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Outlines of the Standard Gospels

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were as much interested in the Kingdom of God at large and did not intend to keep their spiritual blessings to themselves, but desired that others should share them. They supported the work of Synod and sent a very large number of their young men to Synod's colleges and seminaries to become pastors and teachers. But those early settlers, too, were by nature sinful and were beset by temptations on the part of their flesh, the devil, and the world. Their congregations, too, were not made up of perfect saints. But they encouraged one another to lead a Christian life, admonished the erring, and exercised church discipline when necessary. After all, the Franconian settlements were made up of sturdy, Christian people whom God richly blessed in many ways. The first early settlers have gone to their eternal reward, where they are glorifying God with the saints forevermore. May the descendants not fail to appreciate the blessings which they have inherited from their fathers. May God in His grace grant that it may not have to be said of the present Franconian generation, as it was said of the people who lived after the death of Moses and Joshua, "And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Israel," Judges 2:10.

J. H. C. F.

Outlines on the Standard Gospels

Sexagesima

Luke 8:4-15

The text of this Sunday is a parable. Jesus often spoke in parables. He took some well-known fact of daily life and by way of comparison illustrated some heavenly or spiritual truth. Therefore, in order to understand a parable, we must look for the point of comparison. — Why did Jesus speak in parables? The answer is given in vv. 9, 10; see also Matt. 13:10-17. The parable, being an illustration, has as its purpose the making clear of a truth. It is common experience, however, that people who do not want to see, will not see, though a matter be clearly presented to them. The unbelievers, who harden their hearts against God's truth, do not understand Christ's parables. To them the parable conceals God's truth, though it is intended to reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom of God for man's salvation. In order that we may not be found among such unbelievers, let us learn what the Lord says in our text, the parable of the Sower, concerning those who hear the Word of God. As only some of the land on which seed is sown brings forth fruit to perfection, so only some of those who hear the Word of God are finally saved. The reason why some are not saved is

not to be found in the seed, the Word of God, for it is the same Word that is preached to all; nor is the reason why some are saved to be found in the difference of the ground, or the heart of man, for all men are by nature sinners, to them the things of God are foolishness, they are under the curse of the Law. The fact that many are not saved, in spite of the fact that salvation is offered to them in the Word, is solely their fault; the fact that others are saved is solely due to the grace of God. In the parable of the Sower, the Lord does not enter upon all these facts, but merely speaks to us of the reception which is given to His Word, warning us, lest we be among those who hear His Word, but nevertheless are finally lost.

What Does Jesus Teach Us in the Parable of the Sower Concerning the Hearers of the Word of God?

1

There are those who hear the Word but do not believe.

a. V. 5. Seed which falls by the wayside does not take root, does not even enter the ground; it is trodden down or devoured by the birds.

b. V. 12. The wayside hearers are such as hear the Word—it is “sown in their heart,” Mark 4:15—but it does not enter their heart; it remains on the surface; it does not strike root; they do not repent and believe. Such may occasionally even delight to listen to a good pulpit orator; however, they do not take the Word of God to heart but let the devil deprive them of its blessings. These are not brought to faith.

2

There are those who hear and believe but in time of temptation fall away.

a. V. 6. See also Mark 4:5, 6. Seed that is sown on the stony ground may quickly spring up, but there not being much soil, it cannot become deeply rooted and therefore is soon scorched by the hot sun.

b. V. 13. The rocky-ground hearers are those who “for a while believe.” They gladly hear and receive the Word. For the time being they are sincere Christians; but when their faith is put to a severe test by “affliction or persecution arising for the Word’s sake, immediately they are offended,” Mark 4:17; they fail because they “have no root,” they are not well grounded in the Word of God and therefore cannot apply it as the need arises, 2 Tim. 3:12; John 16:1-4; Heb. 12:1-11; Rom. 8:28-39.

3

There are those who hear and believe, but they let the cares and riches and pleasures of this life lure them away from God.

a. V. 7. A farmer or a gardener knows that he must keep his field or garden free of weeds of all kind; for if he allows these to grow, he cannot expect a plentiful harvest.

b. V. 14. The thorny-ground hearers are those who hear the Word, repent and believe, but nevertheless "bring no fruit to perfection"; they are not finally saved. For a long time, even for many years, such may be sincere Christians, but finally they fall away from grace. Why? They permit the thorns, "cares, riches, pleasures, of this life," to grow up in their heart and choke the good seed of the Word. See Mark 4:19. — This part of the parable sounds a warning to Christians to beware of worldliness, of which there is much creeping into our churches today, and is choking out spiritual life. Beware!

4

There are those who hear, believe, bring forth much fruit, and finally are saved.

a. V. 8. The seed that falls on good ground springs up and brings forth fruit abundantly, Mark 4:20.

b. The good-ground hearers are those who hear the Word, believe it, keep it in their heart, meditate upon it, are guided by it, learn it more thoroughly, come to an ever deepening knowledge of their sin and their Savior, lead a godly life, patiently endure affliction and persecution, do not let the lure of the things of this world take them away from their God and Savior, and finally enter the eternal mansions above. These, and only these, are finally saved.

What kind of hearer of the Word of God are you?

J. H. C. FRITZ

Quinquagesima

Luke 18:31-43

Two types of people, though they know Christ in His suffering, are yet to be pitied. Those who know the story of Christ's suffering, but do not believe that it is true, and those who do not openly reject what they have learned about His suffering, but to whom the whole story means nothing. The story of Christ's suffering can be met with rank unbelief, but also with the more subtle denial of indifference.

Our Lenten Prayer: Lord, that I May Receive Sight!

1. We ask for sight to understand this suffering
2. We ask for sight to see Him as the real Helper

1

The two incidents in this text at first glance seem to have little connection; yet they really have the same theme: blind men.

The appalling blindness of that wider group of Jesus' followers. As Jesus announced His impending suffering, they were "amazed"; as they followed, they were "afraid," Mark 10:32.

The disciples were equally blind: "understood none of those things" (could make no sense out of it); "saying was hid," "neither knew those things" (did not grasp things as they really were). Mark states that at the time of this announcement of the suffering these disciples were jockeying for favored positions in the hoped-for secular kingdom which they thought the Master would erect upon His arrival in Jerusalem, Mark 10:35 ff. Here was real blindness about Christ's impending suffering and death.

The cause of this blindness: certainly not a lack of clarity in the words of prediction. This was the *third* announcement of the Passion; it was clear; the *evildoers* are named (Gentiles, chief priests, scribes); the evil *deed* clearly described: mockery, spitefully entreated, spit upon, scourged, put to death.

The cause of this blindness lay in the disciples and the other followers. They did not know *themselves*, that they were eternally lost without Christ's going to Jerusalem to suffer and die.

Jesus going to Jerusalem to suffer is still often looked at with eyes that are really blind. Many who call themselves Christians are "amazed" to think that by suffering, rather than by mere exemplary living, He should be the Savior; others "understand none of these things" because they do not know themselves as lost and condemned sinners; still others "know not the things which are spoken" about Christ because they see in His death nothing more than the oft-repeated triumph of might over right, of hypocritical Jews undoing a hated critic, or an impractical idealist's being dragged to the cross. This is nothing but spiritual blindness.

Our prayer in Lent: Lord, that we may receive sight to understand Thy suffering! This means knowing ourselves as those who have caused this suffering, 1 Peter 3:18. The sins of the tongue, of thought, the deed, sins of neglect, fashionable sins, secret sins—these are the cause of the needed announcement "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem."

2

Blind Bartimaeus lived the hard, hopeless life of a blind beggar. His first cry for mercy is met by the crowd's attempt to silence him, v. 39. Why should they try to keep him quiet? Did they doubt Christ's *ability* to help? Did they question His *willingness* to help? Perhaps it was because they saw in Him nothing more than what they here call Him: Jesus of Nazareth, a confession in which the

Modernist, the unbelieving historian, and even the Jew and Gentile of our day would join.

Calling to Christ, Bartimaeus calls Him not merely Jesus of Nazareth but Jesus, *Thou Son of David*. This was a Jewish name for the expected Messiah, the Savior of mankind. As such the blind man knows Jesus; from Him he seeks help.

Christ, the Son of God, goes up to Jerusalem to suffer. He alone was a sacrifice sufficient for our atonement. Therefore the sins of all men and all sins of men have been taken away, 1 Pet. 1:19, 1 John 1:7. Jesus going to suffer as a mere man would be no more than a victim of human opposition; suffering and dying as the Son of God, His death is a death of universal redemption, Heb. 9:11, 12.

Bartimaeus appeals to Christ's *mercy*, vv. 38, 39. Mercy is a kindness to those who are in misery. Jesus going to suffer is the merciful Lord, Heb. 2:17. Sin always makes man miserable in the end; our present world sorrow is the result of man's sin. Our individual lives are unhappy because of sin. But in Jesus' going to His death there is mercy and plenteous redemption.

Let this, then, be our prayer: Lord, that we may receive sight to understand Thy suffering and delight in the vision of Thy mercy!

H. O. A. KEINATH

Invocavit

Matt. 4:1-11

World conflicts leave numerous issues unsolved. — Our souls are redeemed by Christ. Yet the question is constantly rising in us "Will we stand up in the hour of trial?" Let us consider the following question:

How Can We Conquer in the Hour of Temptation?

If we avoid

1. *Mistrust of God's Word* 2. *Presumption against God's Word*
3. *Apostasy from God's Word*

1

After John the Baptist had baptized Jesus in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, v. 1. Jesus, the Son of God, "made of a woman, made under the Law," Gal. 4:4, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," Heb. 4:15.

Satan hurled Adam and Eve into sin by leading them to mistrust the Word of God. "Yea, hath God said," etc., Gen. 3:2, 3. He confronted Jesus, our Substitute, with the same temptation after Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights. "If Thou be the Son

of God," v. 3. But Jesus, the Son of God, met Satan with the weapon of Scripture, v. 4, and overcame him. He refused to mistrust His Father's word.

God teaches us to pray for our daily bread and promises to satisfy the needs of the nations. But in working for our daily bread in the sweat of our face, we meet with many factors, some beyond our control (seasons, weather, climate), some within our control (co-operation between individuals, countries, nations; Luther's explanation to the Fourth Petition). Even if there is not the direst kind of poverty, the lack of essentials, Satan is constantly nourishing our appetite so that we are willing to countenance dishonesty, sharp practices, oppression, and mistrust of the Word of God, v. 4.

As Jesus refused to mistrust the word of God, so we also must refuse. Our weapon against this temptation is the Bible. Read it regularly, study it prayerfully; be fully equipped to meet every form of mistrust of God's Word.

2

Having failed in his first attempt at leading the Destroyer of the kingdom of darkness into sin, Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple and urged Him to jump down from the height in view of wondering multitudes, quickly gain their acclaim and their willingness to accept Him as Leader. "If Thou be" (Greek text, condition is stated as fact), Satan said and added a Bible passage (mutilated by him), v. 6, as seeming evidence that this act would have the approval of God.

But Jesus refused to let Himself be sidetracked from His mission in this world by rising up in haughty presumption against the word of God. Again He thrust Satan aside with Scripture: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, Thy God," v. 7.

Satan uses this same temptation of presumption against us. We like to be noticed. We want to be commended. We love to pose as leaders. We take great pleasure in presuming to have all the answers to perplexing questions. Upon occasion we suppose it is permissible to forget about the line separating good from evil, justice from injustice, right from wrong.

But the path for conquering sin does not lie in this direction. Guard against presumption! 2 Cor. 10:9-12.

3

Finally, Satan took Jesus up on a high mountain and, showing him all the kingdoms and splendors of the world, asked Jesus to recognize and worship him as God, v. 9. Though prince of this world, John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2; 6:12, Satan was but a fallen creature, condemned forever. Therefore Jesus, the Lord of

the universe and Redeemer of mankind, drove Satan from His presence, v. 10. Jesus conquered. He refused worldly glory. He refused to depart from His mission and the Word of God.

So now Satan with ever-changing variety is seeking to wedge us away from the Word of our Lord. Worldly power and glory, what intriguing temptations! Power in the home, church, school, nation, world, without God, without Christ—what misery, ruin, and death are constantly following in the wake of those who fall into this destructive temptation of Satan!

Christian men and women, refuse to follow the lure of worldly power! Refuse to depart from the Word of God! Worship God only! Hear and follow only the voice of Jesus, the Conquerer of Satan! John 10:1-16.

Stand fast in Jesus! 1 Peter 5:8, 9; Eph. 6:10-18. He is not only our Example, He is our Savior. He has conquered Satan for us and stands ready to strengthen us in our conflict, forgive us our failings, raise us up when we have fallen, lead us on from victory to victory unto the everlasting triumph. A. W. GUEBERT

Reminiscere

Matt. 15:21-28

Faith and humility are inseparably united. True faith despairs of the goodness of man and trusts entirely in the promise of God. The firmer this faith becomes, the more it will lay aside all claims of personal honor. We are to become better established in such faith.

Faith Stoops to Conquer

1

The Canaanite woman had faith. She knew of Jesus; cf. Mark 7:25; Matt. 4:24. Thus she had heard of His preaching, of His miracles, His goodness. By means of these reports the Holy Ghost had worked faith in her and given her a firm confidence that Jesus would help her. It was this faith that gave the woman power to humble herself. Even when all signs seemed contrary, she still clung to that good news which she had heard about Jesus, and insisted this also pertained to her.

A serious condition confronted this woman. Her daughter was "miserably possessed by a devil"—an "unclean spirit," Mark 7:25. "The pious mother had made the misery of her daughter her own." Bengel. In this distress she approached Jesus and humbly pleaded for her daughter.

She does not prescribe time nor manner in which Jesus should help. "In her humility she does not bring her child nor ask Him to go to her." Her humility was so outstanding that the Evangelist

says, "Behold!" She expresses her unworthiness. "Have mercy" is prominently placed first. Cf. Gen. 32:10. She was a Canaanite — belonged to people driven out of the Holy Land by Israel centuries ago; yet she went out to meet the Jew Jesus. She was of Gentile stock; yet she deserted her pagan gods and owned Jesus as the "Son of David," her Savior, her Lord. Even when the fountain seemed frozen from which streams of blessing were wont to flow, she persisted in her pleading. When reminded that she did not hold membership in God's "chosen race," she bowed down and prayed more fervently. When compared to a dog, she answered: "Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs," etc. She not only lets the argument stand but even continues it. With the prospect of crumbs instead of bread she is well satisfied. She cast aside every other consideration (self, self-respect, pride, opinion of friends, presence of disciples) which might have kept her from Jesus. Her humility ended in an unconditional surrender. Cp. Gen. 32:26.

How would we match up with this woman if we were in the same position? How do we act when, in spite of all we do, the Lord seems to brush us off? A seeming lack of understanding on the part of the Lord of our particular case should not cause us to misunderstand Him. James 4:10.

2

The woman had stooped low but now was lifted up high. There was an inward joy, an uplifting of spirit, for in the faith of Jesus she had conquered herself, her pride, and adverse circumstances.

More than that, her faith had conquered Jesus, v. 28. Luther: "She catches Jesus in His own words." Jesus praised this faith (cf. centurion). Not the ancestral stock from which we spring nor the community in which we live, but the faith we hold, our humble trust in Jesus' merit and power, makes us great in Jesus sight. May God grant us such faith! The woman's desire was granted. She received the key to the storehouse of God's mercy. He bids her take, not a diminutive crumb, but "as thou wilt." By her argument, Mark 7:29, the woman had proved her strong faith and in this faith accepted Jesus' help and grace. *Lutheran Hymnal*, 39:2.

The daughter was healed "from that very hour." Working at a distance, Jesus had effected a miraculous cure. The Lord still affords help in every need — in bodily affliction; above all, "with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death" He "has redeemed me," etc.

Conclusion: Is. 57:15 or 2 Cor. 12:9.

VICTOR MENNICKE

