Study Notes for the Sunday Mass Published by Christians for Christ Ministries. We are a non-denominational Christian ministry that seeks to encourage and facilitate Christians in studying the Holy Scriptures. **"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."** 1 Timothy 2:5

Sunday Mass Study Notes for Sunday, 8-07-2016



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes for **8-7-2016**. This week we learn about the Hall of Faith in the Book of Hebrews and about Jesus' call to serve Him while He is away in Heaven.

The first reading is from the Apocrypha. You can read that online for yourself at http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/080716.cfm. In the future Mass Notes may include an analysis of these readings once proper copyright permission has been obtained for inclusion of that text.

Introduction to the Second Reading:

The reading from the Book of Hebrews is from the section referred to as the "Hall of Faith" or "Faith Hall of Fame." The reading records the faith-filled events of some very important men and women of the faith. After reading the definition of faith in the first verse, look for repeating patterns in the second section.

Second Reading: The verses (3 – 7) omitted from the reading are set apart below.

Hebrews 11:1-2 NAS95 1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

Omitted:

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Heb 11:4 ¶ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Hebrews 11:8-19 NAS95 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE. 13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Prior to launching into the Hall of Faith, the author provided the definition of this very important

term, one that we may easily take for granted during the reading of the Bible. They say, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (v. 1). Read this definition again, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." As Christians, we understand intuitively that the context of faith is God. However, faith isn't an object in itself, rather the object of faith is God, for having spiritual faith in anyone but God is vain. For nonbelievers may make statements like, "I have faith that I will get through this" and then rather be guided by their circumstances than God, although God is sovereign over all people and events in the world.

The second section of today's reading begins with, "For by it the men of old gained approval" and then moves to using the repeated phrase, "by faith [name]" followed by a commendation of the person's faith-filled actions. In the omitted verses we see that this follows the general chronology of the Bible beginning first with Abel (v. 4), then Enoch (v. 5) and Noah (v. 7). The reading then moves to person known as the "father of faith," Abraham in verse 8. Saint Paul affirmed this commendation of Abraham in Romans 4:16. Although we see that Abraham certainly wasn't the first to walk by faith in God, he along with his wife, was the one to whom God dedicated a substantial section for commendation in the Hall of Faith. The first portion of verse 8 reads, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by . . ." The subsequent verses chronicle his and Sarah's faithful actions including leaving his known land to go to an unknown place. In verse 17, we see how Abraham passed perhaps the ultimate test of his faith by his willingness to offer up his one and only son as a sacrifice to God. This example of faith lived out by Abraham closely parallels God's willingness to offer His Son Jesus on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. In Abraham's case God stopped short of requiring the ultimate sacrifice of Isaac by providing the lamb himself for the sacrifice. However, we know that in the case of Jesus God provided the ultimate sacrifice through the sacrifice of His one and only Son. We read in the Book of John, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

So much can be said about the reading that concludes with, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises" (v. 13a). How faithful were the men and women of God by following what He told them to do but without them ever receiving the promises that He made to them! The "Hall of Faith" stands as a testimony as to how we as men and women of the faith are also called to walk by faith in God's promises without expecting to see the ultimate answers during our natural lives. God calls us to walk in faith the same way as the biblical examples did, not only just the ones listed in today's reading. We do this through understanding God's promises made to us and walk by taking both baby steps and even giant steps of faith along the way as we sense God's calling. God may call us to leave our known land and proceed to a place with which we are not familiar. Or He may call us to lesser steps such as caring for the needy, or praying for others. During those times when we are doubting our faith we can turn to this section of the Book of Hebrews to see how those before us obeyed God and were commended for doing so. We can expect that if we obey God we too will one day be commended by God in our own "Hall of Faith."

Introduction to the Gospel Reading:

The second reading from Luke concerns the subject of readiness. Here we will see how Jesus calls us disciples of Him to be ready for His imminent return by accomplishing the works which He has given us.

Gospel Reading:

Luke 12:32-48 NAS95 32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 35 Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. 36 Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. 38 Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. 39 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 40 You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect." 41 Peter said, "Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?" 42 And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 44 Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

Jesus called His disciples to fulfil the greater kingdom purposes for their lives by seeking first the kingdom of God as reflected in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:33). He told the disciples that the place on which they focus their investment reveals the true condition of their hearts (v. 34). Next, He provides them with a parable concerning a master who left his servants in charge while he was away (vv. 36 – 40). In the case of this parable, the Lord Jesus uniquely provides the interpretation of it before and after the giving of the parable itself. His disciples are to be ready for the imminent return of their master even though they do not know when he will return. By application this means that as believers, we are to be accomplishing the works of our Father God even though we do not know when Jesus will return.

The second section of the reading proceeds along the same line of reasoning but using an example with a contrast between a godly servant waiting for the return of his master (vv. 42 – 43) contrasted with that of an ungodly one who beat his slaves and got drunk while waiting (vv. 45 – 48). The

application of these verses is that nonbelievers who commit great sins will be punished less than nonbelievers who commit great ones. For all believers are totally forgiven of their sins through the finished work of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:14). However, the application of the reading as a whole doesn't just apply to nonbelievers as we see in the concluding verse. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more" (v. 48d-ff). The big idea is that God calls all people to exercise godly stewardship of the gifts that He has given them. As people in the unique small set of believers (Matthew 7:13), we are to live with patient expectation that God could return at any instant while going about accomplishing the things that God has asked us to do. First and foremost, this means accomplish the Great Commission, making disciples and teaching them all things (Matthew 28: 16-20).

This week please join me in praying for a young man from my hometown who was recently (July 2016) diagnosed with a brain tumor and just underwent surgery. Please pray for his healing and that through this time he may reach out to God and find faith in Him.

Bottom Line: Questions for Reflection

1. In what ways would memorizing the author of Hebrew's definition of faith in God help you to combat future weaknesses in your own faith? "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." How does reading the Hall of Faith help you through these same weaknesses?

2. How does understanding the gifts which God has given you help you to exercise better stewardship of the things in your life?

Readings for the Week

Note: For a listing of readings for the Roman Catholic Mass, visit this web site:

http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/080716.cfm

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 117

Source(s):

Online Scripture verses for most Bible versions can be found at: http://www.biblegateway.com/

Scripture quotations taken from the NASB

Mass-Study-Notes-for-Sunday_08-07-2016.pdfDownload

Mass Study Notes for Sunday 5-31-2015



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes for **5-31-2015**. Our first reading is from one of the first five books of Bible, often referred to as the Books of the Law. The second reading is from the letter of St. Paul to the church in Rome, which explains the basic elements of the gospel. Finally, the reading from St. Matthew includes the final instructions of Jesus to his disciples.

The name Deuteronomy means "second law." In reading Deuteronomy it's helpful to remember that God is not only reminding Israel the law but also of her special place in his love; they are his chosen people. Furthermore, in this repeating of the law given to Moses, God is reminding the nation of their responsibility to live within the sphere of that love. Special privilege (as God's chosen people) always means increased spiritual responsibility.

In this particular passage, God reminds his people of his miraculous care for them up to this point as they journey on to the Promised Land. He has provided for them as for no other people. He delivered them miraculously from slavery in Egypt, and He was delivering them from nations much larger and more powerful than they. He has spoken to them through Moses, and He had disciplined them for their failures, but always to restore them.

God promises his people that if they keep his commandments and obey Him fully, it will go well with them and their children; they will live long in their own land, which He has promised to them "for all time." As you read the passage, reflect on God's special love for those who follow Him.

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First Reading

Deuteronomy 4:32-40 NAS95 32 "Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? 33 Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? 34 Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him. 36 Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. 37 Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, 38 driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today. 39 Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. 40 So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

As you read the verses from Romans, note the relationship of the Christian to God. It's not an association of fear, as one who is under the bond of slavery. Rather, the person who is "led by the Spirit of God" is considered an adopted son and can rightfully speak of God as his father. What's more, as an adopted son, he is also an heir; he has an unspeakable inheritance (which Paul writes about in his letter to the Ephesians). In fact, the Christian is a co-heir with Christ. All that God has planned for Jesus, who obeyed the Father even to His death and resurrection, will be shared with his adopted brothers.

There is a word of caution, however. Paul writes that the Christina may suffer with Christ and later be glorified with Him. If our faith in Jesus is genuine, we will be willing to suffer for Him, not to earn salvation in any way, because He has paid the full price for that, but to demonstrate our love, obedience, and loyalty to Him.

Second Reading

Romans 8:14-17 NAS95 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

The question of obedience is also mentioned in the Gospel reading. In these few verses, we hear Jesus making His final appeal to his disciples, giving them instructions, clearly stating what his

purpose is for them—and, by extension—for his people today, too.

To settle the doubts of some, Jesus makes it abundantly clear that He has all necessary authority to commission them, and, what's more, He assures them of his presence with them throughout the future. He had promised (especially in John's Gospel) that He would send his Holy Spirit to lead, teach, and counsel them in his absence. Sandwiched between the statement of his authority and the promise of his presence is the distinct purpose which He has for his followers on earth.

We are to make disciples, that is, we are to take the gospel message to the world and encourage them to put their faith in the Son of God who sacrificed his life to pay the penalty for mankind's sin. The evidence of that believing faith is baptism into the name of the triune God. But there's something beyond faith and baptism. We are to teach new disciples "to observe (or obey) all" of Christ's commands. That's a lot to think about isn't it? Note the Gospel reading carefully.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 28:16-20 NAS95 16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Bottom Line: Questions for Reflection

1. The Law of God is very far reaching. How do I stack up when I compare my life with the 10 Commandments?

2. Do I have fear about my spiritual condition or do I have confidence that I am an adopted son of God? List two ways in which I am being led by God's Holy Spirit?

3. Am I a true disciple of Jesus? List at least one way in which I am seeking to make other disciples, and teaching them to obey Jesus in all things?

Readings for the Week

Note: For a listing of readings for the Roman Catholic Mass visit this web site:

http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/053115.cfm

First Reading DT 4:32-34, 39-40

Second Reading ROM 8:14-17

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Gospel Reading MT 28:16-20

Source(s):

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Scripture quotations taken from the NASB