

Thoughts on the Readings of August 14, 2022

The Common Thread The “storm of the Lord” is his wrath. It has already gone forth and is coming upon those who pay his word no heed. Yet in his word is promise and surety, the hope of salvation. His promise demands faith, even the faith of Abraham, who believed the impossible was possible with God. It calls for the faith of Moses who longed for the coming of Christ. It requires a faith that would still hope in God’s promise even when facing the world’s storms. Such faith unites and reconciles people to God but divides and upsets families. This too is the “storm of the Lord,” his judgment between faith and unbelief.

First Reading - [Jeremiah 23:16-29](#) We are surrounded by those who spout the delusions of their minds instead of faithfully proclaiming the mind of God. They change the word of God to fit their own fancies and demand that you follow what they preach. God’s answer to this very present problem is rather simple. Do not listen to them. One may easily imagine a bit more counsel: get away from them! The wrath of the Lord is certain. In hindsight, we will see that his anger was surely coming (v20). Let us be clear that God sees it all and hears it all. He also hears the silence. So, let the one who has heard the word of the Lord, speak it. In itself, this word is the unbridled wrath of the Lord. The real prophet, the teacher of God’s word, brings the fire of heaven to earth. The word of God they proclaim is a hammer that breaks the delusions of false teaching into pieces.

Psalms - [Psalm 119:81-88](#) Why do we live? Is it to do nothing but enjoy life? Most would say this is not the reality. And yet there is a way to enjoy even the evil that befalls us. The Psalmist gives us a clue how this may be accomplished. Hope. Hope in God’s word. We have much to endure but we may do so with the promises of God in mind. Our lives, difficult as they sometimes are, are meant to be lived by keeping the decrees of the Lord. Such a life is joyous since it is lived with the joy of the Lord, despite difficulties.

Second Reading - [Hebrews 11:17-31](#); [12:1-3](#) By faith, people of faith have endured it all. Waiting “forever” to have a child and having to raise him in old-age. Having twins but having to put up with their constant bickering. Suffering

imprisonment for the sake of serving the interests of the ruling power. Persevering under the hand of political power because the power of God is more reliable. Enduring the hardship of the wilderness because a promised land beckons. Mocking, flogging, imprisonment, persecution, torment, homelessness, and even death are not too much for people of faith because in it all, God is mightily at work keeping his promises in ways one could never imagine.

Gospel - [Luke 12:49-53](#), [54-56](#) Now, there is a promise for you: “I have come to bring fire on the earth” (v49). Add to that promise that our Lord wishes the fire was already raging. His appearance brought unrest from the very beginning. Jesus did not come to bring peace on earth. He has come to bring peace to the hearts of people in a troubled world.

OTHER THOUGHTS: In order for us to produce good fruits, we must depend upon God’s promises. We must have faith in him. Otherwise, we would eventually despair of doing much, if any, good. There is plenty of opportunity for despair in this life. There is poverty of spirit, grief, hunger and thirst, hostility, and persecution, to name a few things from the Sermon on the Mount ([Matt 5:2–12](#)). But there is great reward in heaven for those who, believing God’s promises, produce the fruits of faith, righteousness, mercy, purity, and peacemaking, in spite of the difficulties. There is reward for their work, and hope for their future.

Yet these good works are not to be done because we think they will appease God or relieve eternal punishment. We are to produce good fruits because we wish to bring glory to Christ, who has already appeased God for us, and because he has provided for us an eternal inheritance. If for no other reason, we should do good because that is God’s command.