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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

Quinquagesima

Matt. 20:17-28

This lesson has from ancient times formed the introduction to the Lenten season, with its solemn announcement concerning the going up to Jerusalem. Certain attendant factors emphasize this solemnity: the fact that the Savior had fully decided upon this course of action, that He took the Twelve apart from other people, that He introduced His announcement with the significant "Behold!" — It is in this spirit that we also should make ready to accompany Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem and to Calvary.

Christ Preparing to Die

1. As our Savior

2. As our Example

1

A. The beginning of the last great journey and the preparations for the atoning sacrifice of the Savior. Vv. 17-19.

a. The announcement, as Luke notes, chap. 18:31, made special mention of the fact that the work of the atonement was begun in keeping with God's arrangements as written by the Prophets. The trip to Jerusalem, with its culmination in the miracle of Calvary, was not a matter of chance, but of God's planning, in which the Son concurred.

b. Christ here uses the name which characterizes His person in a most unique way: "Son of Man," employed almost exclusively by Him, and signifying, in this instance, that His human nature would bear the sufferings which were associated with His atoning work.

c. The prediction of the Savior includes all the chief elements along the way of redemption. Describe them.

It is a source of satisfaction and comfort to every Christian to know that the work of atonement, as wrought by Christ, was not a matter of blind chance and circumstance, but the culmination of a plan worked out in the council of the Godhead from eternity.

B. The significance and the eternal value of Christ's atoning work. V. 28.

a. Christ is the eternal Son of God, as He frequently stated and proved also during His earthly life. He might, therefore, have demanded service to Himself, He might have ruled by virtue of His almighty power.

b. Instead of that, He carries out the work of atonement through service. He becomes the unique "Servant of Jehovah." Is. 53. And

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in this capacity He gives Himself into death. And it is a vicarious death, in the stead, in the place of many, of all men, with special reference to those who, by His grace, would accept the fruits of the atonement. 1 Tim. 4:10.

Again we see that the work of atonement is full of the comfort which sustains our faith and brings Christ close to our hearts.

2

A. The foolishness of the wife of Zebedee and her sons. Vv. 20-30.

a. The request shows a total ignorance of the real significance of Christ's important announcement. In the face of the Savior's imminent death these three seek preferment above others, not realizing that utter unselfishness is basic for the right form of discipleship.

b. The Savior's searching words with regard to the drinking of the cup of suffering did not effect the desired result, since the two disciples blandly assert that they felt themselves fully capable of sharing in the sufferings of their Master. It was a blindness frequently shown by even such as may mean well in their Christianity.

c. The Savior's gentle correction, in the endeavor to make them realize what was really at stake in the ordeal which He saw before Him.

d. The indignation of the other disciples, prompted probably by the frustrated ambition which they felt in their own hearts.

The two disciples as well as the rest are examples of a false understanding of Christ's atoning work, associated doubtless with notions of earthly power and glory. This attitude must be far from every true Christian's mind.

B. The lesson which Christ attaches to the incident. Vv. 24-27.

a. The reference to the manner in which the great and mighty of the world try to make use of their power, in lording it over others, in arrogating authority to themselves.

b. The characteristics of true discipleship of Christ: the great one to become a servant, he who occupies first position to be ready for the work of a slave, for a life of humble service.

c. The work of Christ's vicarious atonement and He Himself the perfect example of the relationship which should exist between Christians by virtue of their being members together in Christ.

It is only by understanding the example of Christ in this manner that Christians will derive the greatest benefit, not only for their faith, but also for their conduct toward one another from the Lenten story.

P. E. KRETZMANN

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Invocavit**Luke 4:1-15**

Exactly 399 years ago today (Feb. 18, 1546) Luther died. No one since the Apostles has given greater impetus to faithful, proper use of Scripture.

"God will not deal with us except through His external Word and Sacrament," he said, "and whatever proudly introduces itself as the Spirit instead of the Word and Sacrament is *the very devil*. (Smalc. Art., Pt. III, Art. VIII.)

How true — can be seen in the text, which strikingly illustrates

Various Ways of Using Scripture**1. The way of Satan.**

Text: Yes, even Satan, the archdeceiver, knows and uses Scripture. Hearing Jesus quote, he also quoted the Bible. Unsuccessful in the first temptation, he bolstered the second with Ps. 91:11. But Jesus was not deceived. He noticed (1) that Satan was *mutilating* text, omitting "in all thy ways"; and (2) that he was *misapplying* text to something never intended. The promise of Psalm 91 was meant to encourage faith, not presumption, such as to cast oneself from pinnacle. Yet that is Satan's way of using Scripture.

Applications: To confirm their false views, many individuals and churches pursue the same method.

A. They mutilate texts; either omit or add something. **Ex.:** When Paul says, "All Scripture," 2 Tim. 3:16, they say, "Not all, only parts." When Jesus commands: "Baptize all nations," Matt. 28:19, they reply: "Not all, only adults." When Jesus declares: "This is," Matt. 26:26, they retort: "Not is, only signifies." Is that not the way of Satan? Hear what God says of such mutilation: "Take away . . . and I will," etc. Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18.

B. They misapply texts; apply it to things God never intended. **Ex.:** When discussing the way of salvation, some quote Lev. 20:7, though this is intended to teach knowledge of sin, Rom. 3:20. For the knowledge of salvation a different word is given: "Believe," Acts 16:31. — The Pope has used Acts 10:3, "Rise, Peter, kill," as proof of his authority to punish heretics, though here God speaks of animals. Is that not the way of Satan?

C. Watch, therefore! "Many false prophets," Matt. 24:24. Nor be deceived by the fact that they quote Scripture. Remember — even Satan did. And be careful never to stoop to his methods. A negligent Christian, when admonished, was heard quoting: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Imagine using that solemn word of the suffering Savior as an excuse for spiritual inertia! Is that not the way of Satan?

2. The way of Jesus.

Text: Every temptation He met with a text, saying, "It is written." To Him, certainly, the Scripture was God's mighty, infallible Word. Therefore, He used it (1) to overcome temptation and (2) to combat error. When Satan in the second temptation (Matthew's sequence) misquoted Scripture, Jesus exposed and annihilated the error with Scripture, saying: "It is written again," Matt. 4:7. That is Jesus' way.

Applications: Like Him we, His disciples, are to regard every word as given by the Holy Ghost and to use it as the "sword of the Spirit."

A. To overcome temptations. Ex.: Does the worldling tempt you by saying: A Christian may join in all the world's pleasures, then answer: It is written, "Love not the world," 1 John 2:15. — In your afflictions does someone say: God does not care for you? then answer: It is written, "God is faithful," 1 Cor. 10:13. In all situations and temptations think of a Bible verse. Ps. 119:9.

B. To combat error. When confronted with errorists, who also quote Scripture, what shall we do? Follow the example of Jesus and say: Again it is written! Ex.: Millennialists quote Rev. 20; answer them: Again it is written, Heb. 9:28. A frivolous youth, reprimanded by his mother, said: "Should I spend my life mourning? Doesn't the Bible say: 'Rejoice in your youth,' Eccl. 11:9a?" Mother answered: "So it does, but again it says immediately after: 'Judgment,' Eccl. 11:9b." That was using Scripture in the way of Jesus.

C. Oh, that all of us might become more adept and careful in the use of our Bibles! Imitate Jesus.

Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray,
The guile and rage of Satan stay!

ALVIN E. WAGNER

Reminiscere

John 12: 20-26

We assume that the disciples, as good missionaries and leaders, introduced the Greeks to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Then Jesus presented Himself to them as the grain of wheat about to be glorified in His person and office by His work and triumph for them and all mankind. He is glorified by glorifying us to glorify Him.

The Glorification of Jesus

1. By His death: He gave His life into death that we could become His glorifying people.

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A grain of wheat bears hidden within itself life, vitality, power to cover after several years acres of ground by its own yield. In its golden harvest the original seed is glorified. This potential glory appears only on condition of the death and subsequent germination of the grain, after which the same life, the same vital principle, rises, but in a different form. The life in the harvest is the same life that was in the grain. The principle of the grain is used also 1 Cor. 15:36-38 with reference to the resurrection of our body. As the same body, so the same life rises. No animate being has two lives.

Here Jesus employs the type as an illustration (1) of His death and its necessity, (2) of His resurrection and its indispensableness, (3) toward the glorification of His own person.

But specifically Jesus refers to the harvest, the fruit of His death and resurrection, namely, the harvest of sinners converted to Him and eternally saved. These are His seed, His fruit. Is. 53:10-12; Ps. 22:26-31. — Already at this moment, while He was preparing to die, He was harvesting as the Hope of the Jews and of the Gentiles. Both are represented, vv. 20-22. — He advances the parable of the wheat to them (1) to show that the Fatherhood, Pentecost, the Kingdom, forgiveness, life, resurrection to life, heaven, is contingent on His death for us, His vicarious death, His death in our behalf; the grain dies for the purpose, and for the sake, of its seed; (2) to prepare them by this beautiful and comforting type against the offense of the Cross.

In His seed His person and work is glorified here on earth, Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:11-14, and there in heaven, Rev. 5:12.

A Christian laid a grain of wheat in a tiny dish where he could see it often to remind himself of the great debt of gratitude to Jesus. Next to this he placed in a useless dish the seed of a tare.

2. By our life: As glorified people we keep our life and devote it to Him.

We want to keep our life. We love it. Jesus does not condemn our desire to live. He is the Giver, Preserver, Protector. But He condemns the sinful love, selfish enjoyment, care and worry, of life. 1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 6:24-34. Such love of life is the loss of life by service to sin and by an unhappy death. Rom. 6:21, 23a. Its purpose, the glorification of Jesus by testimony, devotion, and service, is lost. It is empty, worthless, and remains so. Such a vain life we must hate by renouncing the world and its ways and by denying ourselves. Strange: Keeping life by hating life!

After their conversion Christians love their life for Jesus' sake. He has given it its glorious purpose, which is that they come so close to Him as to render personal service to Him (diakonos) in His household and Kingdom. That is the rich, successful life. It

is the desire of every grateful Christian. He wants to be, he is, fruitful. John 15:5, 16. As Christ's seed he wants to yield much fruit to the glory of the Savior.

In Christ, Col. 3:3, 4, we keep our life unto life eternal. Like body and soul, our life will be the same in eternity. We do not leave it behind to receive another life, a different one, there. We keep it eternally. However, like body and soul, it will be glorified. Temporal and eternal life is the same life except in point of perfection, of duration, knowledge, service, glory, v. 26b, 26c. 1 Cor. 13:9-12; Dan. 12:13; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 20:6; Rom. 2:6, 7; Ps. 73:24; James 1:12; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; 4:8. See Hymn 409.

G. H. SMUKAL

Oculi

John 2:13-25

Jesus went up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover, celebrated in the Temple, one of the most magnificent structures of antiquity. The Temple was very close to the heart of Jesus, His Father's house. At the age of 12 He loved to be there — His Father's business. Later He often taught in the Temple.

The Temple at Jerusalem was a type of the body of Jesus. "There stood side by side the beautiful type and the heavenly anti-type — the earthly sanctuary and the Son of God in His human body." Lenski. The Passover prefigured His suffering and death.

In the New Testament the Christian Church is the Temple of the living God, and every Christian heart is His dwelling place.

In the days of Jesus the Temple worship had been corrupted by formalism and commercialism.

We assemble regularly for worship.

What does Jesus see in our hearts?

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

1. *The earthly sanctuary*
2. *The inward temple of the heart*

1

V. 14. Deut. 14:24-26 permitted distant Jews to sell their animals at home and buy others at Jerusalem. The temple tax must be paid in Jewish coin. The priests had brought this business into the very court of the Temple, had made a stockyard out of it. The sacred Passover had become a great annual fair. Din and tumult disturbed worshippers.

Mal. 3:1 ff. Filled with holy indignation, Jesus formed a whip and drove the cattle vendors and their beasts out of the gates. Vv. 15, 16.

The divine majesty flashed from His features. None dared

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resist Him. All should have been convinced that He was the Son of God, the Messiah. They refused to believe. Cf. John 11:47; 12:27. A committee from the authorities demands credentials, v. 18.

V. 19. Enigmatical sentence. This sign would be convincing even to them, but it would pronounce their doom rather than kindle faith in them. John 12:39 f. They were bent on rejecting Jesus and ruining themselves. "Destroy this Temple." Cf. John 13:27; Matt. 23:32. By rejecting Jesus they were even then destroying the real meaning and purpose of the Temple. Putting Him to death would result in destroying their earthly sanctuary and bringing judgment upon themselves, Matt. 26:64; 27:25.

The Temple has never been rebuilt. But Jesus raised up the temple of His body, v. 22. A sign of infinite grace for all believers, but a sign of judgment for His enemies. Matt. 12:38-40. He died and rose again that He might build His spiritual temple, John 11:50-52; 2 Cor. 6:16. In Jerusalem He showed holy zeal for His Father's house. He is filled with zeal for His spiritual temple today.

2

Every believer's heart a temple of God, Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17. Real purpose in cleansing Temple was to purify hearts. Mal. 3:2,3. What does He see in the temple of our hearts? V. 25.

Materialism, earthly-mindedness? Minds overcharged with buying and selling, profit and gain? Do these things disturb our worship? Do we raise funds rather than win souls?

Formalism? Have we permitted the "deadly routine" of our church work to crowd out true spirituality?

Sign seeking? V. 18. 1 Cor. 1:22. "God must hear my prayers and fulfill my wishes, otherwise I will not believe." Sensation hunting? Not satisfied to sit quietly at Jesus' feet and hear His Word? Must we see something sensational: cripple healed right on the spot, man speaking with tongues, or even a message from the dead? Luke 16:31. We, too, are in danger of looking to signs, manifestations of God's power, rather than to the Word for the foundation of our faith, v. 23.

Jesus is ready to cleanse and purify our hearts. Rev. 3:17, 18. May the sign of His death and resurrection, the preaching of the Cross, ever be to us the power of God and the wisdom of God!

V. L. MEYER