

## Readings for September 7, 2008

### FIRST LESSON: Ezekiel 33:7–11

<sup>7</sup>So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

<sup>10</sup>Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

### PSALM: Psalm 119:33–40

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,  
and I shall keep it to the end.

**<sup>34</sup>Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law;  
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

<sup>35</sup>Make me go in the path of your commandments,  
for that is my desire.

**<sup>36</sup>Incline my heart to your decrees  
and not to unjust gain.**

<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless;  
give me life in your ways.

**<sup>38</sup>Fulfill your promise to your servant,  
which you make to those who fear you.**

<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach which I dread,  
because your judgments are good.

**<sup>40</sup>Behold, I long for your commandments;  
in your righteousness preserve my life.**

### SECOND LESSON: Romans 13:8–14

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you

to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 18:15–20**

<sup>15</sup>If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

## **Readings for September 14, 2008**

### **FIRST LESSON: Numbers 21:4b–9**

<sup>4b</sup>But the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

### **PSALM: Psalm 98:1–5**

Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things.

**<sup>2</sup>With his right hand and his holy arm  
has he won for him self the victory.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has made known his victory;  
his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.

**<sup>4</sup>He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.**

<sup>5</sup>Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

## **SECOND LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:18–24**

<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

## **GOSPEL: John 3:13–17**

<sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

## **Readings for September 21, 2008**

### **FIRST LESSON: Ezekiel 2:8—3:11**

<sup>28</sup>But you, mortal, hear what I say to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you. <sup>9</sup>I looked, and a hand was stretched out to me, and a written scroll was in it. <sup>10</sup>He spread it before me; it had writing on the front and on the back, and written on it were words of lamentation and mourning and woe.

<sup>31</sup>He said to me, O mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. <sup>2</sup>So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. <sup>3</sup>He said to me, Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it. Then I ate it; and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey.

<sup>4</sup>He said to me: Mortal, go to the house of Israel and speak my very words to them. <sup>5</sup>For you are not sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult language, but to the house of Israel — <sup>6</sup>not to many peoples of obscure speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to them, they would listen to you. <sup>7</sup>But the house of Israel will not listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. <sup>8</sup>See, I have made your face hard against their faces, and your forehead hard against their foreheads. <sup>9</sup>Like the hardest stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not fear them or be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. <sup>10</sup>He said to me: Mortal, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart and hear with your ears; <sup>11</sup>then go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them. Say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD"; whether they hear or refuse to hear.

### **PSALM: Psalm 119:33–40**

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,  
and I shall keep it to the end.

**<sup>34</sup>Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law;  
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

<sup>35</sup>Make me go in the path of your commandments,  
for that is my desire.

**<sup>36</sup>Incline my heart to your decrees  
and not to unjust gain.**

<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless;  
give me life in your ways.

**<sup>38</sup>Fulfill your promise to your servant,  
which you make to those who fear you.**

<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach which I dread,  
because your judgments are good.

**<sup>40</sup>Behold, I long for your commandments;  
in your righteousness preserve my life.**

### **SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 2:4–10**

<sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — <sup>9</sup>not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 9:9–13**

<sup>9</sup>As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

<sup>10</sup>And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup>But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup>Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

## Readings for September 28, 2008

### FIRST LESSON: Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32

The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? <sup>3</sup>As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. <sup>4</sup>Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

<sup>25</sup>Yet you say, "The way of the LORD is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? <sup>26</sup>When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. <sup>27</sup>Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. <sup>28</sup>Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. <sup>29</sup>Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the LORD is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

<sup>30</sup>Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

### PSALM: Psalm 25:1–8

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

**<sup>2</sup>Let none who look to you be put to shame;**

**let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.**

<sup>3</sup>Show me your ways, O LORD,  
and teach me your paths.

**<sup>4</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,**

**for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.**

<sup>5</sup>Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

**<sup>6</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>Gracious and upright is the LORD; therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

**<sup>8</sup>He guides the humble in doing right and teaches his way to the lowly.**

## **SECOND LESSON: Philippians 2:1–13**

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

<sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23–32**

<sup>23</sup>When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup>But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

<sup>28</sup>What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup>He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.