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Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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hundreds, selbst nicht der beste unter ihnen, selbst nicht Gerh. Schrift, Luther und das lutherische Bekenntnis im Konfessionsbuch — das muß uns zunächst Penſum bleiben. Und zu Gerhards Verdienst gehört es, daß er juſt ebenſo dachte.

J. T. Müller

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Acts 20, 17—38

Picture briefly the occasion of Paul's farewell address. In this address to the elders he spoke much of his work among them, telling them also how they should conduct their office. We also note the great love and affection the Ephesian Christians had for their pastor. — Since the office of the ministry is so often grossly misunderstood, so often fails to receive the proper appreciation, and since this matter is also a part of the whole counsel of God which should be preached, v. 27, let us consider:

The Christian Ministry

1. Its blessed work

2. Its proper appreciation

1

A) Work of Christian ministry expressly commanded by God, v. 24; cp. Gal. 1, 1. Likewise the pastors of the congregation of Ephesus, whom he had caused to be chosen (cp. Acts 14, 23), had been made overseers by the Holy Ghost; v. 28: $\epsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron$, set you; permanent, not temporary, call.

God has told man in general to work, Gen. 3, 19 a; 2 Thess. 3, 10; but He did not institute the different callings. With the ministry it is different. Here we have a divine institution. And those who enter the Christian ministry either by direct call from God, as Paul and the other apostles, or through the orderly call of the Christian congregation, as the elders, are in a divinely instituted calling. What they do they do by the command of Christ, 2 Cor. 5, 20. What an exalted office and work!

B) In what does this work consist? Not in this, that the pastor is to be an entertainer, to burn Bibles, to be the leader in community work, to sponsor reforms and improvements in city, State, and nation, etc. No; he is to busy himself with the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments publicly and privately. He is to preach, teach, testify, vv. 25. 20. 21. 24. He is to be a living witness of what he has seen and heard, Acts 4, 20. He is to show people their sin without fear and favor and point all contrite and broken hearts to the one and only Savior, v. 21. The Christian

pastor is to bring people into the Church, the kingdom of God, v. 25. For this reason he should preach all the counsel of God and keep nothing back of what God has revealed in the Scriptures for the salvation of man, v. 27. He should feed the whole flock. And because there are always dangers threatening the flock, soul-destroying enemies from without, false brethren from within, he should also be a good overseer and watchman, vv. 29. 30. 31.— Finally, feeling his own weakness, knowing that God must bless all his preaching and teaching and Himself be the mighty Protector of the flock, the pastor should also be instant in prayer, as St. Paul prayed for and with his people, vv. 32. 36.

C) How is the ministerial work to be done?

a) In all faithfulness, because a pastor is in God's service, Heb. 13, 17; because the flock is God's most precious property, bought by His own blood, v. 28. Blessed are the pastors who can say with the apostle: vv. 20. 26.

b) Not looking for earthly riches, vv. 33—35. Paul was more intent upon giving than receiving. He took no salary from the people in Ephesus; cp. also 2 Cor. 11, 7. 12; 2 Thess. 3, 8. We do not expect a tree just planted to bear fruit or the new mission-stations in heathen countries to support their missionaries at once. Otherwise of course 1 Cor. 9, 14 and Gal. 6, 6 apply.

c) In all sincerity. "With tears" Paul warned, v. 31. There was nothing mechanical about his work, no cold professionalism. He put his whole heart and soul into his work.

d) In patience and joyfully, in spite of temptations, trials, and tribulations, past, v. 19, and predicted for the future, 23. 24.

e) With all humility of mind serving as a dutiful slave, v. 19 (*δοῦλεύων*). Paul was not puffed up with pride because of his extraordinary gifts. Although he had labored, suffered, accomplished more than any one else, yet he confessed: 1 Cor. 15, 9. 10.

2

It is generally conceded that preachers no longer command the respect that once was given them. Many preachers in America have themselves to blame for that. They no longer live up to the duties of their high calling, but desecrate the exalted office.

A) With the Ephesian Christians it was different. They knew what kind of pastor they had in Paul. As it was with the Galatians when they ran well, Gal. 4, 14. 15, so also the Ephesian Christians held Paul in highest regard. When, therefore, word was received that the apostle was at Miletus waiting for them, how the elders and probably others, too, hastened to meet their old pastor! How cordially they greeted him! With what rapt attention did they listen to his words! How their hearts were touched by the words

he spoke to them! How their eyes began to moisten when he mentioned that in all probability they would not see his face again! And when he then fell on his knees to pray with them once more, they could not contain themselves any longer. With much weeping they fell around his neck and kissed him over and over again. With deep sorrow they accompanied him to the ship and saw him wave his last farewell to them. These men of Ephesus knew what they owed to the apostle; therefore they could not but show their intense love to him.

B) And so it is today. If Christians have a true and faithful pastor, a shepherd according to the heart of God, 2 Tim. 2, 15; if they remember that God Himself has given them this pastor, that he is God's and Christ's representative and ambassador in their midst, they cannot but honor and respect him and appreciate most highly what he is doing for their souls. In love they will be knitted together with him. But they will not love him primarily because he is such a friendly and sociable man, such a gifted person, etc., but esteem him very highly in love mainly for his work's sake, 1 Thess. 5, 13.

May all Christians ever show all due appreciation for the office of the Christian ministry in words and deeds! J. T. ROSCHKE

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

ROM. 8, 33—39

The apostle had emphasized that we are under God's government. This is of inestimable comfort under all the vicissitudes of life. However, the apostle is chiefly concerned about our spiritual welfare; cf. preceding verses. Since God, "who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," holds the reigns of government in His hands, we are safe.

Since We Are Children of God, We Have Nothing to Fear

1. *No one can accuse us*
2. *No one can condemn us*
3. *Nothing can separate us from the love of God*

1

All manner of attempts are made to accuse the Christian. The devil is ever busy, not merely to ensnare man, but also to accuse him of guilt, Job 1, 2; 1 Pet. 5, 8; John 13, 2; cf. Matt. 27, 3—5. Our fellow-men often accuse us of doing something against them. Our own conscience joins them in accusations, Rom. 2, 15; John 8, 9. There is good reason for this, "for we daily sin much," Ps. 19, 12. This is true even of the choicest Christians, 1 John 1, 8.

But "God justifieth," v. 33, i. e., He declares righteous. If God

does this, then it is so, Rom. 8, 1. 31. 32; Matt. 18, 27. 32. This means that God forgives sin. He pardons such as really are guilty and declares them free from guilt. This, of course, is not such a simple matter as a mere declaration on the part of God, but can be declared only after God's inexorable justice has been fully satisfied, Rom. 3, 25; 5, 18; Col. 1, 20. In short, God declares that His justice is satisfied. Who, then, can accuse us?

2

The devil and all forces of evil raise their accusations for the express purpose of effecting our condemnation. Every accusation before a judge seeks the condemnation of the accused. "The enemies who accuse us before God on account of our continuous sins intend to condemn us with such an accusation, to win from God the judgment of our damnation." (Stoeckhardt, *Roemerbrief*.)

But no one can condemn the Christian, v. 34. Note how the apostle supports this assertion: *Christ died*. This permits only the interpretation that Christ died as our Substitute, Is. 53, 4—7; 1 Tim. 2, 6; 2 Cor. 5, 21; Gal. 3, 13, and that He brought the sacrifice which rendered a perfect atonement, John 1, 29; Heb. 9, 14; Eph. 5, 2; Titus 2, 14; 1 John 2, 2. *Christ rose again*: This is God's declaration that He is fully satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son, Rom. 4, 25; Acts 17, 31. *Christ is at the right hand of God*. Our Redeemer occupies the throne of government, Ps. 110, 1; Heb. 1, 3. *Christ makes intercession for us*, 1 John 2, 1; Heb. 7, 25; 9, 24. In the face of these definite accomplishments of Christ we surely have nothing to fear.

3

Christians are assured of the love of Christ. The entire context shows that the apostle speaks of Christ's love toward us and not of our love toward Christ. Our love to Christ, our loyalty, which often falters, would offer no assurance. Christ's love, however, is powerful and unchangeable. By faith we have embraced that love. It embraces us. It holds and supports us.

Again the forces of evil seek to separate us from this love. The apostle mentions a number of them, vv. 35. 38. 39. Calls attention to prophecy about this, v. 36; cf. Ps. 44, 22. In the world this is the lot which befalls Christians.

But this cannot separate us from love of Christ. We can conquer; v. 37: "more than conquerors." These attackers defeated before they ever attack us. Of course, this victory is not achieved through our own strength, but "through Him that loved us." Christ conquered all for us and graciously strengthens us, 1 Cor. 15, 10; Gal. 2, 20; Phil. 4, 13.

Need we fear anything when such assurance is ours?

J. W. BEHNKEN

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity *

ACTS 16, 9—15

Season of mission-festivals. The purpose of these special services is to arouse and quicken our interest in the work of winning souls for Christ and building the kingdom of God. To attain this purpose, we must seek better acquaintance with mission-work and missionary methods and experiences. In our text we see the most effective missionary of them all at close range. The account of this missionary journey of Paul is typical of, and a pattern for, all God-pleasing and fruitful missionary endeavors, and a study of it will prove both instructive and encouraging. Let us spend this brief hour

With the Missionary

1. *The missionary called*
2. *The missionary at work*
3. *The missionary reaping*

1

Paul was directly *called* by the Lord, Rom. 1, 1. 5; Acts 9, 15. Moreover, he was mediately commissioned by the church at Antioch to preach the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles, Acts 13, 2. 3; 15, 40. — Also in the *choice of his fields* of labor he was guided by God's directing hand, Acts 16, 6; 18, 10; 20, 22. 23. A striking instance the vision, v. 9.

God no longer calls His missionaries immediately. Yet *all Christians* are commissioned by the Lord to be His ambassadors to the world, Matt. 28, 19; 1 Pet. 2, 9. Since it is the Lord's will that the Gospel be preached to "every creature," Mark 16, 15, preachers must be *sent*, Rom. 10, 14. 15. In order that this may be done in an orderly and effective manner, our congregations have joined hands in a synodical organization. Maintenance of colleges and seminaries for preparing Gospel preachers and teachers. Synod elects mission boards for the various fields (home and foreign), experienced, God-fearing, devoted men, to direct and supervise its wide missionary program. By authority of Synod (*we are the Synod!*) they formally and prayerfully *call* our missionaries and send them out. *God calls and sends them through us.* — And they do not go forth at random. God even now directs the missionaries' feet, not by visions, etc., but through the judicious counsel of our missionary agencies, through circumstances and opportunities that reveal His will. The Macedonian call "Come over and help us," rising from benighted and despairing souls, still comes to our Synod and its various boards from beyond the seas, from far and near. Instances of direct, personal appeals made to the missionaries. Hymn 474, 1.

* This outline may be used for a sermon preparatory to a mission-festival or a mission-sermon.

2

When Paul was called to an apostleship, he conferred not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1, 15. 16. "Straightway he preached," etc., Acts 9, 20. 27. To glorify Christ in the souls of men was henceforth his one absorbing interest, Phil. 1, 18. Likewise when the call from Macedonia reached him, he did not hesitate, vv. 10. 11. The arduous voyage, the perils of the sea, the prospect of new trials (cf. 2 Cor. 11, 23 ff.), cannot deter him and his companion Silas. The call is to Macedonia; it *must* be answered. He reaches his destination. He seeks out the most favorable field for his activity: Philippi, the first city of the province and a commercial center, where his word might reach many ears and be carried abroad. Abiding there a few days, he surveys the field. He finds a place of prayer, and mingling with the worshipers, he and Silas speak to them the Word of God.

Our missionaries, too, go out in answer to the Lord's call. Their labors and experiences are essentially like those of the model missionary, St. Paul. They have chosen it as their life-work to save souls through the Gospel ministry. Years of painstaking study in preparation for their calling. Leave their homes and dear ones to follow wherever the Lord may lead, some into distant lands, among strange peoples. Describe hardships of missionary life, study of difficult tongues, wrestling with perplexing problems due to strange customs, dangers of travel, exposure to disease, etc. Trials of the home missionary also; indifference, even hostility to the Gospel, disappointments, privations. Yet with thanks to God we can say that our mission-workers gladly and courageously face the difficulties of their calling. Their motto: Phil. 1, 18. They seek every opportunity, establishing preaching-stations, gathering children in Sunday- and Christian day-schools, soliciting attendance at public worship, etc. — Should we not thank God that He has given our Church so many hundreds of consecrated mission-workers? Should we not bend every effort to make it possible for the several hundreds of young men still idle to join the army of active workers? — And now, how we must rejoice to see the missionary *reaping!*

3

Paul's journey to Philippi and his labors there were not in vain. However, the success he achieved was of the Lord's giving. *The Lord opened Lydia's heart*, vv. 14. 15. Her faith brought forth the fruit of love, v. 15; cp. v. 40. She became a zealous worker in the cause of the Gospel. — Such was the beginning of the large and flourishing congregation at Philippi, a veritable garden of God, producing the fruits of faith and love in abundance, Phil. 1, 3—11.

The faithful missionary is ever permitted to reap. True: 1 Cor. 3, 7. The Christian missionary is a sower of the divine Word.

Much of the divine seed may fall on unproductive soil. But he has the assurance that his labors cannot be in vain. The Lord will open this heart and that to attend, to believe, to be saved, Rom. 1, 16.—Thus in the history of the Church at large as well as of our dear Synod the experience of St. Paul at Philippi has been, and is still being, repeated. Under God's blessing small beginnings in church-work have led to great things for God's kingdom. The humble but faithful efforts of many an unsung missionary have resulted in flourishing churches abounding in every grace to the glory of God. Thus does God's kingdom come.

Let us praise God for our missionaries. Let us pray for them, support them and their glorious work. Ah, yes: Is. 52, 7.

J. W. WERLING

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

1 PET. 2, 1—10

We Christians are exhorted in the Holy Scriptures to be humble. "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble," 1 Pet. 5, 5. The disposition of the person who has a very high notion about his own excellencies, is puffed up, and considers himself better than his neighbors is an abomination in the sight of God. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican teaches this lesson, Luke 18, 9—14.

Humble we must be as to heaven we go;
High is the roof, but the gate is low.

But this does not mean that we Christians do not possess grand treasures and blessings and have no important function or mission to perform. The text shows us that

We Christians Have a Very High Station and Grand Privileges

1. We have been called into God's light.

The apostle employs diversified imagery, which makes his language gripping and beautiful. By nature we were in darkness; we did not know the true God and the way of salvation. But something inexpressibly blessed occurred: God called us out of this ignorance and gave us an understanding of who He is and what through Christ He has done for us, v. 9. It was a removal from death to life. The call of God came in the Gospel, the means of grace. St. Peter refers to what we call conversion or regeneration, the kindling of faith. What a glorious translation and transformation!

The text emphasizes that what induced God to issue this call to us was His mercy, v. 10.

2. *We have been made members of His holy nation.*

By nature we were, spiritually speaking, without a country and nation, v. 10, apparently destined for that outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Neither here nor in the beyond did we have a spiritual home. In a grand description, abounding in striking epithets, St. Peter shows how God has altered this status of ours, making us citizens in the spiritual Israel, v. 9. The terms used were Ex. 19, 6 spoken of Israel in the desert, marking it as a people set apart. In the days of the New Covenant God's people are gathered from all countries and tongues and consist of those who accept Jesus as their Savior, v. 6. St. Peter refers to the holy Christian Church. What he says applies to all believers, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the clergy and the laity. They are all members of the spiritual Israel.

In a different image the apostle calls the Christians a spiritual house, v. 5, in which each one of them is a stone. It reminds one of Eph. 2, 20 ff. Could we conceive of a higher dignity than is described in this text by St. Peter?

3. *We have been made priests and are entrusted with the mission of leading our fellow-men to the light.*

By nature we do not dedicate ourselves to the service of God but to that of sin. When God made us believers, He likewise gave us the status of priests, of servants in His holy temple, vv. 5, 9.

That is said of all, pastors and teachers, on the one hand, and members of their flock, on the other. We hence speak of the general priesthood of believers. There is no longer any need of a special class of priests.

Christians have been made priests to offer up holy sacrifices, that is, to do things pleasing to God, v. 5.

One of these is specified v. 9: showing forth the praises of God. ("Virtues" of God are His great qualities and deeds.) A strong call to engage in mission-work.

To be priests of God, to tell about His marvelous deeds,—is any activity to be more highly prized and more honorable?

While we practise humility, let us rejoice in our prerogatives as Christians, thanking God for having placed us into this holy state.

W. ARNDT

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

1 TIM. 1, 12—17

There is a statement in the first verse of our text which arrests our attention today: "I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord . . . for that He counted me faithful," etc.

What a great thing is faithfulness! Far exceeding mere ability and achievement. (Illustrate. Able and successful men, but unfaithful. People of meager talents, but altogether dependable.)

What a rare thing is faithfulness (dependability, trustworthiness, reliability, steadfastness, proved sincerity)!

Is not the above statement of St. Paul the height of boastfulness, self-righteousness? Would any of us dare to say the same?

On the other hand, must we not be able to say the same thing? Surely we do not want to be rejected as unfaithful. What good is a Christian, a worshiper, who is unfaithful? Was not all this written, not for St. Paul, but for us? Rom. 4, 23. 24 a; 15, 4. Oh, the great and wondrous lesson! Let us learn, from St. Paul's example to say:

Christ Jesus, Our Lord, Counted Me Faithful

1. *His grace has made us faithful*
2. *His grace shall keep us faithful*

1

So far removed from a spirit of boastfulness and self-righteousness, St. Paul speaks in wonderment of the grace bestowed upon him, vv. 12—14 a ("Hath enabled me . . . before . . . a persecutor, etc. . . obtained mercy . . . grace exceeding abundant"); Gal. 1, 13—15; 1 Cor. 15, 8. 9 (v. 8: abortive foetus); 7, 25.

V. 13 c: "I did it ignorantly, in unbelief," must not be construed to say: "I was wicked, but not altogether so. God found me to be essentially honest and reliable; merely ignorant in unbelief." (Acts 23, 1; 2 Tim. 1, 3.) For unbelief is not an excusable sin. Rather, it is the one great and damnable sin, Mark 16, 16; 1 John 5, 10; First Commandment and definition.

St. Paul sees nothing but God's mercy in his conversion and emphasizes it here as much as possible, vv. 14—16. His very call to the ministry a call to faithfulness, v. 12; Acts 9, 15; 1 Cor. 3, 2. (When one is called to a great office it is always due solely to God's grace, unmerited, undeserved). And in this ministry he was to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, which he himself had experienced, Acts 20, 24 b (again a proof of God's marvelous grace).

You, too, have been called by God into His holy Christian Church. Surely you realize that this is due entirely to God's wonderful grace and mercy; for of yourself you are quite otherwise minded, Rom. 7, 18 a. 23. 24; Jer. 17, 9; Ps. 51, 10. In His service you are to proclaim the Gospel of God's mercy. This calls for faithfulness.

2

Mark the note of joyous confidence as St. Paul extols the superabundant grace that was bestowed upon him. It is Christ Jesus who enabled him to be faithful and who put him into the ministry, v. 12; and it is He that endowed him with faith and love, v. 14; 1 Cor. 7, 25 b; 15, 9. 10.

St. Paul needed this grace continually, not only at the moment of his first call. He is still the greatest of sinners, vv. 15 b. 16; Luke 12, 48 b; Rom. 7, 14—25.

It is just this superabundant and undeserved grace of God which makes his position as a child and apostle of God his sure possession.

Just this grace enabled him by his own example to call the greatest of sinners to God's redeeming mercy, v. 16; Eph. 3, 8.

This is the theme of his praise and thanks to God, vv. 12. 17.

All this superabundant grace of God has daily been, and still is being, bestowed upon you, enabling you to call others to that grace. It is a high position to which you are called; but God's grace is sufficient unto it. And just that makes it your sure possession. You could not possibly deserve or merit it. Thank and praise Him for it. Do not take God's call lightly. Do not carry your faith as a mere dogma. Your position now calls for faithful service (congregation, Synod, missions, private life), v. 12 a. b.

H. M. ZORN

