



SUNDAY, AUGUST 7–13

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 19

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 19:4-8

A reading from First Kings.

⁴“Elijah” went a day’s journey into the wilderness,
and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree.

He asked that he might die:

“It is enough;
now, O LORD, take away my life,
for I am no better than my ancestors.”

⁵Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep.

Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him,

“Get up and eat.”

⁶He looked,

and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water.

He ate and drank, and lay down again.

⁷The angel of the LORD came a second time,

touched him, and said, “Get up and eat,
otherwise the journey will be too much for you.”

⁸He got up, and ate and drank;

then he went in the strength of that food
forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

PSALMODY: Psalm 34:1-8

FIRST READING *Horeb = HOR-eb*

If the hearer is to be able to appreciate the substance of this brief story the reader must establish the depth of the despair of the prophet in the reading of verse 4. That is no simple task. Some hints: (1) make the pause between announcing the reading and beginning the reading a significant one; (2) consider the weight of a prayer to God that “asked that he might die”—and bring that weight to the reading of those five words; (3) weariness is a hallmark of despair—the last three lines of verse 4 require a sense of exhaustion. The hope represented in the feeding of the prophet by the angel of the Lord stands in sharp contrast to the despair in the first verse. Verses 5 to 8 need to sound encouraging and hopeful.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 4:25—5:2

A reading from Ephesians.

²⁵So then, putting away falsehood,
let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors,
for we are members of one another.

²⁶Be angry but do not sin;
do not let the sun go down on your anger,

²⁷and do not make room for the devil.

²⁸Thieves must give up stealing;
rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands,
so as to have something to share with the needy.

²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths,
but only what is useful for building up, as there is need,
so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption.

³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath
and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice,

³²and be kind to one another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you.

^{5:1}Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children,
²and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us,
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

SECOND READING *Ephesians = eh-FEE-zhunz*

These words of instruction to the baptized people of God ought to be as encouraging and sustaining as the bread that fed the prophet in the first reading. This is simply good advice for all of us. Deliver it with energy and enthusiasm, having first heard it as God's instruction for the life of the reader! The reader can reach the heart of the hearer with such holy instruction *only* when the reader has taken the same instruction to heart.

GOSPEL: John 6:35, 41-51

The holy gospel according to John.

³⁵Jesus said to [□]the crowd,[□]

“I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

⁴¹Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said,

“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

⁴²They were saying,

“Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?
How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’”

⁴³Jesus answered them,

“Do not complain among yourselves.

⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me;
and I will raise that person up on the last day.

⁴⁵It is written in the prophets,

‘And they shall all be taught by God.’

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God;
he has seen the Father.

⁴⁷“Very truly, I tell you,

whoever believes has eternal life.

⁴⁸I am the bread of life.

⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven,
so that one may eat of it and not die.

⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven.

Whoever eats of this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL

To those who heard these sayings first, they surely must have sounded somewhat obtuse. Even those who have heard them with frequency will profit from the opportunity to ponder them. The gospel calls for a deliberate delivery.