

## Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

#### **Reading 1 – Genesis 18:20-32**

In those days, the LORD said: "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go down and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against them that comes to me. I mean to find out."

While Abraham's visitors walked on farther toward Sodom, the LORD remained standing before Abraham.

Then Abraham drew nearer and said:

"Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty? Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to make the innocent die with the guilty so that the innocent and the guilty would be treated alike! Should not the judge of all the world act with justice?"

The LORD replied,

"If I find fifty innocent people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Abraham spoke up again:

"See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes!

What if there are five less than fifty innocent people?

Will you destroy the whole city because of those five?"

He answered, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there."

But Abraham persisted, saying "What if only forty are found there?"

He replied, "I will forbear doing it for the sake of the forty."

Then Abraham said, "Let not my Lord grow impatient if I go on.

What if only thirty are found there?"

He replied, "I will forbear doing it if I can find but thirty there."

Still Abraham went on,

"Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?"

The LORD answered, "I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty."

But he still persisted:

"Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time.

What if there are at least ten there?"

He replied, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it."

**Genesis 18:20-32** – Our story today follows the Genesis story from last week with the travelers visiting Abraham and Sarah. Abraham begins to see the travelers on their way when God begins to go through some self-reflection. God asks himself if he will reveal to Abraham his current plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

A little back history on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah, if they historically existed, were big cities that existed northeast of the Jordan river. They were part of a group of cities known as the “cities of the Plain.” We are first introduced to this area with Abraham and his nephew Lot in Genesis 13. Abraham and Lot, who were very wealthy, had their herders in disagreement with each other. So, to stop the conflict Abraham agrees with Lot to separate and gives Lot his choice of where he wants to settle with his family. Lot decides to settle in the city of Sodom, because of its rich agricultural landscape, and Abraham decides to settle in what is known now as the area of Canaan. Genesis 13:13 is the first place it is mentioned how “wicked” the city of Sodom is. Sodom’s wickedness is defined by the city’s ability to be hospitable. Sodom was greatly known as a place where those less fortunate were taken advantage of.

So, as God prepares for the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham intervenes on their behalf. This is significant as Abraham thus becomes the first prophet of the Old Testament, or the first individual to intervene to God on behalf of a group of people. Abraham in his wisdom and negotiation skills is able to convince God to spare the cities if they can find at least 10 righteous people. Abraham and God then separate. – B.J.

**Comments/Questions:** Here are a few of my thoughts from the reading. Abraham was able to sway God from a decision. Can God be influenced by our thoughts, words, or action? Abraham acts as a prophet for those less fortunate, who are the “righteous” people we still need to advocate for?

What we don’t see is the next reading of Genesis 19 is the test that the people of Sodom are put to, and to which they ultimately fail. God gives the people of Sodom and Gomorrah a chance to be hospitable, and they fail, which dooms the towns in which God brings about their destruction. Does God test us to make sure we are hospitable?

What are your thoughts on the reading otherwise?

Sources Cited: Paulist Biblical Commentary, 2018 – pgs. 38

**Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8**

**R.(3a) Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,  
for you have heard the words of my mouth;

in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;  
I will worship at your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name.

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

Because of your kindness and your truth;  
for you have made great above all things  
your name and your promise.

When I called you answered me;  
you built up strength within me.

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

The LORD is exalted, yet the lowly he sees,  
and the proud he knows from afar.

Though I walk amid distress, you preserve me;  
against the anger of my enemies you raise your hand.

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

Your right hand saves me.

The LORD will complete what he has done for me;  
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;  
forsake not the work of your hands.

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

### **Reading 2 – Colossians 2:12-14**

Brothers and sisters:

You were buried with him in baptism,  
in which you were also raised with him  
through faith in the power of God,  
who raised him from the dead.  
And even when you were dead  
in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh,  
he brought you to life along with him,  
having forgiven us all our transgressions;  
obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims,  
which was opposed to us,  
he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 2:12-14. As we have already discussed, this letter is considered pseudepigraphic by some scholars, that is probably not written by Paul. It is possible that someone who was familiar with Paul wrote it in his name. Written for people who were mostly from a Gentile background who became followers of Jesus but were being influenced by people (from a Jewish background) who were Christian but were following different practices, because they thought that belief in Christ and baptism are not enough to ensure salvation. The author states that these practices were an empty and deceitful “philosophy” that will not lead to salvation as promised but rather are based in human traditions, not in Christ. They

imply that what Christ accomplished through his death and resurrection was not sufficient. Through baptism they have died to the old self and as Christ was raised by the power of God, they are raised with him through belief and baptism. At first, the false teachers claim that the Colossians should adhere to certain practices of the Jewish law as well as adopt practices of the pagan mystery religions such as limiting their food and drink to prepare for mystical experiences from their patron god or goddess. These are all pagan practices influenced by the environment they lived in. There was also the worship of angels among the practices the author condemns.

Instead, he states that because of their baptismal identity with Christ, they are called to live differently than their neighbors who surround them. In addition to providing a good example for non-Christians, they are called to practice virtues in their relationships with each other—heartfelt compassion, kindness, and meekness. They are to be coworkers for the kingdom of God. Today might we say, “cocreators?”

Comments/Questions: The author of Colossians is offering advice about the danger of drifting away from what it means to be a follower of Christ—especially the core understanding that everything has been accomplished in him—his life, his death, and his resurrection. There is nothing lacking that needs to be supplied by putting one’s faith in outdated practices (from the old law) or borrowing practices from the mystery religions that add nothing to the reality of what Christ has accomplished. Through their newfound faith, they have been reborn and totally forgiven for their sins of the past. What are some of the practices that tempt us today that might be based in the subtle anxiety that says, “Maybe I am not saved?” Our faith leads us to accept ourselves as we really are—God-touched, frail, and always in the process of becoming more the presence of Christ for our world. In him we are given strength. What are the spiritual practices that help us stay centered in him. What do we need to keep growing in our faith? CHS

Primary source: Paulist Biblical Commentary

### **Gospel – Luke 11:1-13**

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished,  
one of his disciples said to him,  
"Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."  
He said to them, "When you pray, say:  
Father, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread  
and forgive us our sins  
for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,  
and do not subject us to the final test."

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend  
to whom he goes at midnight and says,  
'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,  
for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey  
and I have nothing to offer him,'  
and he says in reply from within,  
'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked  
and my children and I are already in bed.  
I cannot get up to give you anything.'  
I tell you,  
if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves  
because of their friendship,  
he will get up to give him whatever he needs  
because of his persistence.

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive;  
seek and you will find;  
knock and the door will be opened to you.  
For everyone who asks, receives;  
and the one who seeks, finds;  
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.  
What father among you would hand his son a snake  
when he asks for a fish?  
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?  
If you then, who are wicked,  
know how to give good gifts to your children,  
how much more will the Father in heaven  
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

**Luke 11:1-13** – Our passage today is another reminder of why Luke's Gospel is sometimes referred as the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the agent running through this whole passage.

It begins with Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer. What is interesting is that the Lord's Prayer is an example of what scholars refer to as "Q" material. According to the 4-Source Hypothesis the writing of the 3 synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke) Mark was the original source for both the writers of Matthew and Luke's Gospel. But, there are some parts of these two Gospels that do not appear in Mark's Gospel. So, scholars question where did the writers of Matthew and Luke get this information? Currently, we don't have any archeological evidence to the origins of these stories so scholars simply collected these stories together and called a single source "Q."

To understand Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer I think it will be helpful to look at the prayer as it appears in Luke's Gospel, Matthew's Gospel, and the way we pray it as Catholics.

<b>Luke's Version (11:1-4)</b>	<b>Matthew's Version (6:9-13)</b>	<b>Catholic Prayer</b>
Father,	Our Father in heaven,	Our Father who art in heaven
Hallowed by your name	Hallowed by your name	Hallowed by thy name
Your kingdom come.	Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.	Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us each day our daily bread.	Give us today our daily bread;	Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,	And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;	And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,
And do not subject us to the final test.	And do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.	And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Luke's version, being the shortest, probably represents most closely the words Jesus would have used, while Matthew's version gives the expanded version we use at Mass.

Each of these first sections are practically the same. "Hallowed be thy name" is a reference to God in Ezekiel 36:22-29 needed to restore his name by renewing the people of Israel. From this context Jesus' words are a prayer to the Holy Spirit to remember God's goodness by renewing his people. The third verse reminds us that God's work of bringing the reign of God to the world is still happening. The fourth verse is a reminder for each disciple that we need God's presence daily. The fifth verse is straightforward asking God to forgive our sins as we do for others. Interestingly, if you only read Matthew's version, you might think you were forgiving a financial debt. Luke's version clarifies that the reference is about sin. In the Catholic prayer the same Greek word for debt can also be translated trespass. The final verse also has its interesting points. Some Catholics have a problem saying that God allows us to go into temptation. Rather, this line clarified by the biblical passages, asks God to not let us be tested at the end times.

The other two parts of the passage (5-8 and 9-13) work in tandem. In the parable of the persistent friend, some cultural assumptions were known by Jesus' audience. It was customary to be hospitable to guests when they came, and to *not* be hospitable would bring shame to the entire city. So, when the friend goes to the neighbor to ask for bread, they initially resist, but because of the cultural pressure that would bring

shame to the city if the friend didn't provide hospitality, the neighbor is obligated to give the bread the friend asks for. Understanding this, we see why Jesus references the "wicked" parent needing to give good gifts to their children. So, Jesus' encouragement of persistence in prayer tells us how much more God will be willing to provide the Holy Spirit to us. So, we can be confident that if we pursue God, God will reach out to us.

Comments/Questions: What part of the Lord's Prayer means the most to you?