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## Brief Lenten Outlines

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through fear of death, the advancement of our Redeemer's kingdom, will surely be reached. Success is established and assured "in the Lord," in the truth of His promise, in the power of His resurrection. This success will compensate for all our toil. What an impulse Easter joy should give to our mission efforts, personal, our Church's, locally and at large! — Let all our life and work reflect the joy of our Easter-song: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory!"

AUG. BERNTHAL

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## Brief Lenten Outlines

### V

#### Crucified

MARK 15, 25—28

The person and life of Jesus are a series of paradoxes. That poor child of humble parents is He who is born King of the Jews. He who was of the tribe of Judah was the great High Priest; cp. Heb. 7, 14. He who sat at the feet of the scribes was the Prophet greater than Moses, Deut. 18. Especially the history of His Passion is filled with such paradoxes. Cp. Acts 3, 15; 1 Cor. 2, 8; Heb. 5, 8. A similar mystery, inexplicable to human reason, but the source of unending joy to faith, is revealed in our text.

#### The King of the Jews Crucified

1. *By His crucifixion Jesus is numbered with the transgressors*
2. *By His crucifixion He is proved the King of the Jews*

#### 1

V. 25. Crucifixion was a slow, lingering, exceedingly painful, withal the most shameful, form of putting one to death. To crucify a Roman citizen was an outrage which brought the swift vengeance of Rome upon the perpetrator. Hence the demand to crucify an accused person deliberately branded him as a dangerous, wicked, vile criminal. With this in mind, the Jews, His own people, had charged Jesus with rebellion against the Roman government, one of the crimes punishable by crucifixion. Though Pilate was convinced of His innocence, he yielded against his better judgment, for political reasons, to the demand of the Jews and had Jesus crucified. Jesus endured all the agonies of this painful, shameful penalty. To add to the insult, He was crucified between two malefactors, v. 27, thus literally fulfilling Is. 53, 9. V. 28. And still — marvelous mystery! — this selfsame crucified Jesus, by His very crucifixion, proved Himself to be the King of the Jews.

## 2

V. 26. Though written in bitter irony, never were truer words penned. Throughout the Old Testament, God had promised to His people a great King, Gen. 49, 10; Num. 24, 17, 19; 2 Sam. 7, 13 ff.; etc. His kingdom was to extend over the whole earth and comprise both Jews and Gentiles, Ps. 72, 8 ff.; and His gifts were to be not temporal, political advantages, but spiritual blessings, Is. 11, 1—9; Zech. 9, 9; 12, 1.

Is that crucified Jesus this promised King, as He claimed to be John 18, 33 ff.? Indeed He is. His claim, absurd as it seemed to Pilate, blasphemous as it was called by the Jews, was indeed proved by His very crucifixion. By His death upon the cross He established His Kingdom of Grace and Glory. By His crucifixion He defeated Satan and his hosts, who had held mankind captive, and procured for them justification, sanctification, salvation, Col. 1, 12—23; 2, 14, 15. Thus alone He fulfilled the words of prophecy. This crucified Jesus, though numbered with the transgressors, Is. 53, 9, though as the humble Servant of God despised and rejected of men, v. 3, was punished not for His own sin, but for the sins of mankind, vv. 4—6, 12. And for what purpose? That thereby He might establish His kingdom, vv. 10—12 a; cp. Ps. 22, 27—31, a kingdom in which the subjects, redeemed from sin and death by the crucifixion of their King, draw from His cross the joy of sin forgiven, strength to serve their King in whatever sphere of activity He has placed them (parents, teachers, rulers, employers, employees; make application according to congregational conditions and requirements), the assurance of eternal life. His cross bridges the gap between heaven and earth, opened by sin, closed by our King. Hymn 204.

TH. LAETSCH

## VI

## Forsaken

MARK 15, 29—34

"Forsaken!" What depths of agony are expressed in this word! To forsake means to leave one behind in some state, to depart from him, leaving him helpless. Forsaken, deserted by one's fellow-men, abandoned perhaps on some desert island, pent up in solitary confinement, what agony! Forsaken! How many have been driven to despair and, cursing God and man, have committed suicide! Our text shows us —

**Jesus Forsaken, Yet Not Forsaking**

1. *Forsaken indeed of man and God*
2. *Yet ever Jesus, loyal to God and man*

## 1

**V. 29.** All passers-by railed on Jesus while He was hanging on the cross, blasphemed Him, spoke irreverently and despicably of Him who had gone about doing good, etc., Acts 10, 38; drove deep into His soul the shafts of bitter mockery, vv. 29. 30. This they had learned from the leaders of the people, who, alas, were leaders also in their opposition to, and enmity against, Jesus; who undoubtedly had spread among the people their blasphemous misinterpretation of that solemn prophecy John 2, 19, which was being fulfilled even now. By their own public rejection and malicious derision of their King they encouraged not only the passers-by, but even the criminals, who were "in the same condemnation, . . . justly," Luke 23, 40. 41, to revile, reproach, upbraid Him, v. 32 b, and the heathen soldiers to make His cry of agony the butt of cruel jests.

Oh, the base ingratitude of mankind! Mankind, we say; for man has not changed. Mockery, ridicule, coarse jests, that is the lot of Christ and His Christians to this day. Not only the rabble, criminals, anarchists, all passers-by, and even, yea, especially, the leaders, the teachers of religion, reject Christ and His substitutionary work. To one and all His cross is an offense, 1 Cor. 1, 18—23. — Must we not also hide our faces in shame as we view this scene? What would we have done had we passed by that cross? How often have thoughts of self-righteousness arisen in our hearts! How often have we voiced our dissatisfaction with God's government in our lives, in Church, in State! Is that not in fact despising Him and His work and His rule? Have we perhaps laughed with the world when Christ was being ridiculed instead of openly confessing Him? Have we forsaken, abandoned, Christ in His members, left our fellow-Christians without help, without comfort? Are we not guilty?

None there was to help, none to comfort Him. Forsaken, rejected, ridiculed by all. And still the cup of agony is not yet emptied. The bitterest draught still remains to be drained. Out of the darkness is heard that awful, mysterious, heartrending cry: v. 34. God Himself forsakes, deserts, abandons Him, leaves Him without comfort, turns away from Him, surrenders Him to the hosts of hell to suffer the torments of the damned in body and soul. Who can fathom this mystery? Yet if anything stands out clearly, it is the truly awful wickedness, the horrible guilt of sin. Hymn 209, 2. 3.

## 2

Though forsaken of God, He does not forsake, desert, God. Without murmuring He submits to that ordeal and, far from despairing, far from becoming disloyal to God, still clings to Him, calls Him "My God, MY GOD," who had forsaken Him. How profound a mystery! An obedient Son of God in the number of those forsaken, among the inhabitants of hell! The only-begotten Son learning obedience by, and practising it in, the things which He suffered, Heb. 5, 8. 9. Loyal to God, loyal to His ministry, loyal to those whom He had come to save from eternal damnation by suffering the agony of being forsaken for them, in their stead. For so alone could He remain obedient to His Father, who had from eternity ordained this agony for His Son as the Savior of the world. So alone could He fulfil His ministry, which in love truly divine He had willingly taken upon Himself, Ps. 40, 7. 8. So alone could He redeem mankind; for there was no other way of satisfying God's justice, of appeasing His holy and righteous wrath. He alone, the eternal, omnipotent God, could fulfil Hos. 13, 14. 15. And by this agony He *has* saved, redeemed, all mankind, *you*. There is nothing that Christ did not suffer for you, no penalty that He did not endure in your stead, no needed satisfaction that He did not render as your Substitute.

Jesus forsaken, yet not forsaking. Let us not seek to fathom this mystery, much less reject it because we cannot understand it. Rather let us humbly, believingly, gratefully, worship this mystery of godliness and Him who made it possible. Let us accept this Savior, who is able to save to the uttermost. Considering the price He paid for our redemption, let us serve Him in home, church, business, in private and public life.

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