

Notes for Next Sunday

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Proverbs 9:1-10). The gracious invitation of Wisdom extends to all who live apart from the life she longs to bring. Jesus Christ calls the world to His banquet (Jn 6:32–59). Those who respond in faith will live forever in the company of Christ and His banqueting guests. Those who foolishly reject Him are dead in their sins.

Epistle (Ephesians 5:6-21). Like the Ephesians, we are confronted every day by a world rebelling against God's way. In our struggle against its temptations, we can rely on Christ's Word and Spirit to lead us.

Gospel (John 6:51-69). Verses 51-59 speak of Jesus coming down from heaven as the true bread to give life to all who believe in Him. Contrary to popular notions, no one "chooses" to believe in Christ; the initiative belongs entirely to God through His Word. Those united by faith to Christ will be raised up on the Last Day to enjoy eternal communion with the Father. In verses 60-71 the Jews are faced with Jesus' true identity and the necessity of faith in Him, many stop following, and even one of the Twelve aligns himself with Satan against Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus' words bring life; they are the means the Father uses to draw people to Himself.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Proverbs 9:1-10

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. ²She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. ³She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. ⁴"Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. ⁵"Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. ⁶Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding. ⁷"Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. ⁸Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. ⁹Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. ¹⁰"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

9:1-6 Wisdom, again personified as a woman, prepares a house and a feast for all who answer her invitation. (TLSB)

9:1 wisdom. Here wisdom is personified as a woman. She is preparing her house for company. But that is not to say wisdom is a woman. At times we use feminine pronouns to personify what is not necessarily female. We might, for instance, point to a ship and say, "There she is!" (PBC)

9:1 seven pillars. Israelite houses were built with pillars on the ground floor to support the upper room, where the family dwelt. As seven is often a sacred number, the house with seven pillars or foundations may refer to the whole earth. (Pillars or foundations are said to support the earth in Jb 38:6; Ps 104:5.) In Pr 8, Wisdom's call is universal. Here, her house may be worldwide. Cf 14:1. (TLSB)

9:1 set her table. Wisdom prepares for her feast as if by checklist. (TLSB)

9:3 her young women. Wisdom's servant girls remind one of the servants announcing the wedding feast in Jesus' parable (Mt 22:2–4). (TLSB)

9:3 she calls from the highest point of the city. As in 8:2, the invitation goes out for all to hear. (TLSB)

9:4 *simple*. The audience for Wisdom's invitation is all who lack wisdom but have not yet rejected her. They may not be seeking Wisdom, but she seeks their attention. (TLSB)

9:5 *wine I have mixed*. Wine was often mixed with spices. (TLSB)

9:6 *you will live*. Wisdom promises life to all who share her feast, which gives life (8:35). The way of Wisdom leads to abundant life. (TLSB)

9:7 *Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult*. Foolish people are not open to correction and may respond to admonition with defensiveness and counterattack. (TLSB)

9:8 *rebuke a wise man and he will love you*. Those who are wise are open to correction and reproof. They know the value of wisdom, even when it hurts. (TLSB)

9:9 *he will be wiser still*. Wisdom is not simply attained all at once. Eager for growth, wise people are teachable. The more they learn, the wiser they are. (TLSB)

9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*. Again we have the key refrain of Proverbs. The book keeps coming back to this because it is central. (PBC)

EPISTLE – Ephesians 5:6-21

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

5:6 *empty words*. Their Gentile contemporaries sought to convince the Christians – and such talk one still hears coming from the mouth of the children of this world – that the things mentioned in v.3 and 5 were adiaphora, innocent, harmless pleasures and enjoyments, permissible interests. Or even though they are faulty, one would not immediately go to hell just because he once gave to natural weakness. These are empty words, void of all truth. (Stoeckhardt)

5:8 *darkness ... light*. This section emphasizes the contrast between light and darkness, showing that those who belong to him who is "light," i.e., pure and true, not only have their lives illumined by him but also are the means of introducing that light into the dark areas of human conduct. (CSB)

5:11 *deeds of darkness*. Sexual immorality. (TLSB)

5:12 *shameful ... to mention*. Christians should not dwell on the evils that their lives are exposing in others. (CSB)

5:14 Christ will shine on you. He will be enveloped by the rays of Christ, the Sun of salvation. In this splendor he will be joyful and blessed as in the day. And this promise of grace it is that awakens the sinner from sleep and death, that grants him power, that makes him willing to obey the call. (Stoeckhardt)

5:15 be care how you live. In order that those without may be won, Christians should be very particular in their conduct, in all that they do. They should walk carefully and prudently. They should turn away from everything that could give offense to Christians and to unbelievers. (Stoeckhardt)

5:16 redeeming the time. Stoeckhardt: Take advantage of the right moment, grasp the opportunity to approach opportunely those who despise God and Christ, to get a hearing for the divine Word, to get in some good work and accomplish something for the Lord. (Buls)

5:18 Do not get drunk ... This means an “excess” or extreme indulgence in sensual pleasures. (CSB)

5:18 which leads to debauchery. "Debauchery" literally means "unsavingness." The translations are interesting: "excess, debauchery, dissipation, wild living." (Buls)

5:18 always giving thanks. This means to have a thankful life-style. It is a good way to keep the heart in good tone. – The Christian will always find some cause for thanksgiving. Under the divine control even painful experiences, calamities etc. must bring us spiritual benefits such as driving us closer to God to seek hi protection, making us search his Word more earnestly for comfort. (Lenski)

GOSPEL – John 6:51-69

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” ⁵² Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³ Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. ⁶⁰ On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” ⁶¹ Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³ The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit^a and they are life. ⁶⁴ Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. ⁶⁵ He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.” ⁶⁶ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ⁶⁷ “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.

6:52 Jews began to argue sharply among themselves. Heated argument erupted over Jesus’ language in v. 51, which the audience found offensive. (TLSB)

6:53 except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man. There is to be no talk about faith that is divorced from the object of faith, which is the flesh of Christ, who comes to us in His preaching and His supper.

6:60 disciples. This is wider group of followers than the Twelve. (TLSB)

6:60 hard. Hard to accept, not hard to understand. The thought of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking his blood was doubtless shocking to most of Jesus' Jewish hearers. (CSB)

6:61 disciples were grumbling. Again there is grumbling reminiscent of what the children of Israel did in the wilderness in the days of Moses. Note especially that those who are doing the grumbling are the disciples of Jesus! Thought this is not a reference to the Twelve, there is nevertheless dissension in the ranks of the other followers of our Lord. Trouble is not coming to Christ from the "outside" but from the "inside." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

6:61 does this offend you? Offend is a form of scandal. A "scandal" a *trap stick* (*bent sapling*), that is, *snare*. This draws to the mind of the original hearers/readers the stick an animal stumbles over, causing the trap to shut. The Jews would see the crucifixion of the Messiah as a stumbling block because anyone killed on a cross was cursed. It was scandalous to think that their God was executed as a criminal.

6:64 some of you that do not believe. It is not a surprise to our Lord that even many of His disciples are rejecting His teaching. As the Son of God He was aware from the beginning who the unbelieving ones were, those whose motives for following Him were impure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

6:66 many ... turned back. Jesus had already made clear what discipleship meant, and many were not ready to receive life in the way he taught. (CSB)

6:67 you do not want leave too? Jesus doesn't direct this question to them as if He feared that they too were doing to leave or as if He were ignorant in regard to their attitude. The way the question is worded in the Greek shows that He expects a negative answer. Jesus asks this question not for His own sake but for their sake. He wishes to draw them closer to Himself. The question invites a confession of faith. It is an opportunity for them to be revealed as ones who were truly given by the Father to come to Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

6:68 words of eternal life. We sing this verse when we about to hear the Gospel lesson as a part of our worship service. Like Peter, we are saying that this is the only word that counts and we want to hear it.