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## Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

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## Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

### Festival of Epiphany

Luke 4:16-21

With January sixth the "Twelve Nights" have ended. In the struggle between light and darkness light has prevailed. The light of Redemption also gained the victory over the darkness of Satan's rule. Epiphany signifies revelation, appearance. Luther holds that the best Epiphany text is the account of Jesus' baptism, which constitutes His inauguration to His prophetic office. Celestial light radiates from our text also. It reveals the light of day dawning upon the world.

#### Epiphany the Day of Light

1. *Foretold by Isaiah*
2. *Fulfilled in Christ*

#### 1

A. Vv. 18, 19 are quoted from Is. 61. Isaiah often portrays the plight of heathen nations of his day under the picture of darkness, as 60:2. Also in Galilee the people are walking in darkness, 9:2. The night of idolatry, superstition, and immorality prevailed. There was no knowledge of salvation.

B. But the Prophet foretells the day of light piercing the darkness, 61:1, 2. He foresees One who is anointed with the Holy Spirit, whose mission is to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, a time of gracious visitation. Isaiah describes the day of light in detail. The spiritual maladies under which humanity groans are set forth under the names of poverty, brokenheartedness, captivity, blindness, and bruisedness. However, the "Servant of the Lord" (Is. 53) will usher in a day of healing and light, dispelling the heathen darkness and comforting languishing Israel by establishing His kingdom among them.

#### 2

A. Vv. 16, 17. A stirring scene. An early utterance of Jesus, the Prophet, after He had been anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power at His baptism. The scroll is handed Him; He unrolls it, selects Is. 61 and reads. He sits down and returns the scroll to the synagog officer. Intently the eyes of all are fixed on Him, expecting a sermon. Only one sentence of His sermon is recorded: v. 21.

B. It was fulfilled. That day in Nazareth was the dawn of New Testament light, the opening of the acceptable year — allusion to year of jubilee, Lev. 25:10, a year of universal release for person and property; day of salvation, 2 Cor. 6:2; the time of thy visitation, Luke 19:44. Henceforth He preached the Gospel to the poor in spirit at the seashore, on mountain summits, in Jerusalem's

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Temple, and in synagogs. He healed the brokenhearted, saying to paralytic: "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He brought liberty to captives, casting out evil spirits and opening prison house of sin to woman at Jacob's well. He opened eyes of spiritually blind, as Nicodemus, revealing to sinners His glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The bruised in conscience, as Mary Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery, He freed from the fetters of vice. Well did He say of His day: Luke 10:23.

C. Darkness covers the earth today as a shroud. The picture St. Paul unrolls, Rom. 1, of the cultured Greek and Roman world of his day applies to the civilized nations of our time. In the midst of war's horrors the men of the present generation make their faces harder than flint. Despising the Law and the Prophets, calloused man gropes in darkness and loves darkness. Modernism in churches; evolution theory has well-nigh obliterated remnant of knowledge of sin. Yet this is the glorious Gospel day. The glory of the Lord is risen upon our time. Epiphany light shining as darkness covers the earth. Nineteenth century was the mission century. Planning activity in Lutheran Church to rebuild after war in Europe and Asia. Once more the light of the Gospel is flaring up over the globe before eternal darkness shall settle upon earth. "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!" Jer. 22:29. Let the Church arise and shine!

L. J. ROEHM

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**First Sunday after Epiphany**

John 6:27-40

Justification through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the chief article of the Christian religion, the article with which the Christian Church stands and falls. Cp. Formula of Concord, Sol. Decl., III, 6, *Trigl.* p. 917.

**Why Is Faith in Christ So All-Important?**

1. *Because no more than faith is required for man's salvation*
2. *Because the fullness of salvation is given to every believer*

**1**

On the day after feeding the five thousand Jesus told the Jews who still wanted to make Him their "bread king" (John 6:14, 15, 26) that they should not work for perishable food, v. 27. There are still thousands upon thousands who would accept Jesus if He would give them food, the full dinner pail, assure to them social security, freedom from want and fear. All this Jesus calls perishable food, which though helpful, needful, of course, for this present temporal life, and though a precious gift, will end and therefore

is not the greatest of gifts. There is another food, which is needful for a life of far greater importance than this fleeting life on earth: that food which the Son of Man, who is at the same time He whom God, even the Father, has sealed as His own Messiah, is ready to give to man, for which above all man must labor, work, v. 27.

At once the question arises which was asked by the Jews: v. 28. Note the plural "works." That is the question asked by natural, self-righteous man, who imagines that he is able to do those works demanded by God as the condition of eternal life; cp. Matt. 19:16, 20; Luke 10:25, 29. In direct contrast to this self-righteous spirit Christ answers: v. 29. The only work God demands is faith in Him who is sent of God to be the Redeemer of mankind. That is a work impossible to natural man, who cannot by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, his Lord, or come to Him; a work possible only through the life-giving grace of God, who gives man to Christ, vv. 37, 39, 65, draws him to Christ in everlasting love, v. 44; cp. Jer. 31:3. Faith is not a meritorious work, but merely accepting, taking, the Bread of Life, of far greater value than Moses' manna — the Bread which the Father gives from heaven, vv. 30-33, which the Son gives to man, v. 27, and which is none other than the Son, vv. 35, 48-51, who is both Gift and Giver. To obtain this Bread, to accept it as a free gift from heaven, to believe in Jesus as the Bread of Life, the Giver of eternal life, that is the one work demanded of man, the one thing needful. Acts 4:12.

## 2

Having Christ, we have all we need for eternal life, for He is the all-sufficient and universal Savior.

All-sufficient. V. 35. Having made this Bread of Life our own through faith, we shall never hunger nor thirst. There is no sin He has not atoned for, no penalty He has not paid, no guilt for which He has not suffered. He has redeemed us from the Law and has procured for us the adoption of sons, Gal. 4:1-7; Rom. 8:14-39. There is no fiery temptation that He cannot quench, no tribulation in which He cannot provide strength. He will lose none of those given to Him; not even death shall sever them from His presence or deprive them of eternal life, vv. 39, 40. All this through faith in Jesus!

Universal. Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out, v. 37. All are saved, and all are welcome! Only believe! Every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him shall have everlasting life. That is the will of Him that sent the Son into the world to redeem mankind. Come, take this Bread. It is free for all. Is. 55:1 ff.

Faith indeed is the one thing needful. The *Lutheran Hymnal*, No. 366. Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5. THEO. LAETSCH

**Second Sunday after Epiphany**

Matt. 12:46-50

In the season of the Epiphany we ponder how Jesus proved to the world that He is the Son of God and the Savior. This He did through His own miracles (today's Gospel story, the first). But He did it, and still does it, also through the creating of a new life in His followers, who say, "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another" (Rom. 12:5, introducing today's Epistle), and who are epiphanies of the Savior's power, Gal. 6:17; Phil. 3:17 ff. The Savior teaches this truth in His startling manner in our text:

**Christians Are Christ's Kinsmen that They Might Do  
the Father's Will**

*I. Our sluggishness to recognize this fact.*

A. In the days of Jesus. The Jews thought that to do God's will, it was necessary to be a Jew, a keeper of the Law. Even Jesus' friends and close acquaintances, those who sought to follow Him, were inclined to think that human relation and intimacy implied a higher position in His Kingdom, a closer approximation to the ideal; cf. text and Matt. 20:20 ff. (Immaterial whether "brethren" implies sons by Mary and Joseph or cousins; a blood kinship is the implication of the text.)

B. Today. — 1. Also now men may assume that association with the Church, a part in its material activity, is the thing. This is an especial danger in an age materialistic like ours and the Savior's own time. — 2. This is a tragedy, because it wrecks the activity of God and Christ, makes the Kingdom of God of no effect. Cf. pessimistic utterances of the present, by churchmen and others, on the coldness and uselessness of the Church; or the indictment of Sardis, Rev. 3:1. No epiphany there.

*II: The real meaning of this fact.*

A. What it means to do the Father's will. — 1. God made man in His image, to want what He wants, to love as He loves, to be holy as He is holy. — 2. He planned this exercise of His will to take place in all the relations of life, right where we are and as we live, on earth as in heaven.

B. What it takes to do the Father's will. — 1. The Fall broke the image, wrecked the activity of God in man, replaced holiness and love with sin and hate. When man looks at sinful man, he does not see God — 2. God sent His Son into the world to restore the life of God in man; John 1; John 3; Eph. 2:1-10. That Christ did through the work of the atonement on the cross. That work is made man's own through the work of the Holy Spirit. So men

become God's children again, John 1:12; and God uses the tools of Gospel and Sacrament to that end. Cf. parallel of text, Luke 8:21; or James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23; Eph. 2:10.

C. He who does the Father's will is Christ's kinsman. — 1. Jesus did not despise human relationships; they serve the launching of man into the world, and are a testing ground of Christian love; cf. Luke 2:51; John 2:5; 19:26, 27. — 2. But the relation which means heavenly life and the life of God, the life of love and obedience to the commands of God, is the relation to God which we have through Christ our Savior, by faith in Him and the new life wrought by His Spirit. We are still in the world for the purpose of living that life and proving that kinship to Christ. Cf. especially John 15:14-16.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

### Third Sunday after Epiphany

Luke 4:38-44

For the economic welfare of the nation two problems must be solved, the problems of supply and distribution. There must be an abundance of things for the country's needs, and this abundance must be distributed so that everyone will receive what he requires. In the story related in our text the Savior solved these problems.

#### How God Provides for the Needs of Men

1. *God provides in abundant measure*
2. *God provides for the needs of all*

#### 1

Jesus visited Peter's home. The disciple's mother-in-law was ill with a "great fever." The Savior healed her. That was a great miracle. But note what followed. She ministered unto them. Usually after illness there is gradual convalescence while the patient rests quietly. This woman is very ill in one moment and able to do housework the next. Here is help in great abundance, more than anyone could expect. That is the way God does when His children cry for help. He gives an abundant supply. Think of the feeding of the five thousand, with basketfuls left over, the miraculous draught of fishes, the wedding at Cana. God has promised to shower His gifts upon us abundantly. Deut. 30:9; Amos 9:13. And that is the way it is with God's spiritual gifts. He gives them to us in overflowing abundance. John 10:10; 2 Cor. 9:8. There are Bibles and Christian literature enough for all. There is much preaching of the pure Word in churches and over the radio. There is no dearth of things that the soul needs. Furthermore, when a sinner is converted and becomes a believer, God does not do a little of it and lets the sinner do the rest. He does it all.

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In Peter's house the woman was very sick in one hour and able to work the next. That is the way God does in conversion. There is no half-way measure. The sinner becomes a saint. Conversion is not a gradual process wherein God gives a start and the sinner does the rest. God does it all. 1 Pet. 2:25. Pieper, *Dogmatik*, II, 560. And like Peter's mother-in-law, the converted sinner receives power to serve.

When we see the abundance of God's gifts, we are incited to be rich in good works. We will quit calculating whether we may have done enough good, and we will become liberal and generous. What if it *does* cost more than we expected? What if others *are* not giving what they should? We will be liberal.

## 2

The other lesson in our text is in verses 40 and 42. The people wanted more miracles and asked Jesus to stay. But He declared that He must go elsewhere and help others. He cannot confine Himself to a few. He must distribute the abundance of His help to many. That is the way God deals with men. He provides abundantly and distributes to all. Ps. 145:15. God also supplies spiritual gifts to all, through His Word and the Sacraments. He cares for the souls of all. 1 Tim. 2:4. Jesus died for all. Salvation is not for a few lucky ones but for all people.

There is another important direction in this incident. The Savior would not stay. He had to go to others. We cannot stay where we want to. It was pleasant on the Mount of Transfiguration, but there was a boy to heal down below, Matt. 17. It was pleasant in the Upper Room, but Gethsemane was waiting. It was pleasant in the home of Mary and Martha, but Jesus had to go to Jerusalem. We cannot always stay where we should like to be. Missionaries — Livingston, Arndt, Naether, and Mohn — knew this. We may wish to stay at home, but there is a church service, voters' meeting, Walther League.

In God's Kingdom there is abundant supply for all, for bodily and spiritual needs. Let us thank God for His blessings, let us be rich in good works.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

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**Septuagesima**

**Matt. 5:17-19**

Men approach the Scriptures from various points of view. Some consider it one of the sacred books of the East. Others find in it the world's loftiest ethics, the finest literature, the record of the most exemplary Man, etc. But all these views miss the main point when men fail to hear the voice of their God speaking to

them in Scripture. That voice is an earnest voice, meaning every word that has been spoken. For our own benefit

**Let Us All Learn to Believe in the Earnestness of Scripture!**

1. *It is in earnest on Mount Sinai*
2. *It is in earnest on Mount Calvary*
3. *It is in earnest at the open sepulcher*
4. *It is in earnest on the Mount of Olives*

1

The words of Christ in v. 17 are most significant. "I am come to fulfill the Law." The Law, originally written in man's heart (Rom. 2:14, 15), later written on stone tables on Mount Sinai (Ex. 20; Deut. 5), could not be brushed aside. This Law is God's holy will and demands holiness and obedience of men (Lev. 19:2; 11:44a; Matt. 5:48; Gen. 17:1). When Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Gen. 3), the curse of God fell on them and on all their posterity, and death was their lot (Rom. 5:19a, 18a; Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 6:23a). Sin made the mind, heart, and will of man wicked (Jer. 17:9). The antediluvian world (Gen. 6:5, 11) and the course of the history of all the nations of the world since then are sufficient proof of the truth of Scripture concerning sin as the source of all human woe (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21-23).

Do you all believe Scripture is in earnest when it speaks about the Law and the curse it pronounces on all men? No? Look to Christ, who came to fulfill the Law, v. 17. See Him born under the Law (Gal. 4:4b), made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13b), with all our iniquities resting on Him (Is. 53:6). Hear Him call out on the cross: Matt. 27:46. Believe Scripture when it speaks to you of the terribleness of sin and turn a deaf ear to all who try to minimize or deny sin (vv. 18, 19; John 10:35).

2

Christ says: v. 17. All the prophecies in all the Prophets from Moses to Malachi speak of the Redeemer and point to Mount Calvary, where Jesus, who came to fulfill all the prophecies (Luke 24:25-27), gave up His spirit with the triumphant shout: John 19:30. Christ is the end of the Law (Rom. 10:4) and the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:15; 5:8).

Mount Calvary is foolishness and a stumbling block to many (1 Cor. 1:23), but without the shedding of the blood of the Son of God there is no forgiveness of sin (Heb. 9:22b). Recognize, and believe in, the earnestness of Scripture. Christ came to fulfill the Prophets (Matt. 26:39, 42, 44). Brush aside all thoughts, all modern

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trends, that would detract from the earnestness of the Cross (1 Cor. 1:18-31). Sing with John Bowring stanza one of "In the Cross of Christ I Glory."

## 3

Mount Calvary without the open sepulcher would be meaningless. Since Christ came to fulfill all things, vv. 17, 18, death and the grave could not hold Him (Ps. 16:10). According to His own prediction, Christ rose from the dead (Matt. 20:19; 28:1-10; 1 Cor. 15). The open sepulcher is the earnest testimony of Scripture that Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). His rising from the dead is certain evidence that Job, Simeon, St. Paul, and all the other devout men of God who accepted, and believed in, the earnestness of Scripture attained the hope and end of their faith (Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 3:5).

Scripture has not changed its earnestness today when you and I view the open sepulcher. The open sepulcher of the risen Savior, the Conqueror of death and all forces of evil (Ps. 68:18; Col. 3:15), is the reason for believing that Is. 26:19; Ezek. 37:1-15 Dan. 12:2; Phil. 3:21; Rev. 21:4, 10ff.; 22:1-6 will assuredly be fulfilled.

## 4

Scripture is in earnest, too, when it tells us to teach others concerning Mount Sinai, Mount Calvary, and the open sepulcher, vv. 18, 19. When Scripture says: Matt. 28:19, 20, Scripture means just that. Scripture wants us to witness unto Christ (Acts 1:8) with the Word of Reconciliation on our lips (2 Cor. 18:19). It urges us to preach the Word in season and out of season (2 Tim. 2:4) so that men will be properly equipped for the battle of life (Eph. 6:10-17), will permit nothing to separate them from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39), and will keep their eyes fastened on the everlasting pleasures at the right hand of God (Ps. 16:11; 17:15; 23:6). We can never forget the Mount of Olives and the Word that Jesus spoke there.

Has all this earnestness of Scripture gripped you and drawn you to Jesus? Let the earnest Word of your God take root in your heart and bless you and others. ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT

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**Sexagesima**

**John 8:25-36**

We are living in a land of liberty. Enumerate the liberties we are enjoying and admonish the hearers gratefully to appreciate and properly to use them. Yet such liberty is not the greatest gift of God. Of the most important and most universally neglected freedom, our Savior speaks in our text.

**If the Son Shall Make You Free, Ye Shall Be Free Indeed**

1. *Without the Son all men are slaves of sin*
2. *Only the Son can make us free indeed*

**1**

From the very beginning, v. 25, Jesus had in no uncertain terms by word and deed told the world who He was and why He had come into the world, John 2-8. Today the history of the world, the Church, missions, charity, etc., proves the truth of Jesus' word and claims.

Yet unbelief continues to ask, Who art Thou? v. 25; cp. v. 53c; 10:24. While boasting of their freedom, cp. v. 33, unbelievers are in fact servants of a cruel slave driver; for unbelief is the greatest sin, v. 24; cp. John 16:8, 9. And the unbelieving sinner is a servant, a bondman, a slave, of sin. Sin rules, dominates him, Rom. 6:6, 12-21. Unbelief makes it impossible to accept Christ and His Word, and even to understand it, John 8:27, 43; 1 Cor. 1:18-23; 2:6-8, 14; it twists Christ's words, John 7:34, 35; 8:21 f. Unbelievers to this day slander and vilify Jesus and His vicarious atonement, cp. John 7:20, 35, 44; 8:13, 22, 48, 52 f.; would like to get rid of Jesus and His Gospel, cp. 7:11, 13, 25, 32, 45-53; 8:37, 59. Unbelief, this wicked sin, brings upon man Christ's judgment, v. 26; excludes from God's house, 8:35a; delivers to Satan, 8:44; and everlasting death, v. 24. Slavery indeed!

**2**

From this slavery the Son alone can make us free, v. 36. There is no restoration of sin-chained man from slavery to sin and Satan to perfect freedom except through Jesus. He alone could carry out successfully the campaign for the liberation of an enslaved world tyrannized by sin. He who calls Himself and proved Himself the great I Am, vv. 24, 58 (cp. Ex. 3:14), who could reveal to the world what He had heard from the Father, v. 26 (cp. 1:18; 3:11-13), tells us that He did nothing of Himself, that His whole life, all His words and deeds, were conformable to a plan devised by His Father for the salvation of the world, v. 28b; Acts 2:23. Hence also the freedom promised by Him was merely a part of the blessings fore-ordained by the Father to be procured by the Son. For this purpose the Father sent Him into the world, v. 26b; John 1:14; a true human being, yet, unlike all other men, holy and sinless, always doing those things that pleased God, v. 29.

This perfect fulfillment of God's Law was an essential part of the liberation He was to accomplish. His vicarious fulfillment of the Law freed man from the necessity of fulfilling the Law in order to be regarded as righteous and worthy to enter heaven.

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**Christ also tells us that He would be lifted up, v. 28, crucified (cp. John 3:14), also in fulfillment of God's plan as outlined in Is. 53. As our Substitute He took upon Himself our sin and its penalty to free us forever and completely from its guilt, its punishment, its dominion. Here is liberation wrought by the Lord Jehovah Himself; cp. Is. 59:16, 17. And therefore: Is. 54:7-17; 61:1-3. Freedom indeed!**

**This freedom is proclaimed in His Word, vv. 31, 32, which opens our eyes not only to see our own sinfulness, but also to behold Jesus, our Savior, our Liberator. Let us continue in this Word; then shall we be free indeed and, like the Son, abide as God's free children in the eternal home of freedom indeed opened for all mankind by the Son.**

**THEO. LAETSCH**

