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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

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Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference**Twentieth Sunday after Trinity**

Luke 6:43-49

Would any man be so foolish as to plant a thorn in the hope of reaping from it a crop of figs? Yet the Savior had a reason for making this statement. The lesson He means to impress is a warning against the common mistake of failing to distinguish between the good man and the evil man as God views them. Lest we make the fatal error of regarding the bramble bush as a grapevine, let us study

Christ's Teaching of the Distinction Between the Good Man and the Evil Man

1. *As to their nature*
2. *As to their works*
3. *As to their fate*

1

What is it that distinguishes the nature of the good man from that of the evil? Christ says that the good man has a good treasure in his heart. The heart of every man is evil by nature. Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23. But the good man though evil by nature has come to Jesus, his Savior, has heard and received His Word, v. 47 a, and from Him has received forgiveness of sins, a clean heart, purified from evil, Heb. 9:14; 10:14-18, 22. His heart now holds a marvelous treasure, for it is the dwelling place of Jesus and the Holy Trinity, John 14:23-27. Cp. *Lutheran Hymnal*, 347, 357. Thus he has been changed into a new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17 ff; no longer evil, but good, holy, a saint in God's sight for Christ's sake, 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 2:19, 22; Col. 3:12 a.

Coming to Christ, faith in Jesus' stirring work effects this radical change in the nature of man. No longer is the believer a bramble, a thorn, a corrupt tree, but by the grace of God he has become a tree of righteousness, Is. 61:3, a branch on the Vine, John 15:5; a fruitful fig-tree. Have you experienced this change? Then remember that whatever of good there is in you, is due to Jesus. Continue in His Word, John 8:31. Do not be satisfied with having come to Him, but be ever deeper rooted in Him, Eph. 3:17-19. Do not play the part of the foolish man, Text, v. 49; but do as the good man does, vv. 47, 48. Then you will show your changed nature in a changed life.

2

Vv. 43, 44 apply to every believer. Out of the good treasure of his heart, changed by the indwelling Christ, he will no longer, like the evil man, bring forth only that which is evil, 45 b. Mark

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7:21; Gal. 5:19-21; Is. 57:20. In ever increasing measure his heart will become the fountain of good works. He is no longer satisfied with mere lip-service, v. 46; not only by word of mouth, v. 45 c, but also by the far louder speech of actions and deeds will he bear evidence of the change God's grace through Christ has wrought in him. While confessing, Rom. 7:18-24, yet daily the grace of Micah 7:18-20 experienced by him impels him to greater zeal in holiness and good works, Phil. 3:7-21; Col. 3. What a change by the power of Christ, who is made unto us wisdom and sanctification! And being found in Him, we will obtain everlasting redemption.

3

The evil man's fate, v. 49. He falls an easy victim to sin and Satan and their attacks, and finally to death and eternal damnation.

The good man, good through Christ, is founded on the rock, v. 48 a, the Rock of Ages, of everlasting strength, Is. 26:4; the Rock on whom the Church and all its individual members are built, Matt. 16:18; who prayed for Peter, Luke 22:32; for all believers, John 17:20, 24; who holds them safe in His hands, John 10:27-29; 1 Cor. 1:8; who is the Resurrection and the Life, John 11:25, 26; Luke 2:29-32; 2 Tim. 4:18. — Lord Jesus, make us good men!

TH. LAETSCH

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity

Mark 10:46-52

"Future world peace must be built on *faith*." This and similar expressions so common today. True, so long as suspicion and mistrust prevail, no proper foundation for world improvement.

There is a faith of a far different nature and of deeper meaning without which there can be no peace between God and man

Victorious Faith

1. *It trusts in the merciful Christ*
2. *It overcomes all obstacles*
3. *It finally leads to glorious sight*

1

Victorious faith is not merely to look to God for *material benefits*. That kind of faith is shown by the disciples asking for a favored place in a supposed worldly kingdom of Christ, Mark 10:35-37. Similarly, people today think that faith is no more than believing that God will provide, will grant recovery from sickness, protect in danger, etc.

The faith of Bartimaeus is much more: he confesses Christ as the *Son of David*; that was the Messianic title of our Lord. To

Bartimaeus, Jesus of Nazareth is the hope of the ages to whom also the Old Testament saints looked as the Redeemer. Furthermore, he appeals for Christ's mercy: "Have mercy on me." — "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

Victorious faith clings to Christ as the Redeemer from sin, death, and the devil, and trusts in His mercy, Rom. 3:22; Rom. 5:1, 2; 1 Tim. 1:14.

2

Bartimaeus was opposed by the *crowd*: "Many charged him that he should hold his peace," v. 48. One blind beggar against the many. But he is undismayed: "He cried the more a great deal," v. 48; original: "kept on crying." So faith in Christ is often opposed by the *many*; Jesus speaks of the "little flock." We are often impressed by the numbers of those who live in complacent heathenism, by those living in a so-called Christian country but denying Him by neglect, by the numbers of those who follow error rather than the truth.

Bartimaeus was opposed by those who *should have known better*. People who did not have to beg for a living as he did, and people who had their normal sight should have helped him to come to Christ; instead, they discourage him.

The same opposition to faith is found everywhere. Fellow church members, neighbors, even family members may constitute opposition to Christian faith, although they all should know better.

The victorious faith of Bartimaeus overcomes all of this; he casts away his outer garment, comes to Christ, presents his prayer. An example for us: "Oh, for a faith that will not shrink, Though pressed by many a foe!"

3

The faith of Bartimaeus led to glorious *sight*. Physical sight is given him. What an experience for him to see the Savior, to see people, to see Jericho, the city of palm trees!

But receiving this sight in a way symbolical of greater things he was to see. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for the Great Passion, Mark 10:33; Bartimaeus "followed in the way," v. 52. Perhaps with his restored sight he viewed the sacrifice on Golgotha and the victory of Easter. That was the greater sight.

Victorious faith at times is similarly granted *immediate sight* in the form of happiness, resignation to disappointments, patience in trouble, etc. But this faith eventually is granted the *greater sight*: Everlasting life, "to see Him as He is," "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying," (Rev. 21:4), reunion with departed loved ones.

Then truly: "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

H. O. A. KEINATH

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity

Luke 14:25-35

Over against Luther's heroic faith the Reformation history pictures Erasmus' vacillating nature. Erasmus' indecisiveness finally alienated him from the reform movement. Be not a weakling, but strong. You, too, are standing

At the Crossroads

1. *Your choice must be definite*
2. *Your choice is all-decisive*

1

During Jesus' early ministry He was hailed by many, but they soon left Him because they disliked the spiritual character of His ministry, John 6:66. Near the close of His public ministry He again became more popular with the crowds, v. 25. He, nevertheless, demanded a definite decision by these candidates for discipleship. A superficial choice was not acceptable. These requirements remain the same.

Vv. 26, 27. If a conflict exists between love of God and of neighbor, "hating" the neighbor, even the most intimate member of the family, is demanded. This hating does not imply harming him. It does, however, denote a positive refusal when the attempt is made to keep us away from God and His Word, 2 Tim. 4:10, e. g., wife neglecting church service to please unchurched husband; indulging in sinful pleasures to remain popular with associates.

In every opposition of our inclinations or comfort to God's holy will, our choice must be all out for God. As in war the convenience of the individual must be surrendered to the safety of the nation, so our life and work to the Lord. Matt. 19:21, 22; Matt. 6:24. Not the peaceful submission to a self-made cross, nor that suffered in common with unbelievers, but only that suffered because of our faith in God is a sign of a proper definite choice.

The cost of this choice must not be underestimated, vv. 28-30. The tower. Vv. 31, 32. The unequal conflict. An indefinite choice, even in the right direction, is unsatisfactory. The cost amounts to more than abstinence from certain sins and carnal pleasures. Whoever feels that an outward following of Jesus is sufficient will desert Him when the test comes. Judas. The cost of being a disciple of Christ is so great that it must be carefully considered. It far exceeds our own resources, Gal. 2:16; 3:10, 11. Only the grace of God for Christ's sake, Rom. 5:1, 2, makes us able to be and remain faithful disciples of the Lord, 1 Cor. 15:10. Cf. F. C. Thor. Decl. II, 65, 66. *Triglot*, p. 907.

The Lord warned those who would follow Him not to make their choice thoughtlessly or halfheartedly. He allowed no compromise: v. 33. Not only as you hear this message, but daily you stand at the crossroads. May your choice to be a disciple be most definite, since it is so decisive a choice.

2

Failure of a definite choice in favor of Jesus is disastrous. Your future depends upon it. Cp. mountain crossroads, one leading upward, the other downward, and no path from one to the other, Mark 16:16.

Failure of a definite choice reaps only scorn, vv. 29, 30. Unbelievers properly despise and mock those who claim to have separated from them but fail to do so. The self-sufficient warrior will meet defeat, v. 31.

Vv. 34, 35. Israel had been appointed to be a salt among the nations. When it did not carry out this obligation, it became not only less useless, but totally unfit for use, Rev. 2:4, 5; 3:3, 16. Salt has its definite purpose. If it fails herein, it is good for nothing else. It cannot be used on the field. It does not even improve the dunghill. It can only be cast out and trampled under foot. What can such salt salt?

Matt. 5:13. If your choice is not clear-cut for the Lord, or if you begin well, and then fail, you harm yourself and mislead others. Cf. King Saul.

Salt, however, is good. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," Josh. 24:15. With a definite choice for Jesus your future will be blessed. You can accomplish great things (build tower) and succeed against formidable odds (20,000 to 10,000). "All things are possible to him that believeth," Mark 9:23.

VICTOR MENNICKE

Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 17:24-30

The important lesson taught by this story from the life of Jesus does not lie on the surface. It will take some thought and meditation to discover it. Perhaps that is the reason why Jesus told Peter to go fishing after he had said: "Then are the children free," to give him time to think it over. If we will delve deeply into this story, we shall understand

The Glorious Freedom of a Child of God

1. *A freedom to be greatly prized*
2. *A freedom to be used with restraint*

1

Capernaum was "His city"; Jesus was well known there, Matt. 4:13; Mark 1:21-37. It was natural that if a tax were to be paid it would be at Capernaum. It was peculiar that the collectors did not demand the tax and that they came to Peter with their question. They may have felt that this Man could not properly be made to pay the tax. Peter, impetuous as always (Gethsemane), answered for Jesus. Then he went to talk to his Master about it. And Jesus met him with the question in v. 25. At that time strong nations would subdue weaker peoples and make them pay taxes, while the citizens at home paid none. Rome collected taxes from its provinces, but the Roman citizen did not have to pay. Peter knew about that, too, and he agreed at once, v. 26. And then Jesus made the statement in v. 26. The children of God are free. The Temple tax need not be paid.

The important truth here is the glorious freedom of God's children. The Temple tax was just one part of the long list of ceremonial duties—Sabbath observance, circumcision, offerings, restrictions in food and clothing, and so on (Leviticus). From all this burdensome yoke, Gal. 4:10; 5:1, Christians are free. The most wonderful part of it all is that Christians are free from the bondage of the Law, the Ten Commandments. Unbelievers are fenced in by the Law. They run against it and hate God, who built the fence, Rom. 8:7. Believers are outside this barrier. They are free people, who are not motivated by force and the fear of punishment. They do God's will out of love. To give us this freedom, Christ was sent into the world, Is. 61:1. That was the purpose of Christ's preaching, John 8:32. That was the purpose of Christ's suffering and death. This is a wonderful freedom, to be highly prized. We have learned what freedom means in our national life, freedom from restrictions, rationing, controls. The sentence of Jesus "Then are the children free" is a proclamation of liberty greater than any other ever made.

2

But this freedom from the restrictions of the Law must be used with restraint. It must not be used so as to offend others. When Jesus declared that the children of the Kingdom were free of the Temple tax, He added that they would pay it anyway, so as not to offend the Jews.

We learn here that our Christian liberty should not be used to offend others. In Corinth there came about a dissension about eating meat that had been offered to idols, and St. Paul said that it was quite proper to eat the meat; yet if such action caused offense, the strong Christians should give up their right to eat it.

So we have the liberty to use tobacco, play cards, have outings on Sundays, but occasion may arise when a Christian should refrain from exercising his privilege. (See *Borderland of Right and Wrong*, p. 32.) Quote 1 Cor. 6:12 and 10:23. It may be difficult to follow the right path in these matters, but it is not impossible to find the golden mean when we are actuated by love.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

The Festival of the Reformation

1 Cor. 15:57, 58

Being removed four hundred years from the time of the Reformation, few people know and understand the deplorable condition of the Church at that time, and the tremendous task that faced Luther; few people today fully appreciate the blessings which through the work of the Reformation came to the Church and to the world at large, and which we enjoy to the full in our Lutheran Church. In commemorating the work of the Reformation we should keep in mind that it was the work of God; Luther was but an instrument in the hands of God who called Luther for this work and gave him the necessary divine wisdom and courage. To God alone all glory!

How Shall We Show Our Appreciation of the Blessings Which God Has Given Us Through the Work of the Reformation?

1. *By holding fast to the Word of God*
2. *By proclaiming God's Word, especially the Gospel, to a sinful world*
3. *By trusting that the Lord will bless our labor done in His name*

1

a. While the history of the Reformation in all its details is a long story, its result may be summed up in a few words: It put the Bible, the Word of God, back into the hands of the people, where God would have it, and again clearly taught the central doctrine of the Scripture and therefore of the Christian religion, the doctrine of justification by faith, or, that man is not saved by his own works, but by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Many again learned to exclaim with Paul, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," v. 57. (The preacher ought to refer back to the entire chapter, of which these words are the climax.)

b. "Therefore," that is, because this is true that in Christ we have the victory over sin, death, and hell, we should be "steadfast, unmovable," hold fast to this blessed truth, v. 58. In other words,

we are to hold fast to the Bible, the final purpose of which is "to make man wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. 3:15. All that the Bible teaches is to serve man's salvation: the Law, to bring him to a knowledge of his sins and of the punishment deserved; the Gospel and the sacraments, to give him assurance of the sinner's salvation through Christ; good works as the fruit of faith. In other parts the Bible speaks of God's dealing with men: Men under the curse of sin and unbelief, and God's children under grace. The Bible is the verbally inspired, unerring Word of God. It is our only guide for faith and life. To forsake the Bible is to forsake the truth, to be unfaithful to God, and to cast aside our salvation. Those who deny the fundamental truth of the Bible, salvation by grace, are outside the pale of the Christian Church. Those who still hold to this fundamental truth, but deny other truths of the Bible, not only do not derive the full measure of God's blessings, but are in danger of losing even what they have. Indifferentism toward the truth leads to a denial of the entire truth. Many have thus lost it. The Lord who has so richly and graciously preserved the truth for us, admonishes and warns us, "Be ye steadfast and unmovable," John 8:31, 32. (Reference may be made to the effort to bring about Lutheran unity and the importance of holding fast to God's revealed Word.)

2

a. The great need of man at all times is to be assured of his salvation in Christ the Savior. That is also the great need of this postwar era. The war was God's judgment upon a sinful world, and His chastisement upon His own children; at the same time it was and still is God's call to repentance. (A brief description ought to be given of the sinful condition of the world, the apostasy of many from the Christian religion, and the indifferentism toward doctrine and Christian life found even among us.)

b. Therefore the Lord's call to us: "Always abounding in the work of the Lord," v. 58. By word of mouth and by means of the printing press the truth was spread in the days of Luther. If we Christians do not bring the Gospel to the people, no one else will. It is a great privilege, but equally as great a responsibility. "Always abounding," that is, doing the Lord's work, building up Christ's kingdom (what an honor!) should be considered by us not to be a side-issue, but our real work, the work of the Church as such and of each individual Christian. By personal testimony in word and deed and by sending preachers and missionaries where we cannot go, we should be about our Father's business, Matt. 5:13-16; Mark 16:15.

3

a. "The work of the Lord," "your labor," v. 58. The work which God has entrusted to us is real labor, it is not an easy task, it meets with much opposition: on the part of the sinful world, false teachers, our own sinful flesh and blood. This ought not surprise us, nor discourage us, for the Lord has told us so and it is in the very nature of the case, for the natural man is carnal-minded, and to be carnal-minded is to be an enemy of God, John 15:18-20; Gal. 4:16; 2 Tim. 3:12.

b. Nevertheless, if our work is done "in the Lord," as the Lord has directed, the work shall not be done "in vain," v. 58; Is. 55:10, 11. The work of the Reformation was not in vain, the work of the founders of our Synod has not been in vain, our work has not been in vain, 1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

Let us show our appreciation for the blessings which God has given us through the work of the Reformation by holding fast to His Word, making it known among men, and trusting that according to His promise our labor in so doing is not in vain.

J. H. C. FRITZ

