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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Mark 2:13-17

The Pentecostal "divine healers" claim to preach the "full Gospel" when they picture Christ not only as the Savior from sin, but also and primarily as the Great Healer from all bodily afflictions. Literalistically interpreting Is. 53:5 ("with His stripes we are healed"), these "divine healers" say that Christ prepared a double cure: redemption from sin through His death, and deliverance from all sickness through the scourging. According to this so-called "whipping-post theology" faith appropriates the physical healing prepared by Christ, just as faith accepts the righteousness for the healing of the soul.—Christ is indeed the Great Physician, the Physician of our sin-sick souls. As such He reveals Himself in our text.

The Great Physician's Treatment of the Spiritually Sick

1. *He calls them to repentance.*

A. The scribes and Pharisees know only one treatment for sin-sick souls: they must make themselves righteous before they can be received by God, v. 16. That is the manner in which they believe to have cured themselves. a) This self-righteous spirit refuses to see its fatal sickness. Imagine a tubercular patient comparing himself with a serious war-casualty, and arguing that since he still has all his limbs, he is well! By exaggerating the sins of others it is not difficult to make oneself appear in a very favorable light. Comparing himself with the "other people" the Pharisee in today's Gospel appears to be a respectable gentleman. But God has established His holy Law, not other people's moral behavior, as our standard. The scribes do not consider their dishonesty, jealousy, murderous thoughts (evident in their spying on Jesus, speaking behind his back, judging) as sin. b) Believing themselves righteous, they feel no need of the Divine Physician. "Let the publicans and sinners also make themselves righteous!"—The cure of souls dare not be entrusted to such quacks. Let us watch over the Pharisee in our bosom, lest he attempt to prescribe the "cure" for our spiritual ills.

B. Jesus calls sinners to repentance, v. 17. a) The Great Physician knows the deep-seated malady. Before this can be healed, He must perform a painful surgery. Repent! He must bring the sinner to a knowledge of his sinfulness. He must cut, wound, kill, bring the sinner to the point of despair. This is the

Great Physician's "foreign office." Cf. *Trigl.*, 955, 478, 486 ff. See also John 16:8-11. b) Then the Great Physician can apply the healing balm of Gilead. Through the Gospel He engenders faith, effects repentance, *metanoia*. This is His "proper office." Cf. *Trigl.*, 953, 261—265. John 16:14. As the Great Physician He restored to spiritual health.

2. He associates with sinners.

The banquet a sign of intimate friendship, v. 15.

A. But how can the sinless Son of God associate with publicans and notorious sinners? As the Great Physician He sees something in His patients which the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees fail to see, namely: The imputed righteousness of Christ, Eph. 5:26, and their own incipient righteousness, Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:9 ff. Through repentance, sorrow, and faith, Luke 24:46, they have become members of the *una sancta*.

B. His association gives the sinners hope and courage. That is the purpose of His fraternizing with them. The Pharisees say: "Birds of a feather," etc. But Jesus does not follow the sinners; on the contrary, they follow Him. Christ does not sink to their level, but raises them to His. They need His fellowship, for they have many obstacles to overcome: the evil example of their former companions, the haughty spirit of the nominal Christians, their own inherent wickedness. Christ's loving, intimate, helpful companionship supplies the strength for a God-pleasing life. Today the heavenly Physician enters our hearts, John 15:5, 15.

3. He enlists them in His service.

V. 14. A Levi becomes a St. Matthew; the tax collector, an Apostle.

A. Without consulting flesh and blood he forsakes his lucrative business to follow the call to serve the Lord. He prepares a banquet—not to bid farewell to his former companions, but to provide an opportunity for them to experience the same blessings which had come to him. The scribes missed a wonderful opportunity to serve their fellow men, because they had despised the Great Physician. Matthew's life proves John 7:37, 38 to be true.

B. Only eternity will reveal how many were brought to faith and strengthened in their faith through the Gospel of St. Matthew, which shows so conclusively that Christ is the promised Messiah. The Great Physician is asking you who have been healed to enlist as an intern in His corps, to assist Him in curing the ills of sin-sick souls and in bringing them health for time and eternity. Amen.

F. E. MAYER

544 Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 9:27-34

Whenever Jesus during His three years' sojourn on earth confronted men, they formed an estimate of Him. But this always holds good, whether Jesus came visibly or whether He comes in His Word. Men must appraise Him. In the Gospel lesson we have three typical instances.

Three Appraisals of Jesus

1. *He is in league with the devil*
2. *He is a unique phenomenon*
3. *He is the Son of David, our Savior*

1

Jesus had healed a demoniac, vv. 32, 33a. Witnesses of Jesus' miracle were the Pharisees. Their appraisal of Him is summed up in v. 34. A terrible blasphemy. Such an attitude towards Jesus has its source in blind hatred. Without seriously considering Jesus' words and deeds, they straightway reject Him. Since they will have nothing to do with Jesus, they cut themselves off from everything that He brings to mankind as the Christ. They call terrible judgment down upon themselves, Gal. 6:7.

Unfortunately, even today there are men who appraise Jesus as did the Pharisees. Particularly in Europe that hostile spirit against the Christ has manifested itself in late years; Communism in Russia branded religion as an opiate which dulls the senses, and in Nazism there was a group that sought to replace Christ by pagan gods. And many cults in our own country are just as hostile towards Christ as the Pharisees in the Gospel. This bodes ill for coming days. We have a situation such as is described in Ps. 2:1-3. Ps. 2:5 is sure to follow.

2

Vv. 32, 33a. Evidently, believing friends brought the sufferers to Jesus. Their faith was not disappointed. In the story, however, also the multitudes receive comment by the Evangelist. They are reported to have merely marveled, v. 33b. Evidently, in the appraisal that they made of Jesus He was merely a great man, a unique phenomenon. Jesus gained only their admiration. The real importance of His person they missed completely.

The same kind of people are found in the world today. They speak respectfully of Jesus, admire Him for teaching the Golden Rule, for setting an example how men should lead exemplary lives, for dying a martyr's death for His convictions, and the like. That is the well-known language of the Modernists. Occasionally even Reformed Jewish rabbis speak of Jesus in the highest terms. Yet

this appraisal of Jesus will never carry with it the comfort of Jesus' help and protection and the hope of everlasting life with Him in the beyond. To such men Jesus can never say: v. 29. Quite the contrary, His verdict ultimately will be: Matt. 7:23. It is saddening to note how many respectable people appraise Jesus in this manner. May God cure their spiritual blindness.

3

Jesus also healed two blind men, vv. 27-29. Evidently, reports of Jesus had reached them, v. 26. Their physical disability, which shut them off from many of the disturbing influences of the world around them, perhaps led them to ponder on the meaning of Jesus more than normal persons in their day. Illumined by God's Spirit, they reached the conclusion that Jesus is the Son of David, the promised Christ, come to redeem His people. That conviction impels them to appeal to Him for help, v. 27. When Jesus does not immediately answer them, unshaken in their faith they follow Him even to the house, v. 28. Jesus did not fail them, v. 29.

The appraisal which these blind men made of Jesus represents also our conviction. We believe that Jesus is the Son of David, the Christ, our Savior, and our God. For us and all others who believe in Him He is a source of comfort in distress. Sorrows and difficulties, resulting from the disturbed conditions on the earth, beset us today as perhaps never before in our lives. There is but One in whom we can find security and gain the certainty that He will hear our prayer. To Jesus we, too, must come with the blind men's prayer: v. 27b. As He helped these men, He will also help us, comfort our hearts, and ultimately deliver us from all the evils that beset us in this life. Happy in time and eternity are those who appraise Jesus as did the blind men. G. V. SCHICK

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

John 7:25-31

Is. 8:14; Hos. 14:9; Luke 2:34; Rom. 9:32, 33; 1 Cor. 1:23, 24; 2 Cor. 2:16.

Our Double Duty as Lutherans in View of the Present Religious Confusion

1. *We must grow in the knowledge of Christ and His Word: that is our duty to ourselves*
2. *We must boldly confess Christ and His Word: that is our duty to others*

1

This chapter depicts a real religious confusion. It centers on Christ's identity, ancestry, authority, creditability. It is heightened by the confusion among the leaders, their inaction and powerlessness. The text introduces a group of insolent city folks, the offensive kind that boasts universal knowledge and hurls criticism and challenges right and left, never allaying confusion, but always contributing to it.—The confusion is due to insufficient knowledge and hasty conclusions, vv. 25-28. There were the facts: Christ's Person, His ancestry, His word, His miracles, His humility, His opposition. The confused could not make these agree with their own ideas of a Savior and their misunderstanding of Scripture. And all this confusion in the Temple!—Spiritual confusion breeds more false doctrine, then malice and hatred, then violence, v. 30. Insufficient knowledge proves destructive. It is inexcusable. It is avoidable. Rationalizing, blind judges bump each others' heads in their darkness. The devil finds their plight humorous. Jesus weeps over it.

The text gives us occasion to note the unhappy state of spiritual confusion. To know certain historical facts concerning Christ as a teacher and leader, to accept "on authority" one of the many diverse opinions of Him, is not even minimum Christianity, is not the saving faith in Christ. Let us learn to recognize more and more the importance of conviction, the happiness and peace of faith safely anchored in Christ. Let us grow in the saving knowledge of Christ a) for our own personal salvation, joy, comfort; b) for greater ability to discern; c) for our personal protection; d) for the benefit of others whom we, the seeing, should lead to the light.

The Lutheran Church is not a Church of confusion. It is the Bible Church. Its Confessions are Scriptural and clear. It has never contributed to, but has always attempted to clear, confusion. While the Lutherans confess with Paul 1 Cor. 13:9, they boldly glory in 1 Cor. 1:5-10, that the part they know is all revealed truth. John 14:6; 16:13; 17:17. True Lutherans know their duty to grow in knowledge and to remain untouched in their faith by the present religious confusion. A Lutheran has the best opportunity to stride forward from the minimum Christian knowledge to the wide scope of the entire revelation. Therefore: 1 Cor. 16:13.

2

Christ meets the confusion, vv. 28, 29. He leaves no doubt as to His identity and authority. He reveals Himself for man's salvation, which rests in Him alone.—He speaks boldly, fearlessly, v. 26.—The effect of His words is a) negative, v. 30 a, because of

the hardness of their hearts. The confusion will grow as His day approaches, Luke 18:8; b) gratifying, v. 31, by the grace of God. The believers base their confidence on the words, vv. 28, 29, and the work, Is. 35:5, 6, of Christ. Yes, some hearts were settled.

We Lutherans humbly thank God for the knowledge given to us. It is our duty now to disseminate that knowledge boldly, courageously, Matt. 10:27, 28. The enemies "can harm us none," Matt. 10:29-31; Is. 40:9. There will always be confused opposition. There will always be a harvest of souls. — As Christ's voice filled the Temple and is preserved to this day while the Temple lies in ruins, so our voice must fill the world to bring eternal fruit when the world is no more.

None has a greater duty than the Lutheran to educate and indoctrinate child and adult by every legitimate means against the present religious confusion. Let us not neglect this duty. James 5:19, 20.

G. H. SMUKAL

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 7:36-50

The boundless love of Jesus is frequently proclaimed and portrayed in the Scriptures and praised in our hymns. In His service to fallen mankind no journey was too far, no task too great. Luke 19:10. The climax of His love was reached when He laid down His life for His friends. John 15:13. The Scriptures also appeal to the recipients of the great love of Christ to return love for love. 1 John 4:19. In our text

Christ Has Somewhat to Say to Us About Love

1. *His love that freely offers us pardon and forgiveness*
2. *Our love that willingly offers Him grateful service*

1

To two persons in particular Christ offered His love, pardon, and forgiveness, first to the Pharisee Simon, and then to the unnamed woman of our text. The Savior not only ate with publicans and sinners but also with the Pharisees. Simon had invited Jesus to dine with him. Jesus did not hesitate to accept. But the invitation was not one of true friendliness. Jesus did not return the unfriendliness. Simon slighted the Savior, vv. 44, 45, 46. Yet Jesus showed him patient nobility and made a loving effort to save his soul. A lesson on love! Though Jesus is neglected by Simon, the latter is not recompensed evil for evil. Rom. 12:17.

To the unnamed woman of our text Jesus also offered His

548 Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

love, pardon, and forgiveness. A notorious woman and a public character, known in the city to be a sinner, came into the room where Jesus was dining. But her conduct over against the Lord, His attitude toward her, and His statement that she "loved much" indicate her conversion. The woman had heard the words of Jesus and thereby had come to the deep knowledge of her sins and also to the saving knowledge of her Savior. She wanted to hear more and to receive special comfort. The loving-kindness of Jesus had drawn her and He assured her: vv. 48, 50.

The Pharisee disapproved of the intrusion of the uninvited guest, v. 39. Jesus remains silent and does not discourage the repentant woman, who burst into weeping. These were tears of contrition and repentance. Ps. 6:6. Then Jesus defended the woman and related the parable of the two debtors, vv. 40, 41, 42. Both the woman and Simon were debtors before the Lord. In one case the debt loomed large, in the other it seemed small. Both could not pay the debt. The woman did not earn forgiveness by her love, but her love gave evidence of her faith and proved that she had forgiveness.

Incidentally the Lord appeals strongly to the Pharisee by this parable, v. 43. He was also a debtor, though he considered himself a smaller debtor or perhaps not one at all. Yet he could not pay his debt of sin and self-worship. Here was the offer of love and mercy to him also. We are not told that he accepted it as did the woman whom he despised. Self-righteousness is a grievous sin and bars one from heaven. Jesus said to the self-righteous: Matt. 21: 31, 32. Let us not despise the gracious offer of love and mercy, nor them who by faith accept it.

2

Though Simon had invited the Savior, he failed to offer the Lord the customary courtesies of that time and place. Simon had given Him no water for His feet (Gen. 18:4), had offered no kiss of peace (Ex. 18:7), had not anointed His head with oil (Ps. 23:5). The Lord had condescended to accept his formal invitation, but there was no faith and therefore no evidence of faith and love and grateful service, vv. 44-46; Matt. 25:41-46. May God preserve us from such a barren state of ingratitude!

What the proud Pharisee failed to supply the repentant woman provided, vv. 44-46. "For water the woman gave tears. For a towel she used the glory of her head, her hair. Instead of the kiss of friendship, she gave a shower of kisses of abject devotion upon His feet. Instead of ordinary oil for the head, the far more costly ointment in alabaster upon His feet." "Much is forgiven her; that is seen from the fact that she loved much." Luther:

"Because she publicly gives testimony of her faith by fruits meet for repentance, therefore she shall also in your presence be publicly absolved and regarded righteous."—What makes this story remarkable is this, that a public sinner, on the basis of her public confession of Christ and her public works of love, is publicly justified, vv. 47-50; Matt. 25:34-40.

How do we appraise our forgiveness, our peace with God through Jesus Christ? How about our love for Jesus? Do we love Him as we should? How about our love for the sweet Gospel, our interest in the work of preaching the same in all the world? How about our love for the least of Christ's brethren in this war-wounded world who are in great need of our love? God grant to us the love of Christ and the love of our brethren.

H. C. HARTING

School Sermon

Matt. 21:13-16

Survey of British child évacués revealed: Three out of every five city children "knew absolutely nothing of the Bible, had never been taught to pray." The report of 17 million spiritually untaught children in our country is equally shocking.

"Civilization marches forward on the feet of little children," said an eminent statesman. It can also march backward. And it will, if children are not given a thoroughly Christian training in home, church, school.

All proper means of Christian education deserve our support, but today let us consider particularly

Why Our Church Fosters Christian Day Schools

1. As a Golden Opportunity for the Children.

Text.—An unforgettable experience it was for the children in the Temple, when one day Jesus came to preach there. With their own eyes they saw Him. They drew near and watched Him. His righteous anger, as He drove out the irreverent money-changers, impressed upon them the dreadfulness of sin. His astounding, gracious power in healing the lame, etc., evoked their confidence in His love. So profoundly were their little hearts moved that spontaneously they confessed Him to be the Christ and cried "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Ah, to be with Jesus, to learn of Him repentance, salvation, righteousness,—what a glorious, golden opportunity!

Application.—A. Our Christian day schools offer children an opportunity no less wonderful. Though Jesus is not visibly present

550 Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

there, are not His teachers at hand to tell all about Him, especially His redeeming love? Is not His Holy Spirit there, generating faith, repentance, etc., through the Word and moving them to sing hosannas and other hymns of praise?

B. Parents covet opportunities for their children to acquire wealth, fame. But what are the best of these compared with that of making personal, intimate acquaintance with Jesus who gives incorruptible treasures? If children cannot fully appreciate this superlatively golden opportunity — cannot we, their parents and elders?

2. As a Mighty Power Against the Enemy

Text. — Amid the Temple throngs moved powerful enemies, scribes, chief priests, plotting against Jesus. To destroy Him, they were busy spreading calumnies. But when children suddenly crowded about Jesus and loudly cried: "Hosanna!" they were stunned, "sore displeased." Here was a counterattack from an unexpected quarter. And an effectual one. Before this hearty, loving testimony of children, the enemies were helpless. Their evil designs received a staggering blow. The simple faith and praise of the children — oh, what a mighty, offensive power!

Application. — A. Our Christian day schools provide a power no less effective. To meet the strong anti-Christian forces in the world — materialism, etc. — the Church is looking for a weapon. But it need look no further. Does not the text illustrate that a thorough training of children in the knowledge and praise of Christ, as given in our schools, is the most powerful counter-attack?

B. "Tremble, tyrants, we shall grow up!" was a slogan of schoolboys in the French Revolution. But our children, if equipped with the Gospel, can make the enemies of Christ tremble. They are growing up for God.

3. As a Great Joy to the Lord.

Text. — To enemies, the children's hosannas were unbearable. They wanted them stopped: "Hearest Thou what these say?" "Yea," answered Jesus, "indeed, I hear them, and hear them with joy. For their testimony I thank God. For what is hidden to your eyes is revealed to theirs! While you refuse to honor Me, God has awakened these children to do so, as He promised: 'Out of the mouths,' " etc. To see this promise fulfilled, to behold the fire of faith burning in little hearts, to notice the dismay of the enemies — oh, what a joy to the Savior's heart.

Application. — A. Our Christian day schools provide no lesser joy to the divine Lover of children. When there, especially, He

Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference 551

sees His little lambs properly fed, His invitation "Suffer . . . to come" (Matt. 19:14) carried out, and God's promise "Out of the mouths" still fulfilled. There is great rejoicing in His heart and in heaven.

B. If it is such a joy to Him, dare we as a church grow weary of supporting such a school? If it is a delight to Him, can you, O teachers, tire of the work—and you, O parents, fail to co-operate and make use of this blessed institution? What? It is a joy to Him who graciously redeemed us? Then shall it be our joy, regardless of the cost, to foster it! ALVIN E. WAGNER

