

LENT II - Wednesday, February 28, 2024

A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church Year B
Wilda C. Gafney, Church Publishing Incorporated. Kindle Edition

Proverbs 28

²⁰ A person who is faithful [has] abundant blessings,
while one who is in a hurry to be rich will not go unpunished.

²¹ The one who shows favoritism is no good—
over a piece of bread will a woman or man do wrong.

²² A person with a covetous eye hastens toward riches
and does not know what is on the way.

²³ The woman or man who rebukes another person
will find favor afterward,
more than one who flatters with the tongue.

²⁴ Anyone who robs mother or father and says,
“That is no transgression,”
is a companion to a vandal.

²⁵ A greedy person stirs up strife,
while a woman or man who trusts in the GOD WHO PROVIDES
will be well provisioned.

Psalms 50

¹ God of gods, the MAKER OF ALL,
speaks and summons the earth
from the dawning of the sun to its setting.

² From Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.

³ Our God comes and does not keep silent,
before her is a devouring fire,
and a whirling [wind] surrounds her.

⁴ She summons the heavens above—
and the earth—in order to judge her people:

⁵ “Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”

⁶ The heavens declare her righteousness,
for God, she is the one who judges. *Selah*

⁷ “Listen my people and I will speak,
Israel and I will testify against you;
I am God, your God.

⁸ Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;
your burnt offerings are continually before me.

⁹ I will not accept a bull from your house,
or goats from your pens.

¹⁰ For mine is every wild animal of the forest,
the cattle on a thousand hills.

¹¹ I know every bird of the mountains
and everything that moves in the field is mine.

¹² Were I hungry, I would not tell you,
for mine is the world and all that fills it.

¹³ Do I eat the flesh of bulls,
or the blood of goats drink?

¹⁴ Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and pay to the Most High your vows.

¹⁵ Then summon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you and you shall glorify me.”

I Timothy 5

¹ Do not rebuke an elder man, but speak to them as to a father, to those younger, as brothers, ² to elder women as mothers, to younger women as sisters, in absolute purity. ³ Honor widows who are really widows. ⁴ If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show devotion to their own family and make repayment to their parents; for this is pleasing in God’s sight.

⁸ And whoever does not provide for their own, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Mark 7

¹ Now there gathered around Jesus Pharisees and some of the biblical scholars who had come from Jerusalem. ² And they saw some of his disciples were eating bread with common hands, meaning unwashed. ³ For the Pharisees, and all Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands as fists, observing the tradition of the elders. ⁴ Also, when coming from the market, without washing, they do not eat anything. And there are also many other [traditions] that they have taken on: washing cups, pots, and bronze kettles—and beds. ⁵ Now the Pharisees and the biblical scholars asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with common hands?” ⁶ And Jesus said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written:

*‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷ and in vain do they worship me,
teaching human teaching as commandments.’*

⁸ Abandoning the commandment of God and taking on human tradition!”

⁹ Then Jesus said to them, “Well do you all spurn the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition. ¹⁰ For Moses said: *Honor your mother and your father and: The one who curses mother or father will certainly be put to death.*

¹¹ But you all say that if anyone tells mother or father, ‘*Korban*, an offering to God, is whatever of mine that would have supported you,’ ¹² then you all no longer permit doing anything for a mother or father, ¹³ making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on, and you do many things like this.”

¹⁴ Jesus called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a woman or man that by going into them has the power to defile, rather what comes out of a person is what defiles a person.”

Text Notes

The “covetous” eye in Proverbs 28:22 is an “evil” eye. God summons the heavens and the earth to do her bidding in verses 1 and 4, and empowers her people to summon her in turn in verse 15, all using the same word. Indeed, the divine issues it as a command using the imperative, “Summon me!” Other translations soften it to “call on me.” But God is granting permission to be summoned in the same way she summons the elements of the universe. In verse 10, *behemoth*, the plural form of beast (*behemah*), is traditionally translated as cattle here.

In the world of 1 Timothy 5, “widow” signifies more than being bereaved of a husband; it is also a ministerial office in the early church. The term is used both ways in the Epistles (see Annette Bourland Huizenga’s discussion in the 1–2 Timothy and Titus volume of the *Wisdom Commentary* and Joanna Dewey’s discussion of the passage in the *Women’s Bible Commentary*). The ministerial widow could also be a virgin or otherwise unmarried.

Mark 7:15 uses *anthropou*, man or generic human; I have specified women and men, as the teaching would not have applied to minors. My reading understands the word is intended to communicate something about how to hold one’s hands when performing the ritual of washing before eating.

Throughout this project “biblical scholars” replaces “scribes,” as it communicates more of their actual function in the community. Counter to many established translations such as NRSV and CEB, “impure” and “unclean” are not used in verses 1 and 5. The use of the word *pugme*, “fist,” in verse 3 has tested (and vexed) translators across the ages. Verses 6–7 quote Isaiah 29:13; verse 10 quotes the Decalogue in Exodus 20:12/Deuteronomy 5:16 and Exodus 21:17. All of the citations follow the Septuagint.

I preserve “Jews” because the matters under discussion pertain to the practice of Second Temple Judaism.