

LENT V - Wednesday, March 20, 2024

*A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church Year B*

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**Genesis 4**

<sup>17</sup> NOW Cain knew his woman (intimately) and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch and he built a city and named it Enoch after his child Enoch. <sup>18</sup> Then born to Enoch was Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael and Mehujael fathered Methushael and Methushael fathered Lamech. <sup>19</sup> Then, Lamech took two women: the name of the one was Adah and the name of the second, Zillah. <sup>20</sup> And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the ancestor of those who live in tents surrounded by livestock. <sup>21</sup> And the name of his brother was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all those who take up the lyre and pipe. <sup>22</sup> Then Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain who forged every kind of implement of bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his women:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
you women of Lamech, hear well what I say:  
I have killed a man for wounding me,  
and a boy-child for striking me.

<sup>24</sup> If sevenfold Cain is avenged,  
then Lamech seventy and seven.”

**Psalm 128**

<sup>1</sup> Happy are all who revere the FOUNT OF LIFE,  
walking in her ways.

<sup>2</sup> Of the labor of your hands shall you eat;  
you shall be happy and it shall go well with you.

<sup>3</sup> Your woman, a fruitful vine flanking your house;  
your children, olive shoots around your table.

<sup>4</sup> Thus shall the person be blessed who reveres the SOURCE OF LIFE.

<sup>5</sup> The WELLSPRING OF LIFE bless you from Zion  
and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

<sup>6</sup> And, may you see your children's children.

Peace be upon Israel!

**1 Corinthians 7**

<sup>1</sup> Now, about what you have written: It is good for a man not to take hold of a woman. <sup>2</sup> But because of sexual immorality, each man should have his own woman and each woman her own man. <sup>3</sup> For the wife, the husband should do his duty and likewise the wife for her husband. <sup>4</sup> For the wife does not have authority over her own body, rather the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, yet the wife does. <sup>5</sup> Do not ever defraud each another except by agreement for a time to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup> This I say as a concession, not a command. <sup>7</sup> I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has their own gift from God, indeed one to one and another to another.

<sup>8</sup> To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain so. <sup>9</sup> But if they are not showing self-control, they should marry; for it is better to marry than to burn. <sup>10</sup> To the married I give this command—not I but the Most High—a woman should not separate from her man, <sup>11</sup> though if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her man; also a man should not divorce his woman. <sup>12</sup> To the rest I say—I and not the Most High—that if a believer has a woman who is an unbeliever and she agrees to live with him, he should not divorce her. <sup>13</sup> And if a woman has a man who is an unbeliever and he agrees to live with her, she should not divorce him. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving man is made holy through his woman, and the unbelieving woman is made holy through her man. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, yet now they are holy. <sup>15</sup> Now if the unbeliever leaves, let them leave; a sister or brother is not bound in such circumstances. It is to peace that God has called you. <sup>16</sup> For woman, how do you know whether you will save your man, and how do you know, man, whether you will save your woman? <sup>17</sup> However let each walk through life as the Holy One has designated and as God has called them. This is what I instruct all the churches.

## Mark 10

<sup>1</sup> Now Jesus arose from [Capernaum] and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan and crowds of women, children, and men again gathered around him, and as was his custom, again he taught them. <sup>2</sup> Then came Pharisees, asking him if it was permissible for a man to divorce, testing Jesus. <sup>3</sup> But he answered, saying to them, “What did Moses command you?” <sup>4</sup> Now, they said, “Moses allowed writing a document of release and divorce.” <sup>5</sup> But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hard-heartedness he inscribed this commandment for you all. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, ‘*God made them female and male.*’ <sup>7</sup> ‘*Because of this a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his woman,* <sup>8</sup> *and the two shall become one flesh.*’ Thus they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no mortal separate.” <sup>10</sup> Then in the house, again the disciples asked Jesus about this. <sup>11</sup> He said to them, “Whoever divorces his woman and marries another commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her man and marries another, she commits adultery.”

<sup>13</sup> Also, women and men were bringing him children so that he might hold them and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> Yet when Jesus saw he became angry and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not prevent them. For to such ones the reign of God belongs. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you all, whoever does not receive the reign of God as a little child will not enter it.” <sup>16</sup> Then he embraced them, blessing them, laying his hands on them.

### Text Notes

Neither Hebrew nor Greek has distinct words for wives or husbands. Both languages use the expressions “her man” and “his woman” to indicate conjugal relationships. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul first says that each *woman or man* should have their own spouse. Then using the same wording, he means that each *wife or husband* should do their duty by their spouse. Paul uses *anthropos*, which means “human” and “man” for man and *aner*, male person, for “husband” while using the most common term for women, *gune*, for both women and wives. Having used *anthropos* for male initially, it is not clear whether Paul means “all males” or “all people” have their own gift of God in verse 7.

Jesus’s previous location, Capernaum, is disclosed in Mark 9:33. *Exestin*, “permissible, right, possible” is not “lawful” (NRSV) or “allow[ed]” by “the Law” (CEB). These translations create and contribute to the idea that Jesus is in opposition to his own cultural and religious background, in anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. Both NRSV in CEB add “wife” to verses 2 and 4. In neither case is the divorced person specified, though certainly understood to be a woman. In verse 6, Jesus quotes Genesis 1:27; in verse 7 he quotes Genesis 2:24. In verse 13, I expand the inclusive “they” to “women and men,” and *hapestai* here means “touch” or “hold.” I prefer “whole” because it is more intimate, and the later description in verse 16, “embrace” (lit. “took them in his arms”), corresponds to “hold” more than to “touch.” The verb in verse 14 can mean either “to be angry” or “to be indignant.” The stronger reading contributes to a portrait of Jesus who feels the full range of emotions and feels them passionately.