

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time - C

Note: Where a Scripture text is underlined in the body of this discussion, it is recommended that the reader look up and read that passage.

1st Reading - 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

First and second Samuel and first and second Kings were known in the Vulgate as 1 through 4 Kings, following the grouping of the Septuagint, or Greek version, of the Old Testament. This places them in the section of historical books. The Hebrew Bible located first and second Samuel among the “later prophets.” The New Vulgate shows first and second Samuel and first and second Kings as separate and keeps them in the historical portion.

Hebrew tradition says that the book of first Samuel was written by the Prophet Samuel himself, at least up to Chapter 25 where his death is described. The rest of first Samuel and all of second Samuel are attributed to two other prophets, Gad and Nathan. However, some scholars question the attribution of the first part of first Samuel to Samuel on the grounds that the events it recounts refer to a period other than that in which Samuel lived. Some think Ezra wrote Chapters 1 through 25, using an early original of Samuel’s and various writings from the time of King David to produce a survey of the period from the start of the monarchy up to the end of David’s reign, a period of some 150 years.

The main purpose of first and second Samuel is to provide a history of the founding of the kingdom of Israel and the settlement of the throne on King David and his line. Samuel, who is regarded as the last of the judges, was the man chosen to bring about the unification of Israel. God used him to make Saul the first king of Israel.

First and second Samuel are structured in four parts, with an appendix. The first part (1 Samuel 1 through 7) covers the miraculous birth of Samuel and his upbringing in the temple. In the second part (1 Samuel 8 through 15) the establishment of the monarchy is described and the consecration of Saul as king. The third section (1 Samuel 16 through 2 Samuel 1) deals with the relationship between Saul and David. Our reading today comes from this section. In the fourth part (2 Samuel 2 through 20) the narrative centers on David: the civil war, the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, the messianic promise that an eternal throne will be given to one of David’s lineage; and David’s adultery, repentance, and death. The appendix is 2 Samuel 21 through 24.

As background for our reading today, Samuel has anointed Saul as king at God’s direction and the people have confirmed it. But some time later Saul has disobeyed God and God has rejected him and told Samuel to anoint David. Saul, in his jealousy, does everything he can to kill David and David has to flee with Saul in pursuit. Saul has three thousand men and David’s band numbers about six hundred. Even though Saul is trying to kill David, David does not reciprocate.

² **[In those days] Saul went off down to the desert of Ziph**

Located on the east slope of the mountains over the Dead Sea.

with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. ⁷ So David and Abishai

One of the three sons of David's sister (1 Chronicles 2:16), David's nephew.

went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him. ⁸ Abishai whispered to David: "God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!" ⁹ But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD'S anointed and remain unpunished?

Even though Saul is trying to kill him, David reveres the "Lord's anointed" and his position as king.

¹² So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head,

A particularly daring act designed to show how close they had been.

and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the LORD had put them into a deep slumber.

Divine intervention is the reason they were able to get close enough to take the spear and water jug.

¹³ Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner,

Commander of Saul's army (1 Samuel 14:50).

and the troops. ²² But David answered: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. ²³ The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD'S anointed.

David's action proves his loyalty in a moment in which he could have taken Saul's life. The next verse tells us **Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David; you will do great things and surely triumph."** So David went on his way, and Saul returned home. This account is believed by many commentators to be a doublet of the story in 1 Samuel 24 where Saul goes into a cave and David cuts off a piece of his garment.

2nd Reading - 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Last week in our study of 1 Corinthians we heard Saint Paul explain to the Corinthians about the resurrection of the dead since it appears that some had questioned if resurrection was a reality. Saint Paul said "If the dead are not raised, your faith is worthless (in vain)."

Saint Paul then goes on to deal with two associated questions: What is the resurrected body like (1 Corinthians 15:44a), and what reason is there to think that such a body really exists (our reading today). In answering the question “what is the resurrected body like,” Paul uses comparisons from the vegetable, animal, and mineral worlds: A grain of wheat dies to become a plant whose form is determined by God. Likewise, God provides every animal with a body adapted to the circumstances of its existence. Even the sun, moon, and stars have their own individual brightness as determined by God. God determines what the resurrected body is like.

Now, we hear the answer to the second question: “What reason is there to think that such a body really exists?”

⁴⁵ So, too, it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being,"

This is a reference to Genesis 2:7 where God formed Adam from the earth and breathed life into him. He became the physical (earthly) body which we all resemble today.

the last Adam a life-giving spirit.

Christ has a living spirit, a life-giving spirit which raises up those who desire to live.

Love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself and you will live.” (Luke 10:27-28)

“He who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.” (John 5:24)

“He who eats me will live because of me.” (John 6:57)

“Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also.” (John 14:19)

⁴⁶ But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one,

Our earthly body is patterned after Adam’s.

we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

Our heavenly (spiritual) body is patterned after the second Adam – Christ. Why do we believe such a body exists? Because we believe in Jesus and He said it. “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God, and those who hear will live.” (John 5:25). He died and was raised to provide the proof.

“This means that just as we have borne the corruptible body of the earthly Adam, so we shall in the

future bear an incorruptible body, like that of the resurrected Christ.” [The Ambrosiaster (between A.D. 366-384), *Commentaries on Thirteen Pauline Epistles*]

Gospel - Luke 6:27-38

Last week we began Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain and we heard the four blessings (beatitudes) and the four curses (woes). The final woe was “Woe to you when all speak well of you. Their fathers treated the false prophets in just this way.” We now hear Jesus tell us to love our enemy.

²⁷ [Jesus said to his disciples: “T]o you who hear I say,

Jesus is speaking to would-be disciples.

love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

This statement refers back to verse 22: “Blessed shall you be when men hate you, when they ostracize you and insult you and proscribe your name as evil.”

²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well,

This sounds like a physical attack. In the parallel account in Matthew 5:39 it is more of a legal or verbal action.

and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic.

The cloak (coat) is more valuable than the tunic (shirt). The cloak is used for sleeping outdoors. The cloak once had a special value as bond (Deuteronomy 24:10-13).

³⁰ Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

The golden rule. This is not original with Jesus; Tobit 4:15 presents this same saying in negative form. Jesus does provide the supreme example of living this out and expects the same from His disciples.

³² For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

Saint Matthew identifies these sinners as publicans (tax collectors) and gentiles. Saint Luke is more tactful.

³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit (is) that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. ³⁵ But rather, love your

enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back;

Be kind. This implies tenderness, liberality, amiability.

then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as (also) your Father is merciful.

Matthew reads “be perfect.” In the Old Testament, mercy is attributed to God, rarely to men, while perfection is a goal to be sought by man.

³⁷ **"Stop judging and you will not be judged.**

See Matthew 7:1-5.

Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

The word “measure,” as it is used in Matthew, is a standard of judgement; but here in Luke, it is the capacity of one’s generosity.