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Sunday Mass Study Notes for Lectionary 162: 11/23/2025



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes. This week, we learn about the appointment of Godly King David. The second reading teaches us about our position in Christ as believers. In the Gospel lesson, we see how faith in Christ leads us to eternal life the very moment when we believe, even if we have committed horrible crimes.

Introduction to the First Reading:

The first reading is from the Book of Second Samuel. At this time in Israel's history, the nation was divided. David had become King only over Hebron, while a large portion of the country still held allegiance to Saul's lineage of rulership through his son Ish-bosheth. Upon Ish-bosheth's death, the leaders realized that they were like sheep without a shepherd and finally gave David their allegiance to be king over them as well. This passage tells how David became king over all of Israel.

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The leaders of the tribes of Israel made a public declaration of allegiance to David as King. It might have been a little uncomfortable to admit defeat and finally give allegiance to the rightful king that God had anointed, but they finally did. They relayed several reasons for being willing to give David their allegiance: 1) He was one of them; they are brothers; 2) David had proven his trustworthiness; 3) David was God's appointed ruler. These leaders had to come to terms with their misplaced allegiance to support David as King fully. With this public declaration, Israel was now united under one ruler, and the civil war that had devastated the people for many years could now end.

This is a significant passage in the redemptive story of God's people, Israel, for God had predicted that David's kingdom would have no end. This passage verifies that God's will was accomplished, even though it took many years and trials for David to be anointed King over all of Israel.

This passage also points to a future King who would be of our bone and flesh (Heb. 2:17), who would show His trustworthiness through His sacrificial leadership (Rev. 19:11), and who would be the good shepherd of people who would surrender their lives to His rulership (John 10:11). Jesus came from the line of David and "He will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). Putting our faith in Jesus is a worthy endeavor as we see the evidence of His competent leadership.

May we be like the elders of the tribes of Israel in this passage. They could no longer hold onto their vanity; instead, we see them surrendering to the king. This sort of scenario gets replayed over and over again as those who are guilty of spiritual treason finally let go of their allegiance to a false king and unconditionally surrender their lives to the rightful king, Jesus.

Introduction to the Second Reading:

In the second reading today, let's look at what Saint Paul had to say to the Colossians.

Second Reading:

> *12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities–all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. Colossians 1:12-20*

Paul provided some profound truths about our relationship to God as believers in Jesus Christ. These truths are so profound that it's hard to comprehend Paul's words in this short section. He said that "we have been delivered from the devil's kingdom" (v.13), which is Satan's empire (Matthew 4:9) into which we became citizens when we were born. However, after we were born from above (John 3:3) through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9) God forgave our sins and transferred us into His holy kingdom (Col 1:14). God created everything for His own purposes (v. 16). He is the Head of the Church, the preeminent One (v.18, also John 3:16 "the only begotten Son"). It was through Jesus' death on the cross as the sin bearer that He made peace with us through His precious blood that was poured out for us (v.20). The peace that Jesus earned for us extends not only to the earth but to the entire universe, including heaven (v. 20).

These truths about our new life in Christ are so profound that they remind me of the words of the Christian hymn "How Great Thou Art," of which verse three reads as follows.

> *And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,*
> *Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;*

That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Jesus bore *our* burdens on the cross. He did it gladly, knowing that through His finished work, he would take away our sin and disarm the powers of darkness (Col 2:15). With these truths in mind, let us move into the Gospel lesson.

Introduction to the Gospel Reading:

In the Gospel this week, in Luke Chapter 23, we jump forward to the Good Doctor's account of Jesus's crucifixion. This is a sudden turn of events since last week in Chapter 21, Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple and looked forward to His second coming. Read the lesson for today and pay particular attention to the insights you picked up from Isaiah 53.

Gospel Reading:

32 And two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. 33 And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. 34 But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. 35 And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." 36 And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" 38 Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." 39 And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" 43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:32-43

It played out exactly as Isaiah said it would. Jesus had his possessions divided (v.34), was crucified with others (v.32), and proclaimed to be a King (v.38). Yet even at the hour of His death, Jesus showed compassion for others. First, Jesus prayed to God the Father to forgive the people who were bringing about his crucifixion. He said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (v.34a).

Second, when one of the criminals on the cross expressed repentance and faith in Him (v.42), Jesus told him, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." Isn't it amazing that this criminal's simple faith resulted in Jesus' promise of eternal life with Him in heaven, even though he wasn't baptized and had never gone to church or synagogue?

What is the relevance and importance of Luke's teaching for us in our lives today? First, we can be reassured that, like the repentant thief on the cross, since we have repented of our sin and trusted in Jesus' finished work on the cross, we will be and are saved. Second, we can trust that we won't receive what we deserve for our deeds but will instead receive rich blessings from God purely as a result of His grace and not as a result of anything we have done to earn it (Ephesians 2:8-9). Since Jesus already entered His Kingdom, these blessings will come to us in both the present and future when we meet Jesus face to face. "And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in. How great Thou art!"

Reflection Questions

1. Reflect upon Jesus' words to the repentant thief on the cross. "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42).

A. In what ways is it hard for you to accept that someone who was never baptized, never attended church, or never participated in any religious activities was granted eternal life with Jesus?

B. How long would Jesus promise elapse between the present earthly time when the criminal was hanging on the cross and when he would be in paradise with Jesus?

2. Reread this verse from the second reading. "13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Taking both these verses and what we learned about salvation in the Gospel lesson, is Jesus making us a promise that we too will inherit eternal life the very day that we die?

3. In the second reading, we read from the second chapter of Colossians, which contained some fundamental truths concerning our position in Christ. This continues the theme Paul began in the opening chapter. In that previous chapter, there were more important truths concerning our position in Christ. Read and reflect upon Paul's Letter to the Colossians, Chapter 1, verses 13-14:

> *"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*

What are some practical implications of these verses in your life as a believer in Jesus? Answer this question in light of the following contexts:

– When I am feeling afraid
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