

About the Readings on Sept. 22, 2024

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Sunday, September 18–24

Lectionary 25

We continue through the autumn's standard Sundays and are now at the center, that is, the apex, of Mark's gospel. Our failure to live as servants draws us to holy communion for forgiveness and sustenance.



[Jeremiah 11:18-20](#)

This passage, in which the prophet boldly speaks an unpopular word, is linked with today's gospel reading to focus on Jesus as the unpopular speaker who was destroyed. However, we gather on Sunday, the day of the resurrection, because Jesus' name is most certainly remembered among us.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

Having heard the words of Jeremiah, we respond by singing [Psalm 54](#). It is as if we join with Jeremiah asking God to save us from those who reject God's word. Many Christians understand verses such as 5, which ask God to destroy evil ones, as applying appropriately to the power of evil itself, which in baptism we promise to renounce. Like Jeremiah, we conclude by praising God.

[James 3:13— 4:3, 7-8a](#)

This Sunday the second reading fits well with the gospel. James decries selfish ambition and calls on the community to live in wisdom, and in Mark Jesus corrects the selfish ambition of the disciples and gathers them around himself, who is servant of all and the Wisdom of God.

[Mark 9:30-37](#)

Each Sunday we stand before the passion of Jesus Christ, yet we are no better than the original disciples in embodying the countercultural worldview that the crucifixion inaugurated. We must take care not to sentimentalize Mark's reference to a little child, who in antiquity was more likely to be discarded than pampered. Tying Mark to Jeremiah 11 illumines this excerpt by reminding us that Jesus is like the vulnerable child whom we welcome into our midst through the word and the meal.