

Thoughts on the Readings of September 19, 2021

The Common Thread A prophet is not accepted by his people ([Luke 4:24](#)), as seen in the lives of Jeremiah, David, and Jesus. Jeremiah and David prayed God's vengeance upon the people of Anathoth and the Ziphites. Jesus, knowing God to be the "upholder" of his life, was able to be the truly "gentle Lamb, led to the slaughter." He humbled himself before God, and was therefore, exalted to be the Savior of the world, taking vengeance on sin and death. God also provides grace to be humble, the servants of everyone, drawing near to him instead of in anger toward those who oppose us.

First Reading - [Jeremiah 11:18-20](#) Our modern world does not like justice. Oh, we hear about it often enough, that people really desire justice; but we really do not care much for real justice. Many will read the words of Jeremiah in verse 20, and wonder why the prophet was unwilling to just take it on the chin. Why does there have to be vengeance upon those who had plotted against his life? But the Lord says that vengeance is his and that he will indeed repay. ([Deut 32:35](#)) Jesus spoke of real justice too when he said that such evildoers would not escape the divine sentence of hell.

Psalms - [Psalm 54:1-7](#) It was never David's aspiration to be king. He would only be the ruler of the people because God had said so. David was persecuted by King Saul because of the word of the Lord. It was not for David's music or friendship or any other reason. David was bedeviled by Saul because of the word of God. He knew, therefore, as difficult as such knowledge is to live with, that the Lord who had called would also deliver. It was with such knowledge that David could prayerfully entrust his life to the Lord.

Second Reading - [James 3:13-4:10](#) Jeremiah had sufficient reason to strike the plotters against his life before they could get to him. David had every reason to lash out at King Saul for the king's attempts on David's life. The Church suffers much persecution too. Sometimes, we want the kind of justice that strikes back. However, we know that it is the meek who will inherit the earth. ([Matt 5:5](#)) Christ's Church is called to peacemaking in spite of any conflict, to gentleness when others play rough, to mercy even if all others are merciless. In such times, we do not bear in on the enemy; instead, we draw near to God, trusting him for a harvest of righteousness.

Gospel - [Mark 9:30-37](#) Jesus, unlike unwitting Jeremiah ([Jer 11:19](#)), would both knowingly and willingly go to his death ([Acts 8:32](#)) and also not complain or denounce his assailants ([Isa 53:7](#)), let alone retaliate. ([Matt 26:53](#)) Yet, his own disciples argued with each other about which of them would be the greatest in their meek Lord's kingdom. So, he who had taken the time to talk and play with children ([Matt 19:13-15](#)), took another child in his arms and showed them what the greatest in the kingdom looked like. As they stared at the child, they could not have helped but see the Servant who held that child.