

2-1-1937

## Brief Lenten Outlines

W. Arndt

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

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### Recommended Citation

Arndt, W. (1937) "Brief Lenten Outlines," *Concordia Theological Monthly*: Vol. 8 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol8/iss1/14>

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However, holiness of life, on the other hand, consists also in this, that we become more and more holy. "It is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy," v. 16. God is absolutely holy. 1 Thess. 4, 3; Heb. 12, 14. Being God's children, we should show even here on earth more and more the nature of our holy Father. For how can we be truly the children of the holy heavenly Father if here on earth we live and deport ourselves as children of the devil?

Are we living up to the expectation of our holy God also in this respect that we no longer have the shape and form of our former unholy self, but that as obedient children of our holy God we most earnestly strive after holiness in thoughts, words, and deeds? Then our hope will not be in vain. The day will come when all imperfection of the present will have to give way to perfection. Ps. 17, 15. May God hasten the day! J. T. ROSCHKE

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## Brief Lenten Outlines

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### I

#### Sorrowful unto Death

MARK 14, 32—36

In viewing the consummation of the work of our precious, divine Savior, Mark, brief, but vivid in his narrative, will be our guide. Let us go to the scene of our Lord's suffering not as curiosity-seekers, but as repentant sinners, conscious of having had a share in causing Him this deep woe. We see the beginning of it in Gethsemane, where the Savior says of His soul that it is—

#### Sorrowful unto Death

1. *His anguish was inexpressibly great*
2. *It was caused not merely by a knowledge of impending suffering, but by His being our Substitute as Sin-bearer*

### 1

After the Passover meal and the institution of His Holy Supper, Jesus came to Gethsemane with His apostles. Here there was a garden affording a place for rest.

Something now occurred into the full nature of which we shall not be able to enter here on earth. Jesus withdrew to the interior of the garden. Mental and spiritual suffering set in. The words used by Mark signify that a state of terror came over Him and that He was distressed and troubled.

His inner agitation was so intense as to threaten to bring on death, separation of soul and body. We know that great grief, unexpected grief, has often brought on death.

Jesus prays. How strange! He that can avert all trouble pleads for help. See His deep humiliation. He leans on His disciples for support, v. 33. He who has often helped others now looks around for help.

## 2

What is the explanation? Jesus had full knowledge of His impending suffering and death. He suffered like a criminal awaiting execution. This was a dreadful thing for Him who is pure and holy.

But more must be said. He had a cup to drink, the chief content of which was guilt, the guilt of sin contracted by all mankind. Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 21. There was glaring down on Him the wrath of God, which smites all sinners. Hence His indescribable woe.

He did drink the cup. He became our Substitute, Mark 10, 45. And so we think not merely of our sins, but rejoicingly, gratefully, likewise of the help effected for us. A.

## II

## Betrayed

MARK 14, 43—46

In the Passion narrative, so it has been well said, we are shown a cross-section of humanity, its various types of characters, its many ways of opposing Jesus and His message. Let each one of us, instead of merely condemning the enemies of Christ and instead of judging others, watch to see his own likeness appear as the story unfolds. In today's text from Mark's gospel we are shown Jesus as —

## Betrayed

1. *The dastardly deed is done by a disciple*
2. *Under the guise of friendship*
3. *With the capture of Christ as the result*

## 1

The enemies of Jesus had not dared to arrest Him in the Temple, when there was a great multitude of people around Him. A certain man, however, offered to lead the servants of the high priest to a secluded spot where Jesus could be arrested without commotion. This man was one of the disciples of Jesus, one of the Twelve, Judas. He had been one of the closest friends and

companions of Jesus for several years. — Money did it. Even the world despises such an act. Jesus, our Substitute, endures it.

Christians, through their many acts of sinful weakness, hurt Christianity more than all its outspoken enemies.

## 2

What made the act of Judas particularly repulsive was that it was perpetrated in the garb of sincere, affectionate friendship. A kiss was employed by him. This means was probably chosen to make identification certain. Cf. Ps. 41, 9. — The sin of hypocrisy here looms up. We constantly avow friendship for Jesus. Are we sincere? Do we somewhat resemble Judas?

## 3

Jesus is taken captive. Judas had hurried away from the Passover meal to get a number of soldiers. In Gethsemane he finds Jesus. The soldiers bind Christ.

The great paradox: The Lord of the universe is now a prisoner. Sin is a mighty force, as we see here; but love, which makes the omnipotent Creator submit to such indignities, is still greater. A.

## III

### Condemned as a Blasphemer

MARK 14, 55—64

As we in these days think of our sins, let us not fail to include among them sins of the tongue: words of unjust anger, of peevishness, lies, slanders, defamations, curses, unnecessary or false oaths, blasphemies. That among the transgressions which Jesus atoned for were sins of this nature we are reminded of by our text, which shows us Jesus —

#### Condemned as a Blasphemer

1. *The charge of blasphemy was a measure of last resort*
2. *It was totally unfounded*
3. *It was made the basis of a capital sentence*

## 1

From Gethsemane, Jesus was led to the high-priestly palace, first before Annas (John 18, 13), next before Caiaphas (John 18, 24), and it is before the latter where Mark's narrative places Him. A meeting of the chief council had hastily been called in the deep of night.

Charges are sought against Him. Witnesses have been gotten ready. They testify, but there is no agreement. Jesus' effective reply to the falsehoods is silence.

The attempts of the enemies appear frustrated, when the high priest finally resorts to a different method. He asks Jesus directly whether He is the Messiah. Jesus now speaks, answering in the affirmative. It is what His enemies desired. Now they charge Him with blasphemy.

## 2

Jesus had spoken the truth, and had spoken it clearly.

He could not have spoken differently. And what abundant proofs of His Messiahship had He not furnished in His miracles!

His reply indicated the importance of His being accepted as the Messiah, v. 62. This was not merely an academic matter.

His judges, instead of investigating the truthfulness of His assertion about Himself, called Him a blasphemer. If He had not been the Son of God, He would have been guilty of this sin. Cf. John 10, 30—39.

## 3

The sin of blasphemy was punished by death in the old theocracy. Cf. Lev. 24, 11—16. Accordingly the death-sentence was now pronounced upon Jesus. The people condemning Him were His own countrymen, the rulers of the nation which, first of all, He had come to bless.

This ingratitude and rejection must have caused Jesus the severest pain.

He was falsely accused of a sin of the tongue; we, let us say it again, have often actually transgressed in this fashion.

Behold with what a price we are purchased! In thankfulness let us guard our tongue and use it to sing the Savior's praise. A.

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 IV

### Delivered to be Crucified

MARK 15, 6—15

Who can enumerate all the occasions of injustice that the annals of mankind record! Israel was treated unjustly by Pharaoh in Egypt; innocent Naboth was condemned and stoned at the instigation of Jezebel. What must not be overlooked — we ourselves are often unjust in our judgments, finding fault without cause. May this lead up to our discussion of the most heinous perversion of justice history reports. In the text we see the Holy, the Innocent One —

**Delivered to be Crucified**

1. *The trial had convinced the judge of Jesus' innocence*
2. *The verdict ordering crucifixion was wrong from the judge by His enemies*

**1**

The chief council of the Jews could not carry out its sentence, which condemned Jesus to death. The right of meting out capital punishment the Roman government had reserved for itself. Jesus is led before the Roman governor. The charge is that He made Himself the King of the Jews. Jesus admits that He is the King of the Jews. Then many false accusations are hurled at Him. Jesus is silent; these false accusations deserve no reply.

The custom of freeing a prisoner at the feast came in. Pilate was anxious to set Jesus free. Why? He saw that Jesus was innocent and that the chief priests had delivered Him up to him for envy, v.10. Evidently no proof that He was the fomenter of a rebellion had been presented. While Jesus called Himself King of the Jews, the governor realized that this was not a political title. Pilate saw that Jesus was popular and that the high priests wished to rid themselves of One whom they considered dangerous to their authority.

It is important that we should have assurance of Jesus' innocence. The iniquity He bears is not His, but ours.

**2**

The verdict of condemnation was wrung from the governor. The freeing of Jesus under the customary amnesty granted at the feast was not acceptable to the Jews. Barabbas, a notorious murderer, was preferred.

With regard to Jesus the shout is: "Crucify Him!" Repeatedly this cry is sent up.

When Pilate sees the determination of the Jewish leaders and he cannot break it down, he weakly yields.

Knowing that he is condemning an innocent person, he delivers Jesus to be crucified.

Justice is outraged, but the highest demands of divine justice are met. The greatest crime of the ages is committed, but all the crimes and transgressions of mankind are atoned for. The Jews compass the destruction of Jesus; they have to help to save the world. Cf. Gen. 50, 20.

A.

