

6-1-1937

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

Theo. Laetsch

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Laetsch, Theo. (1937) "Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 8 , Article 51.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol8/iss1/51>

This Homiletical Help is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

Second Sunday after Trinity

Rom. 10, 1—15

The greatest calamity that ever befell the human race is described in the Bible with few and simple words. No extravagant and sensational language is used by the Holy Spirit to tell the sad story of man's disgraceful fall from a state of innocence and holiness into a state of sin and shame. But though the language used is so very simple, could the greatness of man's sin or the sadness of his fallen condition be more graphically portrayed? Of his own free will man gave up his blessed freedom and close friendship with God and deliberately chose the humiliating slavery of Satan and degrading bondage of sin. How unspeakably sad is man's natural condition after the Fall! He might have been the free and happy child of God, and now he is the abject slave of Satan and sin. But thanks be to God, for wretched, fallen man there is help and salvation, etc.

Salvation, O Salvation!

The Joyful Sound Proclaim

1. *There is a dire need for this salvation*
2. *God has graciously provided this salvation for all men*
3. *It is God's will that we proclaim this universal salvation*

1

a) Their sad natural condition is felt by men in a greater or lesser degree. They realize that they are estranged from God by their sins and make attempts to remove the barrier; cp. Rom. 9, 31; 10, 2. Men have ever made desperate attempts to restore the old relationship with the Creator. There is probably no torture, no task, that man has not inflicted or imposed upon himself to gain the good will of his god. He has shunned no labor, however great, no sacrifice, however stupendous, no torture, however terrible, to make himself acceptable to his idols.

b) But all these attempts have been, are, and ever will be utterly futile. Notice Paul's "but" in v. 2 of text. The Jews should have known better, but they rejected the right knowledge offered them. God's clear revelation concerning Himself and how He wishes to be honored they rejected and went their own way. Hence their zeal was not God-pleasing, and for this reason also all their attempts to please God were useless. Their righteousness was not the righteousness that comes from God and so could not satisfy God and save them.

c) Thus it is with the self-directed attempts of all men to save themselves. Be their attempts ever so strenuous and their zeal

ever so intense, they cannot satisfy the righteous God. Nothing but a perfect fulfilment of the Law can satisfy the perfect God, v. 5; Luke 10, 28; Matt. 5, 48. And since all man's attempts are imperfect, God's perfect Law is not satisfied, Eccl. 7, 20; Is. 64, 6; Job 14, 4; Ps. 143, 2; Jas. 2, 10. Hymn 310, 3; 325, 2.

2

a) God has graciously prepared a salvation. This He did by sending His Son, according to His eternal counsel and decree, in the fulness of time into the world, born of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those that were under the Law, Gal. 4, 4, 5, by His perfect fulfilment of the Law, obeying it in thought, desire, word, and deed, and by bearing the guilt and punishment of our sins, 1 Pet. 2, 24. And all this He did as our Substitute, Matt. 3, 15; 2 Cor. 5, 21; Is. 53, 4, 5. Thus, then, Christ became the end of the Law, v. 4.

b) This salvation is universal; it is not only for the Jews, but for all men, vv. 4. 9—13. God loved the world, John 3, 16; He made His Son under the Law for all, Gal. 4, 4, 5; Christ came to save all, Matt. 18, 11; He took away the sin of the world, John 1, 29; 1 John 2, 2; even of those who reject Him, 2 Pet. 2, 1.

c) And this salvation is free for the taking, vv. 4. 6—13. It is not a salvation that you must prepare in whole or in part; nor are you asked to do anything to merit it in whole or in part. It is all yours for the mere taking. John 3, 16: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall . . . have everlasting life."

3

a) By nature man is ignorant of this great salvation. He is by nature blind as to the way of salvation, 1 Cor. 2, 14, and could never find it; he is also dead, Eph. 2, 1, and therefore utterly unable to attain it; yes, he is even strenuously opposed to acknowledge and accept it, v. 3; Rom. 8, 7.

b) There is only one means of bringing this salvation to man, and only this one means can make men willing and able to accept the Gospel, the Word of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, vv. 9. 14. 15. The preaching of this Word alone is able to open the eyes of the spiritually blind, to awaken them from the death of sin, and to remove the natural enmity from the heart; for it is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1, 16; cp. 1 Pet. 2, 9; Jer. 31, 18; 2 Cor. 4, 6. Yes, by the Gospel alone that faith is wrought in the heart by which man appropriates Christ's merits and salvation; it alone is the means by which the Holy Ghost brings a man to recognize Jesus as his Lord and Savior, 1 Cor. 12, 3.

c) As has been said, faith presupposes the preaching of the Gospel, and if it is to be proclaimed, there must be preachers. But preachers must be sent. Has provision been made for this sending of preachers? Yes, Christ has provided the necessary preachers of His saving Gospel, Matt. 28, 19; Mark 16, 16; Acts 1, 8. And as Paul thinks of this gracious provision that Christ has made for the preaching of His salvation, he joyously exclaims: v. 15b. Yes, blessed work, that of proclaiming the joyful sound of salvation to all men. Hymn 474, 3. 4. _____ F. J. LANKENAU

Third Sunday after Trinity

Acts 3, 1—16

"Divine healers" of every sort claim that they are able to perform the same miraculous cures as Christ and the apostles. Christians suffering from long-standing disease are often harassed by these healers or their adherents, sometimes urged by their own relatives, or tempted by Satan, to apply to these healers for relief. A study of our text will convince us of the essential difference between the miracles of the apostles and those of our modern "divine healers" and of the danger and sinfulness of calling upon them for help.

Peter's Healing of the Lame Man

1. *It is a miraculous healing*
2. *It is a healing in the name and for the glory of Jesus*
3. *It is a healing for the spiritual welfare of his fellow-men*

1

Describe the long-standing ailment of the lame man and the miraculous cure. By a mere word; immediately; a perfect cure; no trace of lameness remaining. Cp. 4, 14. So all miracles were performed by the apostles.

God still performs miracles in answer to prayers or through believers to whom He has given this special gift, as He sees fit. But there is an essential difference between these genuine miracles and the healings of the divine healers. If these effect a cure, it is only after protracted treatments, careful preparations, influencing the mind of the ailing person, etc. For instances of remarkable, yet natural, cures of ailments due to a morbid state of mind, hysteria, neurosis, etc., see Th. Graebner, *Faith-cure*, Tract No. 86. How often, however, do they fail to cure, while apostles knew no failure. How often the cure is worse than the ailment was! Even if they would be quite successful in the healing of diseases, still a Christian would not apply to them for help because theirs is a Christless, antichristian method, as we shall now see.

2

V. 6. The apostles heal in the name of Jesus, refusing to accept any honor and glory for themselves, v. 12. What a difference between Peter and John and the healers of our day, who are continuously advertising themselves, seeking their own glorification! Though they use the name of Jesus, it is not in the manner that Peter used it. To him it was not a mere charm; cp. Acts 19, 13 ff. To him Jesus was not a mere man, a miracle worker. To him He was the divinely appointed Savior, Jesus Christ, who by His suffering and death, vv. 13—15, redeemed mankind; the Holy and Just One, yea, the Son of God in a unique sense, the Prince of Life, acknowledged as such by God Himself through the resurrection. Cp. 4, 9—12. That, that alone, is the name which made the lame man strong, v. 16. Contrast with this the Christology of divine healers of our day. They deny the deity and the vicarious atonement of Christ. Their doctrine is the doctrine of devils, 1 Tim. 4, 1, to be avoided by every believing child of God, who will rather suffer all his lifetime than appeal for healing to deniers of His Savior.

3

This miracle was wrought in order to save the lame man from spiritual sickness and death, vv. 8. 9. 16. Saving faith was engendered in him. Peter makes use of this opportunity to preach Christ Crucified to the multitudes. Again note how he proceeds. He preaches the Law first. Not does he thunder against sin in the abstract, not against the sins of the Romans. No, *ye* delivered and denied, *ye* denied, etc., vv. 13—15. Very personal preaching and very bitter truths. If popularity or financial gain had been his object, as it is the aim of many divine healers, that would have been the most unsuitable way of gaining them. Silver and gold he had none, though he had performed many miracles, Acts 2, 43. His purpose was to save his fellow-Israelites. He preached the Law in order to make them aware of their sins; the Gospel, to lead them to their Savior, to awaken saving faith in their hearts. That is a faith that neither demands healing by all means nor is disappointed if healing does not come in answer to prayers, that is satisfied with the assurance of forgiveness and eternal salvation, radically different from the faith demanded by the divine healers. The faith demanded by healers is based on the ability and the personality of the healer and will lead either to false security, if a cure is effected, or to despair if the patient remains a patient. Divine healing does not work spiritual welfare, but untold harm to soul and body and purse of the poor, unfortunate victim.

Close with an urgent warning against this wickedness.

TH. LAETSCH

Fourth Sunday after Trinity**Acts 4, 1—12**

Need of confession of Christ is emphasized in the Bible, Matt. 10, 32; Phil. 2, 11. The Bible also gives us some wonderful examples of true confessors and their confessions: Nathanael, John 1, 49; Peter, Matt. 16, 16; John 6, 69; Martha, John 11, 27.

Still confession of faith, confession of our Savior, is often neglected. Reasons for this neglect are: ignorance, for many so-called Christians know so little about Christ and the Christian doctrine that they cannot make a good confession; indifference, for many so-called Christians take their Christianity so lightly, it means so little to them, that they do not care to speak about it; fear, for many persons, like Peter in the palace of the high priest, are afraid that their confession might bring them some unpleasantness, some evil results.

We Lutherans are not guiltless in this matter. Though we have been remarkably blessed by God with purity of doctrine, with a wonderful system of education, with a soundly indoctrinated membership, we often do not permit our witness, our testimony, to ring out as clearly and boldly as it should. We need new instruction, new encouragement, to be witness-bearers, bold confessors, for Jesus. Text gives such help.

A Bold Confession of the Only Savior

1. *Under unusual, trying circumstances*
2. *With marvelous clarity and candidness*

1

A) Unusual circumstances recorded in previous chapter.
 a) Healing of lame man at the Gate Beautiful of the Temple, Acts 3, 1—11. — b) Peter, making the best of the situation, preached a remarkable sermon to the wondering people and called upon them to repent and to believe, Acts 3, 12—19.

B) Unusual, trying circumstances related in our text. a) V. 1. Peter, while still preaching, was interrupted. By whom? The priests, who undoubtedly were angry because the people in their astonishment over the miracle had neglected the Temple services and sacrifices. The captain of the Levitical Temple guard. Temple guard did police duty in Temple. May have acted because they thought that large gathering was disturbing the peace of the Temple. Chief among those who came upon Peter were Sadducees. They were members of the high-priestly party, people who were especially offended because Peter preached "the resurrection from the dead," v. 2. — b) V. 3. Peter was not only interrupted in his sermon, but manhandled and arrested and placed in jail until the next morning. Certainly unusual circumstances surrounded the bold testimony, the open confession, of Peter and John.

C) Application. Unusual and trying circumstances today. Much bitter opposition to truth. Communism and atheism. So many would-be Christians have drifted far from moorings of faith. Modernism denies just the testimony of Peter concerning the resurrection, the Savior, repentance, and faith. We Lutherans have the truth, Word in purity. Tremendous world responsibility to testify, confess, everywhere, at all times, by means of pulpit and press, radio and public forum. Are we doing enough of it? Is our confession bold and clear enough? What are you doing as a congregation, as an individual? Is your testimony heard? Does it give a clear sound, or is it weak and garbled? Confession of Peter was made with remarkable clarity and candidness.

2

A) Bold testimony of Peter before Council. a) Immediate occasion of this testimony, vv. 5—7. Similar setting as at trial of Jesus, Luke 22, 66. 67. Seemingly formal meeting of Council, not during night as in case of Jesus, but in the morning. Rulers, elders, scribes, priests. Characterize each group briefly. Ranking members of high-priestly family, v. 6. Some apparently came from distance, "gathered together at Jerusalem."—"Set them in the midst." Council sat in circle, and persons who had business before the Council, especially the accused, were placed "in the midst." Pointed question, v. 7b. Emphasis on "ye." By what right had Peter and John done these things? —b) Polite and direct introduction. Text, vv. 8. 9. Peter was Spirit-filled. Cf. v. 31; Mark 13, 11. He addressed wicked enemies as rulers, elders. A bit of irony in v. 9. Rather strange to be brought before the High Council merely for doing good, healing a poor cripple. But since it seems that court wished to fasten the charge of sorcery, divination, upon them, Peter boldly proclaimed the source of the miraculous power that had been shown.

B) Main contents of bold confession. a) All glory must go to Jesus for the miracle, v. 10. The healed cripple took stand with the disciples before the Council. Peter claims no honor either for himself or for John. Gives all credit to despised, crucified, risen Lord. —b) All shame and disgrace must be heaped upon enemies. They had crucified Jesus; they had rejected him; they had attempted to set Him at naught, v. 11. They had done everything in their power to destroy Him forever; but God raised Him up from the dead; made Him to be the Head of the corner, the very Corner-stone and Foundation of the Church, Eph. 2, 20. This surely was open and candid testimony.

C) Climax of confession is reached in v. 12. Jesus is the only Savior. He is the Savior of all people, John 3, 16. All other saviors are ruled out. All personal work, all self-righteousness, is cast

aside. Most assuredly the words of Peter are a bold testimony to the only Savior.

D) The contents of the candid and open confession of Peter before the Council is a fine summary of Lutheran teaching. Just these facts are and must be stressed again and again by us: Jesus, the Crucified, the risen Lord, the Lord of life and death, the One that made the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, is the only Savior. — We have the light of the saving truth. Can we, dare we, hide this light under a bushel? If we fully realize how much the sinful, wicked world needs just the bold testimony of Peter, just the bold testimony of soundly indoctrinated Lutheran Christians, we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard and sincerely believe. Friend, just what are you doing to bear bold testimony for Jesus?

E. L. ROSCHKE

Fifth Sunday after Trinity

ACTS 5, 34—42

The Bible ever presents contrasts of faith and unbelief, their aspects and operations: Abel and Cain; Isaac and Ishmael; David and Saul; the publican and the Pharisee; Paul and Felix. Our text contrasts in particular the unprincipled and cowardly uncertainty of unbelief with the victory of faith in Jesus.

"It Is a Good Thing that the Heart be Established"

1. *An unstable heart is the result of unbelief, which operates with assumptions*
2. *Faith in Jesus stabilizes the heart unto victory*

1

A) The text offers the proceedings of the Council against the apostles, the Holy Spirit's record of the court session. a) Note the reaction of the councilmen to the apostles' powerful testimony and then the headless determination to slay, heedless of every law. Now a doctor rises to say a few words. He issues a warning; he quotes some crime record; he gives an advice; he utters a truth, which he bases on external evidences mentioned before and on human reason. The councilmen generously agree, but forthwith they act and speak contrary to the professor's advice and their own resolution by beating and opposing the apostles, in reality fighting against God. What a mess they made of the case before them! Quite unbecoming to men. — b) They might have known, they should have known, they did know, that this counsel and work was of God. It was revealed by Him in Moses and the Prophets. It was the subject of interest since Adam. At this time it was the talk of the hour. The apostles' testimony was a revelation of the truth and a call to repentance.

B) Professor Gamaliel and his associates represent the forces who oppose Jesus and His cause. a) Their disregard of the inspired writings fulfilled in Christ is the popular attitude. The two *ifs*, the devil's pet word, vv. 38. 39, create the doubt that is wanted by compromising diplomats, who speak truth to hide truth. Gamaliel's advice has the full endorsement of all unbelievers everywhere. It is said to be reasonable, tactful, compromising, a balance against personal responsibility, clear conviction, and fanaticism. It shifts from one premise to another, from one *if* to the next *if*. It is cowardly, sinful, fatal. No unbeliever is sure in his unbelief. Unbelief is inexcusable because God has revealed His counsel in Christ Jesus. Modernism supports its own source: the unstable heart. It fears conviction, borrows opinions, commends tolerance of every diverse and strange doctrine in its inconsistency and cruelty against Christ and His own: "Do not speak in the name of Jesus."—b) May God preserve us from such blindness! It rises also in the Church with an air of superknowledge and advises us not to harbor Scriptural convictions, but to assume and to wait, wait, wait,—and to count uncertainty a virtue. Gamaliel's advice brings us nowhere. The unstable heart—what an abyss of darkness and sin! What a death to leap into doubt! Jas. 1, 8.

2

A) The disciples depart a) beaten, but not beaten in spirit; b) rejoicing (Only Christians understand this rejoicing. As one dressed the wounds of the other: "Peter, they did beat you very hard; does it hurt?" "John, are you in severe pain?" As the sorrowful, yet always rejoicing for His name's sake); c) disregarding the Council's command (see v. 29). a) They ceased not to be active in teaching, in preaching, in the Temple (in public), in every house (extensive work in private), daily.—b) Jesus Christ the Climax. The incomparable Savior, Way, Truth, Life. Theudas was slain and his followers scattered; Judas of Galilee perished, and his cause was lost; the Council of the Jews was brought to naught; but: Heb. 13, 8. In Him faith conquers, and faith in Him is victorious.

B) The Word is not bound.—Were you ever on trial for Jesus' sake, in your home, school, university, workshop, on your journeys? What is your experience for His name's sake? Sometimes seeming defeat, but always victory. Your field of Christian activity is everywhere. Sing and live our battle-hymn. Defeatism versus aggressiveness.—Such courage requires conviction of faith, Job 19, 25 ("I know"); 2 Tim. 1, 12 ("I know"); Rom. 8, 38 ("I am persuaded"), and thorough indoctrination, 1 Pet. 2, 2. 3.—Luke 17, 5; Heb. 13, 9; 2 Cor. 1, 21; Col. 2, 7; 1 John 5, 4. 5. G. H. SMUKAL