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| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Sunday closest to July 20 |
| Proper 11 Year B RCL |

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| ***Track 1*** |  |  |
| 2 Samuel 7:1-14a Psalm 89:20-37 Ephesians 2:11-22 Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 |  |  |

**The Collect**

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.*Amen.*

**Old Testament**

**2 Samuel 7:1-14a**

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.”

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

**The Response**

**Psalm 89:20-37**

***Tunc locutus es***

20 I have found David my servant; \*  
with my holy oil have I anointed him.

21 My hand will hold him fast \*  
and my arm will make him strong.

22 No enemy shall deceive him, \*  
nor any wicked man bring him down.

23 I will crush his foes before him \*  
and strike down those who hate him.

24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, \*  
and he shall be victorious through my Name.

25 I shall make his dominion extend \*  
from the Great Sea to the River.

26 He will say to me, 'You are my Father, \*  
my God, and the rock of my salvation.'

27 I will make him my firstborn \*  
and higher than the kings of the earth.

28 I will keep my love for him for ever, \*  
and my covenant will stand firm for him.

29 I will establish his line for ever \*  
and his throne as the days of heaven."

30 "If his children forsake my law \*  
and do not walk according to my judgments;

31 If they break my statutes \*  
and do not keep my commandments;

32 I will punish their transgressions with a rod \*  
and their iniquities with the lash;

33 But I will not take my love from him, \*  
nor let my faithfulness prove false.

34 I will not break my covenant, \*  
nor change what has gone out of my lips.

35 Once for all I have sworn by my holiness: \*  
'I will not lie to David.

36 His line shall endure for ever \*  
and his throne as the sun before me;

37 It shall stand fast for evermore like the moon, \*  
the abiding witness in the sky.' "

**The Epistle**

**Ephesians 2:11-22**

Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” —a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

**The Gospel**

**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

“Good fences make good neighbors,” or so the saying goes.

One can think about this as if two brothers or two sisters were sharing the back seat of the car or a room, and they place masking tape down the middle of the room to divide the space. Suddenly peace, or at least peace in the sense of “peace and quiet” seems to work really well, at least for the parents, until a child needs to use the facilities or go to the kitchen and has to trespass across the other’s territory.

This sort of thing can work after armed conflict— take for example any national border, but think particularly of the Berlin wall. There is enough blood shed, so that some sort of cease fire gets decided upon, and walls are put up so as to let life come back to normalcy. The country is divided, families are split apart, some on one side and some on the other, but in general people are not dying in combat. They may only die when they attempt to cross the walls.

This sort of peace is the sort of peace of Rome in Jesus’ and Paul’s day, the Pax Romana. The Pax Romana was brought about in Roman occupied nations with Roman armies, guards, centurions. And of course, this is not the sort of peace that Jesus brought.

As it was, Jesus was a revoltutionary. Still, he didn’t directly advocate in a political campaign for Jews and Gentiles to embrace each others’ differences. However, as Paul (or a Paul follower) details in his letter to those in Ephesus, this thought is a natural outgrowth. This loving neighbor, this showing care for the centurians, for their family members, for those in places which are not Israel—-all of this leads one to recognize that Jesus gives us a new way to operate, and it is actually a much more difficult way to operate. It is caring for those who cross the masking tape, who may use some of what we think are “our” resources (even though, let us be honest, everything, everything is a gift from God.)

This peace is as tenuous as our faith is. It is peace that comes though faith, in recognizing the good in other people, and ourselves, rather than operating through fear—which often leads to recognizing the potential or assumption of bad in the other. This fear is the only reason that we, as people, ever erect walls. “Good fences make good neighbors.” And as Pope Francis accurately stated, walls are not from Jesus. Yet, this sort of peace is not where people go to naturally, because it is much, much easier to have fear lead our behaviors. Paul spoke of Jew and Gentile, because the peace between them was almost unheard of. Pax Romana, again, was rarely open conflict, but there was no trust between Jew and Gentile. This feels similar to many situations today.

Paul points us to where we should be, but it is the Gospel of Jesus that tell us how to do as Jesus does. This Gospel passage we read this morning is broken up and takes place around the feeding of the 5000. Jesus had just before sent his disciples out two by two and now they have returned and are ready to rest, to tell stories, to regroup, to be the people they are— the band of close followers around Jesus. Jesus first encourages this. He knows a Sabbath is necessary and in order. Yet, still the needs of others outside the small band of disciples interrupt. Jesus has *compassion* on the crowds. Compassion is not the same as pity. It literally means “with passion” or you can think “with feeling.” He looks at them and he feels for them. “They are like sheep without a shepherd.”

When we encounter the other—- those people, whoever they are, who cause us to fear—-we are not to fear them…. We are not to erect walls, we are to see the face of God in the other, and be moved, to have feeling and good will for them, this is part of faith. It is trusting God enough to know that God made us all, that we share our humanity. There are good characteristics and there are bad characteristics in each and everyone of us—- look for the good. Pray to God to enable you to love those who sin differetly than you do. Be moved to be with them, take down the masking tape dividing the room. Even when you may be tired and want to come back home, and regroup with your friends…. the work that stirs with compassion is still there. Regrouping with friends has its place, but when others need you, be there, be present, have compassion.