

Stretching Toward Sunday

Thoughts, readings and reflections based on this week's lectionary readings

June 7, 2015

Proper 5B/Ordinary 10B/Pentecost 2

The readings this week:

◦ 1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15), 16-20, (11:14-15) ◦

Psalm 138 ◦ 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 ◦ Mark 3:20-35

[Click here to read this week's Scriptures](#)

All in the Family

A couple of weeks ago, while sermonizing, I talked about *The Way*, the stunning movie about the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela with Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez. It's a story of journey, and grief, and loss—but it's also a story of a group of complete and total misfits who come to hate each other...and then love each other. They end up inspiring change in one another every bit as much as the 800km pilgrimage route.

In a sense, no matter how dysfunctional they seem to be at times, they become something like family.

Family is as foundational a concept in the Bible as anything else. The Bible begins in Genesis, not with talk of nations and tribes...but families.

Big families. Real families. With moments of dysfunction so great it makes your head spin—and gives one pause at the phrase "biblical family values."

And, sure, there are other great metaphors to describe the relationship between God and humankind. King and subjects. Master and slaves.

But, it always comes back around to family.

Sometimes God's faithful people are likened to the bride of the Bridegroom. And our infidelities are then compared to adultery.

But, most of the time we're God's children. God's daughters and sons who bring great joy as well as great consternation.

And so, coming to God and God's Kingdom is really like...going home. To family.

In Mark chapter three Jesus' family is either

frustrated with him, or just plain worried about him. They hear that Jesus is drawing crowds again, and they go to restrain him—because people are talking. Some people think he's loony. And his family is either embarrassed, or worried of what might become of him.

It doesn't always end well for such people.

But, Jesus doesn't seem to mind all that much. After all, he knows how badly it's all going to turn out.

So what does he do? He opens up the tent and allows everyone who wants to enter the chance to enter. Who is his family? Those who do the will of God. When you do the will of God you get the chance to be his brother, his sister...even his mother!

Jesus' family is an open family. The door to the family homestead is wide-open.

And while the rest of us may bring dysfunction in the door with us—and at times we can look like a group of misfits...the things we gain are amazing. And the greatest of those things is love.

Come on in. Join the family.



Rick Morley, [a garden path](#)

Reflecting on the Word



1st Reading:

[1 Samuel 8:4-11, \(12-15\), 16-20, \(11:14-15\)](#)

Reflect on your own patterns of living—home, clothing, car, possessions, even your yard. In what ways has your imagination been captured by current trends? What reasons do the elders give for wanting a king? It seems that the elders have good reasons for being dissatisfied with Samuel's sons, but what other motivations are behind their request? Notice all the terrible results that will come from having a king. Why do you think the people continue asking despite these warnings? Why do you think the Lord repeatedly tells Samuel to "listen to the people?" When are you most likely to be influenced by trends? What trends are you following despite the warnings you may have had? [Quiet Time Bible Study](#)
[InterVarsity Press](#)

Psalm Reading: [Psalm 138](#)

How has God answered some of your personal prayer requests throughout your life? How has his faithfulness encouraged you? David's heart was set on God providing a temple, assuring his presence for his people, but the temple was not constructed yet. Are you thankful to God (like David), though some of your dreams and hopes have not yet been realized? David said, "When I called you, you answered," not "When I called you, you said yes." How are you dealing with the "No's," and the "Waits"? A day is coming when every tongue confesses and every knee bows to God. How does that reality impact your readiness to speak God's praises now? David emphasizes God's supernatural power in protecting his people. How does this reality decrease your fear? How have you experienced God's protection? [Small Group Study](#)
[Questions](#)



Praying Toward Sunday

Lord Jesus, you welcome all who seek to follow you. I seek to do your will. Thank you for inviting me to be part of your family in the Kingdom of God. Amen.

[American Bible Society](#)

"What is God saying to you today?
Listen to God speaking to you through these readings.

Through the woman's story, is God saying to you:
"Reach out and touch me.

I want to love you so much.

I do love you far more than you will ever imagine."

Or through the words in the psalm, is God saying to you:

"Come back.

All is forgiven.

I love you still.

You are my beloved child"

Or is God saying to you:

"I see your faith in me, but now I want others to see it too.

Share your story.

Listen to their stories.

Tell others what I have done for you"

[Mustard Seeds](#)

3rd Reading: [2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1](#)

When was the last time you wrote a letter to someone by hand, on paper? What's the longest letter you've ever written? In what ways are our outer natures wasting away as we grow older? In what ways is your inner nature being renewed daily? What might it mean to look to the things that are unseen? What are the important things in life that cannot be seen? Love, for example, is not a physical, tangible, touchable thing, and yet it is very important. What are some other invisible, spiritual aspects of life to which we look to be renewed? What will you do this week to pay more attention to those unseen, spiritual aspects of life, so that your inner nature might be renewed daily? What would be most helpful to stay mindful of these things? [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, ELCA](#)

4th Reading: [Mark 3:20-35](#)

What did Jesus' family think about Jesus, and what did the religious folks think? In what ways were they trying to dismiss Jesus? How does Jesus respond to these accusations? How do these arguments of the "trilemma" make you feel? Do you know of someone who has let themselves off the spiritual hook by categorizing Jesus as a good teacher? Why or how do they do this? What would you say to this person? How would you pray for this person? Do you ever unintentionally dismiss Jesus? [Cumberland Community Church](#)