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Outlines of the Standard Gospels

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Outlines on the Standard Gospels

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 22:15-22

By putting their question to Jesus the Pharisees thought to force Him into a trap and so to discredit Him; whether He answered yes or no, He would offend one or the other party. — There have always been attempts to discredit Christians, specifically Lutherans, because of their attitude toward civil government. Because under certain conditions (Acts 5:29) they refuse to obey, they were called rebels. Modern historians like to call the Reformation the "Protestant Revolt" (Do we note the gentle pressure of a fine Italian hand? They "revolted" against a false government, the Pope's); others persist in the claim that Luther taught unconditional obedience to government. — The Christian (and therefore Lutheran) attitude toward civil authorities is based on the rule laid down by Christ in the text:

Render unto Caesar the Things Which Are Caesar's; and unto God the Things That Are God's

1

Caesar the *de facto* government. The Romans had attained this position by trickery and force; yet the Jews themselves acknowledged their authority by using their coinage (Talmud: "He is the king of the country whose coin is current in the country").

This government, no matter what form it takes, is God's ordinance (Fourth Commandment; Rom. 13:1 ff.; 1 Pet. 2:13). Therefore ("for conscience' sake", Rom. 13:5) Christians render to the government *all* the things that are Caesar's: honor, obedience, taxes, support, if necessary, to the extent of blood and life. They who refuse this shall "receive to themselves damnation." — Finally, Christians do not forget the divine injunction: 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Luther: Even the poorest government is better than anarchy.

2

God is the Ruler of the universe; as such He has the right to constitute various realms: That of Caesar (civil government) and that of the Church; into the latter realm belong all the things which He has not put into the hands of the secular government. His realm here on earth is the Church.

Our duties toward this realm are just as definite as the others. It is not really a matter of man's free choice whether he wants to be a member of the Church or not; he is a rebel against God if he is not; he does not render unto God the things that are God's. —

Membership in the Church requires faith, a sanctified life, willing support of the Church with earthly goods and service, with our physical and mental gifts.

3

There need be and there should be no collision between the two (Augsb. Conf., Art. XXVIII, 12; *Triglotta*, p. 85). The Lutheran Confessions and other statements of Luther show awareness of the fact that the then existing mingling of the two realms was not ideal, but a stopgap required by the emergencies of the time. The ideal, for the first time in history, in our country; that accounts for the remarkable growth of the Church here.

There must be no mingling of the two realms; that would be contrary to the rule laid down by Christ (if the government interferes with the Church, or the Church with the affairs of the State, they demand that we render to Caesar the things that are God's, and to God the things which He has definitely relegated to Caesar). In such a case, and in every case of collision (if State demands disobedience to God, or Church rejects just demands of the State), we must refuse to obey and rather suffer anything than transgress Christ's rule (Acts 5:29; Dan. 3; Matt. 10:28; Christians in the early persecutions; Protestants in post-Reformation times, the religious wars, under the Inquisition).

Jer. 29:7. One of the greatest blessings of God that in our blessed land we may follow fully and freely Christ's rule laid down in the text. Let us *watch* and *pray* that we may not lose this blessing.

THEO. HOYER

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 9:18-26

The sermons of the past church year were designed to strengthen our faith. At the conclusion of the church year let us review the blessings of faith.

The Marvelous Power of Faith

1. *It draws the believer to Christ.*

Jairus (Luke 8:50) and the woman (v. 22) believed. In this faith they approached Jesus in the hour of need. They had good reason for doing so. As ruler of the synagog, Jairus will have had firsthand knowledge of the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:3). Surely, Christ could also help his daughter. Disregarding the open hostility on the part of other Jewish leaders, he put his entire trust in Jesus. (Mark 5:22 f.) — The woman "had heard of Jesus" (Mark 5:27). What she had heard about Jesus assured her Jesus would help her also. In both instances faith drew the suppliant to Jesus to ask His help.

The degree of faith of Jairus and the woman is a matter of speculation. The need of each arose from different situations. For twelve years Jairus had had the pleasure of having his young daughter with him; now he is confronted by a sudden yet very serious condition, v. 18. The woman was faced by a condition of many years' standing (twelve years' illness; helplessness of physicians), v. 20. Trust when help has been long delayed, may call for greater heroism of faith than under sudden crises. In both instances implicit trust is the faith which drew these believers closer to Christ.

Desire for help from Jesus and trust in Him draws also us ever closer to Him. — *Lutheran Hymnal*, 422:4.

2. *It draws Christ to the believer.*

"As a magnet attracts the iron, faith draws the power of the Lord to itself; power of salvation for the recuperation of body and soul." — *Stoeckhardt*.

Having heard Jairus' call of sorrow, Christ at once left his seat at the banquet which Matthew gave on the occasion of his call "and followed him," v. 19. In the case of the woman, Jesus at once turned to address her. Speaking words of tenderness, He called her "daughter." Gently He encouraged her by saying, "Be of good comfort," v. 22.

Though our burden be ever so heavy, our grief ever so crushing, our care ever so great, if we but cling to Christ in faith, He will draw closer to us. Is. 41:10; Ps. 145:18; *Lutheran Hymnal*, 356; 647:4.

3. *The mutual contact produces wonderful results.*

a. With regard to the believers: Having approached Jesus in faith, the woman was not disappointed. Her faith made her whole, even though her illness was protracted and pronounced incurable. Mark 5:29. The delay caused by healing the woman gave people time to assure themselves that Jairus' daughter really was dead. The commercial mourners were present (v. 24) and knew she was dead, Luke 8:53. Taking the girl by the hand, Jesus restored her to life, "and her spirit came again." What joy especially for parents and friends! As a person believes, so will he receive from the Lord; only that, in bodily need, faith does not dictate type and time of help.

Spiritual benefits are of even greater importance. By singling out the woman, Christ gave her strength to confess Him publicly, Mark 5:33. He praises her faith. The girl's parents likewise were blessed at seeing their daughter raised. They were astonished. They became confessors of Christ's power, v. 26.

b. With regard to Christ: Men glorified His name. His fame spread abroad. His majesty and power, His kindness and readiness to help, were magnified in the eyes of the believers.

We are far removed from the scenes of Capernaum, yet faith remains the same. If we believe on Christ, we will approach Him; and He will draw closer to us. He will be also our help, and His name will be made glorious.

VICTOR MENNICKE

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 24:15-28

"Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," Amos 4:12. The world and all that therein is, is hastening toward dissolution. As a thief in the night, the great Day of the Lord will break upon all created beings (2 Pet. 3:10). We Christians, too, must see the end of all things, "for here have we no continuing city," Hebr. 13:14. In a world that is tottering on the brink of ruin we Christians turn to God's Word for instruction and ask

What Shall We Pray for in These Last Times?

1. For eyes to see the signs of the times
2. For feet that flee from present temptations and dangers
3. For hearts that seek strength and rest in God

1

A. In Matt. 24:4-12 (cf. Mark 13:5-9; Luke 21:8-12) Jesus had spoken of various signs that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus emphasizes *see, hear* (vv. 6, 15). The Apostles and early disciples saw the signs Jesus had spoken of, and many of them lived through the fall of the Holy City.

B. The signs preceding the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the city are, according to the words of Jesus, a picture of the end of the world. He who has eyes to see may read as he runs and recognize the "abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place. (Cp. Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Popery, *Trigl.*, 234, par. 23, 24.) Instead of Titus and his hosts before the gates, we see the myriads that despise the Law of God, spurn the Gospel of Jesus, and wallow in the cesspools of sin. We see apostasy even within the Lutheran Church: worldliness, neglect of God's Word, etc., within our own midst. Our prayer to God in these last times is for eyes to see these signs.

2

A. Fleeing feet are to be coupled with seeing eyes. When the woes and calamities broke upon Jerusalem — and they broke suddenly and swiftly — Jesus' disciples were to flee and let nothing

hinder them in their flight, vv. 16-21. Personal possessions must be sacrificed. Expectant mothers and women with little children would be exposed to particular danger, because they must try to take care of themselves and their own flesh and blood (Luke 23: 28, 29; 1 Tim. 2:15; Ps. 127:3; 128:3). Those who were caught in the destruction of Jerusalem suffered untold agony and death.

B. Jerusalem fell because of the wrath of God. God has told us the world must come to an end because of its wickedness and unbelief. All the signs pointing to the dissolution of our world are multiplying with increasing rapidity. Jesus' word to us is not only that we pray for eyes to see the state of things, but also that we beseech Him for feet to flee from the wrath which inevitably will break upon mankind, vv. 23-28. Materialism, neglect of the Word of God, vice, pride, worship of military power, love of money, the many promptings of the flesh, are dogging our steps daily. "Flee these things," says Jesus. "Flee and live!"—"O Jesus, give me courage to flee the 'abomination of desolation,' courage to flee the 'pollutions of the world,'" 2 Pet. 2:29.

3

A. Without a doubt, those who saw the evils and fled from them when Jerusalem sank into dust gave their hearts to God and found in Him strength to live through the ordeal and rest from all their anguish. God's promise to them was sure and effective, v. 22.

B. As the world is rushing toward the final Judgment and temptations and dangers are multiplying, our hearts in particular need strength and rest. Human resources fail in fortifying the hearts, only God can make the heart strong and steadfast. We turn our hearts to the hills whence our help comes, Ps. 121:1. We pray God that we may not strive to seek strength and rest at the foot of Mount Sinai with its demands of holiness and perfection. We beseech Him to enlighten our heart as we stand before Mount Calvary and behold the Lamb of God, slain for sinners. We entreat Him to teach us to exclaim with Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," Matt. 17:4. As the eagles of judgment are gathering together, let us lift up our hearts to God, have our conversation in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and gather treasures for the mansions above (Matt. 6:20).

So we shall have comfort and everlasting peace when the Son of Man comes at the end of the world, v. 27. ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT