their awareness of separation from Him (cf v. 10, Adam's response to God). (TLSB)

3:9 called to the man. God addressed Adam. As the head and steward of God’s creation, Adam is responsible for what has happened, even though the woman was the first to disobey God’s command. (TLSB)

3:9 Where are you? A rhetorical question meant to make Adam think about what he and Eve had done and what it had led to at this point in time. It is also a reminder that we can’t hide from God and that he looks deeper than just earthly surface matters. The passages below confirm the saying, “You can run but you can’t hide from God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

3:10 I was afraid. A dread came over Adam. When we are frightened by our own guilt we often fudge on the truth and begin to make excuses as Adam does in this verse.

3:12 The woman you put here ... gave me. Adam’s answer attempts to make both God and the woman responsible for his disobedience. (TLSB)

3:14 Cursed. The serpent, the woman and the man were all judged, but only the serpent and the ground were cursed—the latter because of Adam (v. 17). (CSB)

3:14 eat dust. † Synonymous with groveling defeat and humiliation. (CSB)

3:15 he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. Luther: “Satan understood this threat well; therefore he has continued to rage against human nature with such great hatred. Adam and Eve were encouraged by this promise. Wholeheartedly they grasped the hope of their restoration; and full of faith, they saw that God cared about their salvation, since He clearly declares that the male Seed of the woman would prostrate this enemy.” (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

¹³ It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

4:13 same spirit of faith. Believers from every generation and time possess the same faith in God’s Word, which delivers a spirit of perseverance to speak of God’s grace no matter the cost. (TLSB)

4:13 I believed; therefore I have spoken. Faith leads to testimony. Paul therefore tirelessly labored and journeyed to bring the gospel message to others. (CSB)

4:15 grace extends to more. The goal of Paul’s ministry to the Corinthians was to reach more people. (TLSB)

5:1 earthly tent we live in. Our present body. As a tent is a temporary and flimsy abode, so our bodies are frail, vulnerable and wasting away. (CSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 3:20-35

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” ²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.” ²³ So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. ²⁸ I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. ²⁹ But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” ³⁰ He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.” ³¹ Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” ³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

3:22 came down. He is in Capernaum at this time. The Bible scholars come all the way from Jerusalem and spread the story that He can cast out devils because He is working together with the devil. Note that they make two claims: He has Beelzebul and by means of the rule of demons He casts out demons. By making two statements they make the slander more vicious. (Buls)

3:22 Beelzebul. The name *Beelzebul* means “lord of the flies.” It appears to be a deliberate mispronunciation of the name *Beelzebul*, which means “prince Baal.” Canaanites worshiped the fertility god Baal (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

3:24-26. Jesus points out that the argument of these Jewish teachers makes no sense. If Satan’s house was divided against itself, it would fall of its own accord. There would be no need for exorcisms. But that clearly was not the case. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

3:27 enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions. Jesus was doing this very thing when he freed people from Satan’s control. (CSB)

3:29 whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is one of the proof passages for the sin against the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not accusing these people of having committed this sin, but He is sternly warning them. (Buls)

3:32 Note the irony. People who barely know Jesus are seated next to Him, eagerly listening, while His family is outside, trying to get close enough to make Him stop. (TLSB)