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Outlines of the Standard Gospels

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Outlines on the Standard Gospels

Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 5:1-11

"All things are possible to him that believeth." What a glorious promise. It is given by the Savior Himself, who can make good His promise, and always does. But we are so slow to believe such a promise. As a result we are not always as happy and as cheerful and as successful as we could be and as the Savior would have us be. In our text today the Savior encourages us to believe Him, to grow in faith, to say with Peter,

"Nevertheless at Thy Word I Will Let Down the Net"

1

This Word we should apply to our own personal Christianity.

a) We are confronted by situations similar to that of Peter and His companions, v. 5. Now, at an apparent inopportune time of the morning the Savior says to them: v. 4. — We at times labor without much success; we pray, and our prayer remains unanswered. To us it seems there is no hope of success. We have put our best skill into our labor, what more can we do? Trying times? Yes, trying for our faith when the Master says, "Launch out." The Master's voice comes to us, saying, Try again, labor on, keep on praying, Luke 11:5-13. It is then we should say with Peter, "*Nevertheless,*" in spite of it all, "at Thy word I will let down the net."

b) Like Peter, we shall never be disappointed when we follow the Savior's directions, putting our trust and confidence in Him. Vv. 6, 7. Miraculous! Those who obey the Lord and put their trust in Him are never disappointed. Jesus says to the nobleman, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." "The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him," and he found his son alive, John 4:50-54. Cp. Acts 16:30-34. Likewise, if we believe in our Savior, who redeemed us from sin, we shall rejoice, our sins can then no longer trouble us. It is our unbelief that makes us miserable. Lord, increase our faith, that we may say, "Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net."

2

This Word we should also apply to ourselves as workers in the kingdom of the Lord.

a) Like unto Peter, we are also called to be fishers of men. The purpose of Christ's miracles was "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might

have life through His name," John 20:31. Christ was not just a miracle man. He "taught the people out of the ship," v. 4; He presented Himself to them as the Savior. At the same time He was calling men to be His apostles, to carry the Gospel message into all parts of the world, to be fishers of men, v. 10. The miraculous draught of fishes was to strengthen their faith in Him as their Lord and Savior and thus encourage them for the work of the ministry.

Not all Christians are called to be pastors, but all are called to be witnesses of Christ. What an honor! What a responsibility! Christ's miracle elicited from Peter the confession "I am a sinful man, O Lord," v. 8. But the Lord is willing to use us sinful men, after our own conversion, to convert others by the preaching of the Gospel. With this net we are "to catch men," v. 10. The war-torn world's great need is the Gospel of peace, peace with God through Jesus Christ. The war is God's judgment upon a sinful world calling men to repentance. The Christian Church of today is face to face with a tremendous task. Will she measure up to it? The Lord will not fail her.

b) He has promised that our labor in the Lord will not be in vain, 1 Cor. 15:57, 58. That miraculous draught of fishes was to prefigure the work of the Church, when she, at her Master's bidding, lets down her Gospel net for a draught. Even in this work we shall at times toil all night and take nothing. Missionary work, not only among the savages and in heathen countries, but also among the heathen at home, is often disappointing, showing no or little result for a period of time in spite of hard labor on the part of the workers. Even the thought of abandonment of the work may be contemplated. But the Master says, "Launch out," v. 4, do not stop, go on. And with Peter we should answer, "Nevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net," v. 5. Success will follow, must follow; for the Lord cannot disappoint. Often we are put to shame in our missionary endeavors because of our little faith, our lack of faith. Individuals whom we considered hopeless have turned out to be staunch Christians, leaders in the Church. Many a Saul has been turned into a Paul. Fields which we thought to abandon have later turned out to be most fruitful. The Apostles did not labor in vain, nor do we labor in vain. Let us remain faithful to the Word of God, the eternal truth, and obey the Master's command to proclaim His Gospel of salvation; the Lord will give success. "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men," v. 10. Let us forsake all, all that would interfere with this blessed work, and follow Him, v. 11.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Sixth Sunday after Trinity**Matt. 5:20-26**

Examining oneself is a profitable exercise. In schools many tests are now arranged so that the pupil gauges his own ability. Standardized tests are immensely popular. Newspapers and magazines have taken up the idea with lists of questions by which we can check our knowledge and our attitudes.

Also in a spiritual sense we can and should examine ourselves. 2 Cor. 13, 5. Our text presents an opportunity for testing our righteousness.

Examining Ourselves Whether We are Leading a Righteous Life

Let us ask ourselves these questions:

1. *Are we satisfied with a mere civil righteousness?*
2. *Are we satisfied with a mere outward worship?*
3. *Are we satisfied to remain unforgiving to the offending brother?*

1

a) Civil righteousness is concerned only with the outward act and does not ask about the motives of our action. Example: A man may pay his taxes with hatred and cursing; but so long as he pays them, he has exercised civil righteousness, for the state does not ask for any particular inward motives.

b) The Pharisees and the scribes were satisfied with this kind of righteousness. V. 20. They believed that if the gross outward transgressions of the Law had been avoided, the commandments had been kept.

Such mere outward keeping of the Law means little; it still bars from entrance into God's kingdom. Much more is involved in the keeping of God's Law: It demands that the innermost motives also be pure and holy. Anger in the heart, sinful words, are just as much a violation of the Fifth Commandment as the actual deed of taking life, v. 22.

c) This Pharisaic righteousness is very common: it seeks merely the approval of fellow men, the approval of the state's laws, conformity to the customs and folkways of the community, the favorable opinion of fellow church members. But far more is required: holy desires and pure motives must be the basis of all our acts.

How do we rate on this first question?

2

a) Worship can become mechanical and merely a going through the motions. Jesus refers to such v. 23. A man could come to the Temple at Jerusalem although he knew that fellow men had

grievous charges against him, go through the outward act of sacrificing without the greater grace of first being reconciled. Such worship is worthless: "Leave there thy gift"; "be reconciled." An unreconciled worshiper worships in vain.

b) There are so many temptations to such mere outward worship today. "Save the surface and you save all" is not only a pious slogan, but is often applied to worship. Prayers that are mere "much speaking," church attendance that is mere hollow formality, giving for God's kingdom which is done merely to avoid the uncomfortable censure of public opinion, traditionalism rather than convictions in religious life, the empty phrase rather than the meaningful confession—all this is merely bringing the gift to the altar, but the heart is not in the sacrifice.

How do we rate on this question?

3

a) The Pharisaic explanation of the Fifth Commandment was that only actual murder was a transgression. Jesus shows that all the "minor" sins of hatred, ugly words, and even the subtle, unexpressed sin of an unforgiving attitude, is yet a violation of God's holy Law.

b) Few motions are so basic to our nature as the desire for revenge and to pay back the offender in kind, getting even. Generally the world sanctions this desire. Few emotions enter more frequently into daily life, and few are harder to suppress. Many think that to forgive and forget is a sign of weakness.

Jesus says: "Agree with thine adversary quickly"; He does not ask how hard it is or how unjust the adversary may have been. Forgiving is one of those exercises of crucifying our flesh.

How do we rate on this question?

This text holds God's Law before us in all its searching brilliance; it condemns us all.

We can find refuge only in the greater righteousness of Christ, procured for all men by His vicarious fulfilling of the Law. In Him we also find strength to lead a new life.

H. O. A. KEINATH

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Mark 8:1-9

Through the marriage of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and by giving this first couple the promise of children, God established the home and parenthood. Of the many varied pursuits that engage the attention of human beings—agriculture, com-

merce, etc., none can supersede parenthood. In view of trends that have been disturbing many homes throughout our country for a number of years it is well for us to emphasize the obligation resting on the shoulders of the father of a family.

Jesus an Example for All Fathers

1. *In providing daily bread for those that belong to him*
2. *In looking after the soul interests of those committed to his care.*

1

Vv. 1-3. Jesus, the Creator of the universe (John 1:3; Heb. 1:2-4), provides for all His creatures. He who will not let a sparrow fall to the ground without His will, looks in particular after the bodily needs of human beings. In a miraculous way He feeds more than four thousand people, vv. 4-9.

Although Jesus teaches us not to worry about food, drink, and clothing (Matt. 6:24-34), it is nevertheless not improper for us to concern ourselves with the question of bodily needs. Jesus Himself suggests this question, v. 2. The man who marries and begets children is obligated to provide daily bread for them (Gen. 30:30; 1 Tim. 5:8). Through prayer, mental and physical effort, God has promised to bless the father's endeavors. He should pray the Fourth Petition and earn his daily bread in the sweat of his brow (Prov. 6:6; 10:5; 12:11; 20:13; 22:29). For all the implications of daily bread see Luther's explanation of the Fourth Petition.

2

Only at the end of the third day Jesus spoke about daily bread for the body, vv. 1, 2. During these three days He had performed many miracles of healing, Matt. 15:30, 31. It is impossible to suppose that Jesus ministered only to the needs of the body. He who would not let Himself be detained very long in any locality (Mark 1:38), who preached in their synagogues (Mark 1:39; 6:6; Matt. 9:35), who delivered the Sermon on the Mount, who gave the disciples of John an adequate answer (Luke 7:22, 23, 27), who invited the heavy laden unto Himself (Matt. 11:28-30), who spoke many things in parables (Matt. 13), who taught His disciples to pray for laborers in His kingdom (Matt. 9:36-38), who sent His disciples out to preach (Matt. 10:7; Mark 6:12; Luke 9:2, 6), could not have kept multitudes with Himself for three days and offer them nothing for their souls. As a real Father His first concern was for the soul of the multitudes. He spoke of repentance, of forgiveness, of heaven, of Himself as the Messiah. He instructed, He encouraged, He comforted, He warned. He gave the multitudes abundant spiritual food.

You fathers cannot suppose that your whole duty toward your children is performed when you earn money and supply them with food and other necessities of life. As Jesus was interested primarily in the souls of men, so you as fathers are held by God to look after the soul health of your children. You yourself must know what it means to be about the business of your heavenly Father. You yourselves must see in Jesus your only Savior from sin. You yourselves must have a heart filled with faith, love, zeal, devotion, for your Lord. When you have realized the value of laying your heart in the hands of Jesus, your first concern will center around the soul health of your children. As early as possible you will teach your children to pray. Later, personally and through Christian teachers, you will teach your children the abiding truths of the Bible. By word and example you will bend your every effort toward making loyal members of the body of Christ out of your children. Through such devotion to Jesus and to your children you know you will be united with your children in heaven for all eternity.

May God give you fathers the proper attitude toward work, toward His Word, toward your children.

ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT

Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 7:15-23

Camouflage is important in warfare; used from the wooden horse of Troy to the nets spread over battleships in present conflict. In spiritual warfare Satan is a past master of camouflage. Cf. Gen. 3:1-15; 2 Cor. 11:14. Satan's messengers—the false prophets—imitate him in his deceptive tricks and would mislead many; hence the warning.

Spiritual Camouflage

1. *Wherein it consists*
2. *How it can be detected*
3. *How it is punished*

1

Camouflage—attempted deception; ships, tanks, guns, and clothes are painted and outfitted to make them less conspicuous or give them a nonmilitary appearance.

The camouflage of false prophets is called sheep's clothing; i. e., that which hides their ravenous designs. This may consist in smooth words (cf. Rom. 16:18) or in pious deeds. The false prophets are still called prophets. They are not gross idolaters like the pagans but claim to be followers of Christ. The name of the Lord is on their lips, v. 21. Like Baalam, Num. 24:16, they

may be endowed with the power of prophecy, v. 23. They may even attempt exorcism; cf. Matt. 12:27; Acts 19:13.

False prophets use the same tactics today. *Science and Health* begins with a statement on prayer by Jesus. The opening paragraph of Russell's *Millennial Dawn* praises "divine grace." (If specific cults are mentioned, brevity and exactness should be observed.)

Deception is the work of Satan, John 8:44; but truth is of God, Ps. 33:4. May we in all sincerity confess our faith. We have nothing to hide. Openly we may unfurl the banners of our God.

2

Camouflage can be detected, but it is a difficult task and requires careful observation. In war, photography aids in its detection. Artificial colors and fake structures which even powerful field glasses will not reveal are registered on the sensitive film of the picture. Hours of painstaking study are then required to recognize the deception.

Also the camouflage of false prophets can be detected, vv. 16, 20. As in nature every tree bears fruit after its kind, worthless trees producing unsound fruit and the fruit of thistles being unprofitable, vv. 16-18; so false prophets produce fruit after their kind. The chief business of a prophet is preaching; accordingly, what he preaches, his doctrine, is his fruit. This doctrine should be examined, 2 Thess. 5:20, 21; 2 John 10. The criterion whereby all preaching must be judged is the Bible, Acts 17:11; Gal. 1:8, 9. By carefully examining all teaching in the light of Scripture, we shall be able to uncover the deception of false prophets. They are only pseudoprophets — fakes — who sooner or later will be revealed.

Recognizing false prophets is possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit by God's Word. Persons poorly grounded in the Bible become their easy prey; cf. Luke 8:13. In the face of this danger let us use every proper means to become better established in God's Word, thereby more firmly to believe in Jesus as our only Savior from sin, and in the power of His Spirit guard against all spiritual deception.

3

Even in war, camouflage may become dangerous. Paratroopers found in civilian garb on enemy soil are shot as spies.

A tree blooming ever so profusely, yet not producing good fruit is eliminated from the orchard, v. 19. Jesus' application: v. 23. He tells false prophets that in spite of their outward profession of Christianity, they never belonged to His elect; while they boasted of their accomplishments, they lacked that righteousness which avails before God; while they pretended to follow Him on

earth, they will be definitely separated from Him in eternity. Cf. Ps. 1:6 b; Matt. 18:6.

Spiritual camouflage is ever a makeshift, soon uncovered, and eternally punished. Let us beware of its deceit and rather follow the pure Gospel preaching. Thereby our faith will be strengthened, 2 Tim. 3:15. We shall then do the will of the Father in heaven, v. 21 b, i. e., accept Jesus as His Son and our only Savior. Thus we shall have our "fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life," Rom. 6:22.

VICTOR MENNICKE

Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 16:1-9

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. 10:12. With these words of today's Epistle, punctuated by the multiple examples of God's wrath visited on Israel (1 Cor. 10:5-10), our Lord warns us against a smug complacency and urges prudence in the use of His manifold mercies. Such an admonition is given us also in the Gospel for today through the parable of the Unjust Steward. Its lesson:

Be Prudent in the Use of Your Earthly Possessions

I. *Use them as the property of the Lord, for which you are accountable.*

A. As the "goods" entrusted to the steward of our text were the property of his master, v. 1, even so all our earthly possessions are the Lord's.

1. "A steward is a person entrusted with the management of estates or affairs not his own," *Standard Dictionary*. Here, οἰκονόμος, lit., "a person entrusted with the management of a house."

2. Our earthly goods are called "mammon," v. 9, and here we include not only money (mammon being the Aramaic and Syrian word for money), but all resources of man (Greek: μαμωνᾶς, perhaps means, "what is trusted in," Thayer. "Treasure," Gesenius; "riches," Edersheim; hence our earthly possessions. See Luther's explanation of "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer).

3. "Unrighteous" mammon, v. 9, because so frequently used with sin.

4. We are God's stewards because all our earthly possessions are His, Ps. 100:3; 24:1; 1 Chron. 29:14; John 3:27; 1 Cor. 4:7; Jas. 1:17.

B. As the steward of our parable was required to "give an account" of his stewardship, v. 2, even so we must give an account

of our stewardship, 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12, according to our abilities and gifts, Luke 19:13-26; Matt. 25:14-30; and Luke 12:45-48.

C. As the steward of our text was "unjust," v. 8, because he "was wasting" (Greek: διασκορπίων, pres. part.) his master's goods, v. 1, so we are unjust stewards because we in like manner are wasting our Lord's possessions.

1. How many of the 8,760 hours of each year are we spending in God's house and in His service? What use are we making of our earthly resources in the cause of His Church, His Sunday school, His Christian day school, and His Synod?

2. Well might we pray, therefore, in today's Psalm, "Save me, O God, by Thy name," and when He pardons us for Jesus' sake confess in the words of the Introit, "Behold God is mine Helper."

II. Invest them now for the life to come.

A. As the "unjust steward" was prudent about his earthly future, so we ought to be prudent about the life to come.

1. The moment he saw the end of his stewardship approaching, he made plans for his future welfare, vv. 3, 4. In this respect, "the children of this world," etc., v. 8 b.

2. Our earthly possessions will some day "fail," v. 9; Matt. 24:35; 6:19; 2 Pet. 3:10-14.

3. How foolish, therefore, to neglect the future, St. Luke 12:16-21; Mark 8:36.

B. As the unjust steward manifested prudence, v. 8, by using what was still at his disposal for his future security, v. 3-7, even so we are to show prudence by following our Savior's admonition, v. 9, and using our present earthly possessions in laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven, Matt. 25:34-40; 2 Cor. 9:6; Luke 12:22-34, 42-44; 6:33-35; 1 Tim. 4:8; Luke 14:13, 14.

C. Verily, have we fully invested all our earthly possessions in the cause of the life to come? What have we done for the poor, the needy, the distressed, the souls hungering for the Gospel and thirsting for the waters of salvation? Have we been good and faithful stewards?

Conclusion. As the Lord hears our cry for help and pardons our iniquities through Christ, may we determine the more to employ all our earthly possessions with prudence.

TH. F. NICKEL

