

Notes for Next Sunday

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:7-9). The Lord promises to restore His people to the Promised Land after the exile in Babylon. The exile is temporary, for God Himself will save the remnant and return them to their home. God could destroy them for their sin, but out of deep love and compassion He merely disciplines them with exile and even gives them the hope of return. Our Lord disciplines us for a time that we might walk by faith. In Christ, the discipline of God works for our benefit.

Epistle (Hebrews 7:23-28). Though the Levitical priesthood could not bring the fullness of God's salvation, Jesus, the sinless and perfect Priest, serves eternally as the one who brings our needs to the Father. In Him we have access to God's blessings. His perfect work reminds us that death will always cut short even the best effort that anyone makes to serve God. However, Jesus freely brings us God's eternal blessings through His sacrificial death.

Gospel (Mark 10:46-52). Though Jesus is intent on going to the cross, He pauses to have mercy on Bartimaeus, who can do nothing to solve his problem except cry out to the Lord, "Have mercy!" Like Bartimaeus, learn to call on the Lord and trust in His power to deliver you. Jesus will hear and respond compassionately.

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 31:7-9

"⁷ This is what the LORD says: "Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.' "⁸ See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return. "⁹ They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is my firstborn son.

31:7 foremost of the nations. Israel owed its preeminence solely to its choice by the Lord to be His instrument in blessing all nations. This undeserved distinction accounts for similar titles of honor. (TLSB)

31:7 save. The Hebrew for this word is the basis of "Hosanna," the cry of the people of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. (CSB)

31:8 blind ... lame. This included the poorest and the least important, the very outcasts of society. (Kretzmann)

31:9 with weeping. They come with tears of mingled joy and penitence, on account of the unmerited grace of God in accepting them into His kingdom. (Kretzmann)

31:9 level path. God will lead them on paths of righteousness. (Kretzmann)

31:9 firstborn son. Once again God embraces the apostates of the northern tribes, calling Ephraim "my firstborn son." He restores this son of Joseph who had received the inheritance of the firstborn when Jacob in his old age blessed the sons of Joseph (Gen 47). (PBC)

EPISTLE – Hebrew 7:23-28

²³ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. ²⁶ Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

7:24 He continues forever. Since our High Priest, Christ, has passed through death to life, His priesthood and promises will never end. (TLSB)

7:25 draw near to God through Him. Through trust in Christ, we have access to all the Father’s gifts, including the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:11–13). (TLSB)

7:25 always lives to intercede. Jesus presents our needs to the Father, praying on our behalf that we may receive the gift of life to the full (cf Jn 10:10b). Luther: “If here by faith we do not take hold of Christ, who is sitting at the right hand of God, who is our life and our righteousness, and who makes intercession for us miserable sinners before the Father (Heb. 7:25), then we are under the Law and not under grace, and Christ is no longer a Savior. Then He is a lawgiver. Then there can be no salvation left, but sure despair and eternal death will follow.... [But] I am baptized; and through the Gospel I have been called to a fellowship of righteousness and eternal life, to the kingdom of Christ, in which my conscience is at peace, where there is no Law but only the forgiveness of sins, peace, quiet, happiness, salvation, and eternal life” (AE 26:11). (TLSB)

7:26 holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Jesus is holy because He is sinless, innocent because He never had personal guilt, and unstained because He was a spotless victim for His pure sacrifice for sins. A true human being, He is also truly the Son of God from eternity and so is forever without sin. (TLSB)

7:28 men who are weak. God’s own promise concerning the unending priestly office of Jesus remains eternally in effect. (TLSB)

7:28 made perfect forever. Christ was made perfect in that he faced temptation without succumbing to sin (see notes on 2:10; 5:8). Instead he perfectly obeyed the Father, thereby establishing a perfection that is eternal. (CSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” ⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

10:46 Jericho. A very ancient city located five miles west of the Jordan and about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem. In Jesus’ time OT Jericho was largely abandoned, but a new city, south of the old one, had been built by Herod the Great. (CSB)

10:46 a blind man ... begging. The presence of a blind beggar just outside the city gates, on a road pilgrims followed on the way to Jerusalem, was a common sight in that day.(CSB)

10:47 Son of David. A Messianic title. This is the only place in Mark where it is used to address Jesus. (CSB)

10:49 Jesus acted with authority as he ordered the crowd to “call him.” They did. Now the antagonists, conforming to Jesus’ attitude, adopted a new perspective. They no longer rebuked him; they encouraged him, and exhorted him to cheer up, get up, and find Jesus. Bartimaeus’ blindness and poverty did not hinder his life of faith. He threw his cloak aside, jumped on his feet, and went to Jesus. In spite of his blindness, he acted in a decisive manner, not because he saw physically but because Jesus called him. His eyes of faith perceived his Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

10:50 cloak. Folded on the lap to receive alms. He tossed away the cloak in order to get up, not knowing if later he would be able to find the alms and his source of warmth. (TLSB)

10:52 faith has saved. Physical healing is only part of Christ’s work. Jesus rescued Bartimaeus from sinfulness as well as its collateral damage: blindness. (TLSB)