

Notes for Next Sunday

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 44:6-8). God is speaking, and our charge is simply to listen. The three names used in this verse are significant. They not only tell us who God is, but also tell us what he does. Here we see both his relationship to his people in terms of majesty and loving concern. A true king is always mindful of the condition of those under him. As long as the human race has existed, no person, place, or thing has ever foretold the future as the Lord has. Only God's Word is sure and certain; the exile itself is proof of that. Since God's Word alone can be trusted, trust it now when God offers a word of comfort, hope and restoration.

Epistle (Romans 8:18-27). Paul is painting a picture of suffering. The suffering is caused by the sin that entered the world when Adam and Eve first sinned. It does not just impact people but it also affects all of nature. The suffering is so great and wide spread that man and nature are groaning under its weight. BUT, Paul points to a hope that will make the suffering all worthwhile. The hope that Paul points to is way better than anything we have at this time. There will be times when we will not even be able know what we should ask in prayer. BUT, there, too, Paul points out that when this happens the Holy Spirit will pray for us.

Gospel (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). In verses 24-30 Jesus tells the parable of the weeds. In verses 36-43 He explains the meaning of the parable to His disciples. This is a parable of the kingdom of heaven. The sower is the Lord. The field is the world. The seed is represented the Gospel, the life-giving Word. The enemy worked in a stealthy fashion at night when no one was aware of it. The weeding out process is not ours as the people in the church to do. That will be done on the Judgment Day by God's angels. Then the good plants (believing Christians) will be taken to heaven and unbelievers will be placed in hell. The last verse again points to the real lesson in "He who has ears, let him hear."

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

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 44:6-8

“This is what the LORD says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. ⁷ Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come— yes, let him foretell what will come. ⁸ Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

44:6 first ... last. Yahweh is “the everlasting God” (40:28). With the double title “the first and the last,” he reiterates this point. To be uniquely the first and the last is to have been the only God in existence and present throughout Israel’s story, the only one working out a purpose in that story in its entirety from its beginning until this coming consummation.” This double title is given to Jesus in Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13 as a testimony that he is Yahweh, come in the flesh. There is no other God! (CC)

44:7 who is like me. Israel is on trial, again, and before them Yahweh places life and death (cf. Deut. 30:15). Who is like Yahweh? He challenges all rivals with the same argument used earlier (41:21-24, 26-29; 43:8-13). Yahweh alone is able to predict the future and bring it to pass. Like the previous trial scenes, the court is silent. Babylonian gods have no witnesses because these deities have accomplished nothing.

Their would-be witnesses have nothing to witness to! Yet none of their adherents dare whisper, “The emperor has no clothes.” These frauds continue their pattern of “no show.” (CC)

44:8 do not tremble...be afraid. His superiority assures His faithful people that He can take care of them. God encourages His people not fear and tremble as they face the difficulties of the Babylonian captivity or any other catastrophe or problem. (PBC)

44:8 rock. The rock imagery used by God to describe himself is quite common (33 times in the OT), especially in the Psalms, 2 Samuel 22 and Deuteronomy 32. Is 17:10 gives us a good understanding of what is meant by the term. God is our help, our strength, and our refuge. When flood-waters rise, we have security, not in the high places of idol worship, but in the height of our Rock-God. His promises are rock-solid; bad news for the idol-worshiping heathen and good news for Israel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

EPISTLE – Romans 8:18-27

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. ²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

8:19 The creation. Personification of all created beings and things. (TLSB)

8:19 waits. Intense expectation. (TLSB)

8:19 sons of God to be revealed. Full disclosure of the new, transformed existence in heaven. (TLSB)

8:21 will be liberated from its bondage to decay.† The physical universe is not destined for annihilation but for renewal. And living things will no longer be subject to death and decay, as they are today. (CSB)

8:22 has been groaning. Creation is personified as a woman in labor waiting for the birth of her child. (CSB)

8:23 firstfruits of the Spirit. As the firstfruits of the harvest indicate more is to come, so the Holy Spirit and His work guarantee future blessing. (TLSB)

8:23 adoption as sons. Christians have this status now (v 15), and yet do not have it in its fullness (v 19). (TLSB)

8:26 he Spirit Himself intercedes. Christ prays for us in heaven, but the Spirit intercedes within us. (TLSB)

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷ “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ²⁸ ”“An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ²⁹ ”“No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”

13:25 weeds. Probably darnel, which looks very much like wheat while it is young, but can later be distinguished. This parable does not refer to unbelievers in the professing church. The field is the world (v. 38). Thus the people of the kingdom live side by side with the people of the evil one. (CSB)

13:28-29 The master’s servants inquired whether they should collect the weeds prior to the harvest. But pulling darnel weeds, with their strong and deep roots, would uproot the emerging wheat plants. (TLSB)

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” ³⁷ He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰ “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

13:38 sons of the evil one. They are actively evil. They are products of the devil. Judas was a hypocrite. God did not predestine Judas to damnation. Judas rejected the shield of faith to ward off the fiery missiles of Satan.

13:40-41 The sons of the evil one are further defined as those who cause others to fall into sin (*skandala*) and those who practice lawlessness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

13:40 end of the age. Parable illustrated the final judgment. (TLSB)

13:42 weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is figurative for excruciating pain.