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Homiletics: Studies on the Swedish Gospels

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HOMILETICS

SAINT PHILIP AND SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLES' DAY
(May 1)

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

Orientation.—Philip the Apostle (not to be confused with Philip the Evangelist): one of the first whom Jesus "found" and called to follow Him. Philip then "found" Nathanael (probably another name for Bartholomew) and said to him: "We have found . . . Jesus. . . Come and see!" (John 1:43-46.) And so the temple grows (v.21; cf. Rev.21:14). At the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus asked Philip: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" And this He said to prove him, etc. (John 6:5 ff.) On the day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem certain Greeks approached Philip with the request: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip served them by telling Jesus. (John 12:20 ff.) When Christ later spoke to the disciples about His Father, it was Philip who said: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8; this is in the Gospel for the Day). And Philip was among those who met in the upper room in Jerusalem after the Ascension (Acts 1:13). And "after successful missionary labors in Galatia and Phrygia this Apostle is said to have suffered a cruel death. When scourging failed to silence him, he was stoned, crucified, and finally run through with a spear to hasten his death." (Webber, *Church Symbolism*, p. 202.)

James the Apostle: Often identified with James "the Lord's brother or cousin" (Gal. 1:19). Traditionally known as James "the Less." Davis, *Bible Dictionary*: "It is natural . . . as it has been usual, to assume that the James of . . . Mark 15:40 . . . is this James." (NOTE: Saint James the Elder the Apostle's Day is July 25.) Very little of a definite nature is known about him. He was called "the Less" probably because he was younger or smaller (or both) than James, the son of Zebedee. Perhaps it was to him that the risen Lord appeared (1 Cor. 15:7). And perhaps it was he who wrote the Epistle of James. Tradition adds its usual interesting details: "Unlike the other Apostles, he remained in Jerusalem, where he became the first Christian bishop, presiding over the first apostolic council. Old historians relate that he was surnamed 'the Just' and continued for 30 years to govern the church at Jerusalem. As a Nazarite, he abstained from strong drink and animal food and wore linen. Because he was always kneeling in intercession for the people, his knees became callous like a camel's. Finally, hostile Jews led him to the gable of

the Temple and demanded that he denounce Christ before the Easter multitudes. When, instead, he fearlessly confessed Jesus Christ as Messiah, the Jews hurled him down and began to stone him. As he lay dying and praying for his murderers, a fuller ended the martyr's life with a club. This is said to have occurred about 69 A.D." (D. E. Ressel, in the *Lutheran Chaplain*, May-June, 1952, p. 38.)

Why are Philip and James joined together on this day? And why was May 1 set aside as their day? — "The combination and the date seem to have been determined by the fact that the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rome, built A.D. 350, was rebuilt in the sixth century and rededicated May 1, A.D. 561, on which occasion the relics of the two apostles were transferred to this Church which was now rededicated in their honor." (Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 502.)

Notes on the Text. — Why Eph. 2:19-22 as the Epistle for this day? "The Epistle refers to the Church as being 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,' a passage which led the medieval Church to give apostles' days equal honor with Sundays." (Ibid.) And Philip and James are among the Apostles. But we are not medieval. The Apostles and Prophets are not so many component parts of the foundation. Rather "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets" is that on which they also rest, namely, Christ! Cf. 1 Cor. 3:11 and *The Lutheran Hymnal*, No. 473: "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord!"

The Holy Christian Church

I. What it is.

- A. The communion of saints ("fellow citizens with the saints," v. 19).
- B. The household of God (v. 19).
- C. The holy temple of the Lord (v. 21); "Made holy by faith"; Cat., qu. 178. Eph. 5:25-27.

II. How it grows.

- A. God builds His church ("in the Lord . . . through the Spirit").
- B. Through the means of grace.
 1. The Word; cf. John 17:20.
 2. The Sacraments, instituted by Jesus Christ Himself, who is "the chief Cornerstone."

III. Why it exists.

- A. "For an habitation of God"; cf. 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:16.
- B. To serve God with holy works; Cat., qu. 178; 1 Peter 2:5.

The introduction: a reference to the Day and occasion and thumbnail sketches of the lives of Philip and James. References to these two Apostles we can also easily weave into each of the three parts, keeping in mind that "the memory of saints may be set before us that we may follow their *faith* and *good works*" (A. C., XXI).

For a longer and more exhaustive study of the text (as the Eisenach Epistle for Pentecost) see CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, June 1930, pp. 434—440.

A Collect for the Day

O almighty God, who by Thy Holy Spirit hast called us to be fellow citizens with the saints and of Thy household, and who dost build Thy church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone, grant us to be so fitly framed together through their Word in the unity of the faith that we may be a holy temple for Thy habitation and may serve Thee with good works; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Pitcairn, Pa.

LUTHER POELLOT

Studies on the Swedish Gospels

JUBILATE

JOHN 17:1-8

The Text and Its Central Thought.—Talk of glory seems irrelevant so often. Either the talk has propaganda purposes, or it is inconsequential. The glory of a baseball victory, the glory of marching armies, the glory of human beauty—these have affected our interpretation of the word. How feeble the term "glory of the Father" sounds alongside the power, the intelligence, the love of the Father as well as other terms expressing a colored interpretation to us. The glory of the Father reminds too many of hazy clouds trailing across a warm blue sky, a golden red sunset on a delightful spring evening, or the incessant pounding of white surf along rocky beaches with a wide expanse of ocean stretching beyond. Nothing "practical" is in that. Beautiful enough, but it is really a luxury to occupy one's time with it.

With jarring force we need to confront the Father's glory as reality, the only lasting reality, the end-all and be-all of our existence. It has to do with the Savior's crucifixion (v. 1: "the hour is come"); with His agony in Gethsemane (Luke 22:42: "not My will, but Thine");

with His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-28, Phil. 3:10, 2 Tim. 1:10); and with His Sermon on the Mount and casting out devils (v.6).

The Savior lifts His eyes to heaven and looks longingly homeward as He pours out His heart to the Father in prayer. The liturgical theme "Homeward Bound" is evident in this part of the prayer as well as later. It is the joy of anticipation of home feebly suggested by those who look forward now, come what may, to the serene joy of mother's smile when they come home on Mother's Day, a week hence.

To see, even to glimpse, the Father's glory gives a direction to life that is unintelligible to those limited by the material and temporal. Such motivation will, yes, must, encounter persecution, misunderstanding, or ridicule. That glory of the Father can reflect itself in us as it did in Jesus.

A central thought for this text is: The glory of God as it is seen in Jesus Christ draws and drives us, bringing eternal life and manifesting the Father's glory in that process as Father and Son glorify each other.

The Day and Its Theme.—The liturgical theme "Homeward Bound" invites us almost irresistibly to stress the evident longing of Jesus as He raises His eyes to the Father, for it finds its echo in our hearts. The note of triumphant confidence of the *Parish Activities* theme for this day, "Home and Church Conquer Together," finds ample expression in a personal and individual sense in this text, though it is certainly not the central thrust in its unique sense.

The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.—To lift our goals, our desires, and our plans above material self and selfish pride to a vision of glorifying the Father. The roots and the power for such glorifying must lie in Jesus Christ and never elsewhere. We do not add to the Father's glory; we merely express it in our lives.

Sin and Its Fruits to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.—Concern with the here at the expense of the hereafter; desire to glorify self even in the name of religion. Failure to motivate apparently worthwhile goals by a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Substitution of character for faith, coupled with a failure to recognize with awe and gratitude the sovereignty of God.

Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.—This opportunity is crystal clear in verse three and in a less evident way offered in verse one and verse six. Jesus was sent by the Father. His hour came particularly in His passion and resurrection but was evident also in His miracles and parables.

Illustrations.—Instances of God's glory occur in Isaiah's vision

(Isaiah 6); the Transfiguration (Matthew 17); the giving of the Law (Ex. 34:5-7, Deut. 5:24); the Baptism of Christ (Mark 1:9-11); Pentecost (Acts 2); to Stephen (Acts 7:55); and in God's revelation of His will and power since the time of creation (Psalm 8). The beauty of spring, the right use and abuse of Mother's Day, and the recency of Easter afford exceptional opportunities of foil, contrast, and example.

*Outline***The Trail of Glory****I. God the Father dwells in glory.**

- A. Our highest hopes, our finest longings, our most sensitive convictions only hint the Father's glory (Rev. 21:11, 23).
- B. His glory is not in surroundings, nor in fanfare, but in Himself (v. 5; Psalm 104).
- C. His glory is not dependent on recognition (Ps. 113:4).

II. The Father made His glory clear in Jesus Christ.

- A. Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection show us the Father's nature and heart (v. 4; John 1:14).
- B. His promise of eternal life to us, not only to see but also to share in the Father's glory, offers new life.
- C. His words, His life, show us the Father (vv. 6, 8; Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:6).

III. Through Christ we see the Father's glory.

- A. Our eyes receive sight when salvation comes to us (v. 3; 1 Cor. 2:7; Luke 2:32).
- B. His Word defines our relation to the Father's glory (vv. 6, 8; Is. 42:8; 60:1; 1 Peter 1:8; Rom. 8:17, 18).

Conclusion: The best is still before us, to see the Father's glory in full. Even now we witness it in Christ and, through Him, in ourselves. Show forth His glory.

Portland, Oreg.

OMAR STUENKEL

CANTATE**JOHN 15:10-17**

The Text and Its Central Thought.—This text appears in that great section of St. John's Gospel which contains Christ's last discourses with His disciples. The time is probably during the Passover of the year 30 (John 13:1). It is Maundy Thursday evening. Christ will soon offer

His great sacrifice of love on the cross (John 18:1). The sacerdotal prayer was uttered at this time (ch. 17).

The immediate context is also important. Vv. 1-9 give the parable of the Vine and the Branches, emphasizing union with Christ and the bearing of fruit (good works). Following this text we find that our Lord speaks of the reception that Christians will have in the world. He prepares them for trouble and persecution, which they will experience in spite of their lives of love.

The central thought is *love*: Christ's love for His own, the disciples love for each other and their Master.

Detailed study of the Greek text is essential and profitable. V. 10: Divine love is primary. ἀγάπη is the foundation of Christian faith and life. The keeping of Christ's commandments is the condition for abiding in this love. Christ Himself kept His Father's commands and thus abode in His love. It is assumed that abiding "in My love" is the highest aim and good in life. The words are addressed to Christians, who alone have the motive and the understanding which Christ assumes. V. 11: The connection between love and joy. The world seeks joy where it will never be found. V. 12: This text emphasizes the *life* of love. It speaks of the sanctified Christian life. Yet Christ's commands are based on His love and the sacrifice of His life for us. The commandments of Christ are not cold and solitary ethical precepts. They do not stand by themselves, as the principles of Buddha or those of any modern ethical humanist. Christ says that we are to love "as I have loved you." Here is the uniqueness of Christianity, the heart of our holy faith. Faith in Christ is first and primary. The *Expositor's Greek Testament*: "His love was at once the source and the measure of theirs." Cf. this verse also with many passages in St. John's First Epistle: 1 John 3:23, 24; 4:7-11. Consider the basic difference between humanitarianism and Christianity. V. 13: Love reaches its highest point when it issues in sacrifice. Here, too, Christ surely is speaking of His coming sacrifice for the sins of the world. Cf. Rom. 5:8: "But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." V. 14: Here Christ returns to the main point of this text: the *life of love* of His disciples shows itself in obedience to His commands (cf. v. 10). V. 15: The relation of servants to their master is not characterized solely by love. Right, duty, justice, and authority set the tone for the master-servant relationship. It is different between friends, since their contacts are open and intimate. Christ's revelation to His people lifts them to this higher level of friendship. V. 16: Here also the primacy

of the divine action is asserted. Once more the Lord focuses attention on His primary work. Here He speaks in terms of (1) election and (2) the answering of prayer in Jesus' name. God's action is first and primary, therefore, in election and even in prayer. V.17 contains a summary thought. This pericope is a beautifully condensed statement of the evangelical appeal for sanctification.

The Day and Its Theme.—The lessons for Cantate fit well with the central thought of this text. James 1:16-21 (Epistle) emphasizes the necessity of our sanctified Christian life, which is based upon Christ's work, since we are the "first fruits of His creatures." John 16:5-15 (Gospel) stresses the office of the Holy Comforter, whom Christ will send. The Collect emphasizes the thought of love and joy and connects very closely with the expressions in our text. The Gradual states the reign of Christ in majestic words. Proper attention and emphasis by the pastor in the reading of the lessons will do much to emphasize a unified truth in the entire service.

Sin and Its Fruits to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.—Our Lord here deals explicitly with the central problem in Christian living: Whence comes power and incentive to live in obedience to Christ? Christ, indeed, saves us from the guilt and power of sin! Verse 12 is a marvelous example of the positive Gospel motive for a sanctified life of love and service. Helpful doctrinal reading, alongside the specific textual study of this passage, is found in Article IV of the Formula of Concord, "Of Good Works" (*Thorough Declaration, Trigl.*, pp.939—951). Summary: Good works are the fruits of faith.

Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.—The first part of the suggested outline is the place for clear Gospel emphasis. Christ's reiteration of the Gospel is significant in this text, with its primary interest in the fostering of deeds of love.

Illustrations.—The very setting in which these words were spoken provides good introductory and illustrative material. Before the supreme sacrifice on Good Friday, Christ speaks to His disciples concerning the two greatest needs: His love for them and the reflection of this love in their own lives. *Parish Activities* theme: "Home and Church Conquer Together." How is it in our homes? Does faithful use of the Word and Sacrament foster faith in Christ and love toward one another? How can we expect love to dwell in the home if members of the family neglect Him who is the Source of all true love? The true solution to family tensions is found in Christ the Lord, the Source of all grace. How about our life in the larger family of God,

the Christian congregation? Christ makes it clear that we are to live together in brotherly love. He alone gives us the power and grace so to do. Christ in Word and Sacrament gives His church, and all its members, the divine power and grace to do much more than merely stay together. The divine love which should characterize the life of the church is the greatest force on earth. Of the early Christians the pagans said: "Behold, how they love one another."

Outline

The Centrality of Love

- I. Christ's divine love is the basis for our faith and life (vv. 12, 13).
- II. Christian love, the reflection of divine love, should characterize all our actions (vv. 10, 11).
 - A. The keeping of His commandments.
 - B. The source of divine joy.
- III. Deeds of love are the true marks of God's children (vv. 14-17).
 - A. In such deeds they serve their Lord and one another.
 - B. This love is the outward evidence of God's election.

Chicago, Ill.

JAMES G. MANZ

ROGATE

LUKE 11:1-13

The Text and Its Central Thought.—At a time not specified a certain disciple, evidently unacquainted with the Sermon on the Mount, on seeing Jesus "engaged in prayer," requested instructions in this art. Jesus complied, offering at the same time an abbreviated version of the Lord's Prayer. A comparison of this with the St. Matthew version and also a study of the Greek tenses will prove enlightening. The aorist of the first three petitions calls for a hallowing of God's name and a coming of His kingdom that is to be *effective* in us and through us according to His will. The present imperative in the Fourth Petition, "*keep giving* us day by day (καθ' ἡμέραν) the bread of our needs," emphasizes the long-range look of Him who is able to plan for the morrow; whereas the aorist in St. Matthew, "*Give* us this day (σήμερον) our daily bread," focuses attention only on the need of the moment. In the Fifth Petition we ask for the forgiveness of "*sins*" (ἁμαρτίας, lit., "the failure to have 'hit the mark' of God's requirements") In St. Matthew these "failures" become the "debts" of a righteousness due to God till paid. Our promise in the present tense to "*keep forgiving* all those who are indebted to us" is a pledge to make this

the daily habit of our lives; while the aorist of St. Matthew, lit., "as we *did* forgive," expresses the thought that already at the moment of prayer we did *with finality* dismiss from our hearts all the wrongs that have been done to us. With the aorists of the closing petitions we completely commit ourselves to God's guidance through every type of testing unto final deliverance.

To appreciate the illustration that follows we must realize what a complicated affair the bolting and unbolting of the door is in an Oriental house, with the family asleep in the room. No wonder the father says at first, "*Stop* ($\mu\eta$ with the imperative present) troubling me."

One ought not overlook the $\kappa\alpha\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\mu\iota\nu\ \lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega$, "Besides I myself declare to you" (v.9), an emphatic asseveration on the part of Jesus wherewith He introduces three present imperatives that urge us to "*keep asking*," etc., and six assurances that such praying will never be in vain. The change from the plural $\epsilon\mu\iota\nu$ of v.9 to the singular $\pi\alpha\varsigma$ of v.10 individualizes the promise and makes it personal. The three present tenses ("keep asking," etc.) do not imply "vain repetitions" (*contra* Matt.6:7), but encourage us to come to God again and again with each new need and by every avenue of approach.

Vv.11,12 remind us that fathers do not make mockery of their children's requests by giving stones shaped like cakes for cakes, or fishlike serpents in place of fish, or dead and poisonous scorpions rolled up like eggs instead of eggs; much less the Father in heaven. If we who are sinners give "good things" to our children (v.13), how much more will the heavenly Father give us His best gift, the Holy Spirit, wherewith comes all that is truly good (Matt.6:33; 1 Cor. 12:3; Gal. 5.22, 23; Heb. 11:6; John 14:16-18; 16:7-15).

The *thought*: Jesus teaches us how to formulate our prayers in a manner pleasing to God so as to put first things first and how to come to God as children to their father and with a similar confidence. He assures us that such prayers will be effective.

The Day and the Theme.—The Gospel encourages prayer in Jesus' name. The Introit and the Gradual sing of our redemption, which is made certain by the resurrection, ascension, and session of our Lord, thus assuring us that our prayers are acceptable and heard. The Collect and the Epistle remind us to put our prayers to action. The monthly theme of *Parish Activities* calls for the home and the church to conquer together. Making the church's prayers meaningful and fruitful requires the help of the home. Here children can be taught how to formulate their own prayers and how to practice them.

The Goal and the Purpose of the Sermon.—To effect an appreciation of the Lord's Prayer and to use it as a pattern for prayer; to learn to come with all our needs to God as our Father as children do—boldly, repeatedly, even persistently; with confidence, but always with complete submission to His gracious will.

Sin and Its Fruits to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.—To pray selfishly; to despise prayer as fruitless when we fail to get our way; to doubt God's promises or goodness when evil comes; to fail to commit our cause and ourselves altogether into His hands; to neglect prayer because we are sinful or because we hesitate to come so often; to pray for mere show; to offer vain repetitions; to be full of anxiety; these are the sins we need first to recognize in ourselves and then to have forgiven us in Christ, so that, having put them aside, we may begin anew our prayer life.

Opportunities for Explicit Gospel: (1) Christ's own prayers serve not merely as examples but also as our righteousness and as a covering for our poor and sinful praying (Matt. 5:17, 18; Rom. 10:4; Jer. 23:6; Gal. 3:27); (2) the Fifth Petition, to which Christ personally and emphatically guarantees God's affirmative answer; (3) the promise of the Holy Spirit, through whom alone faith can be gained or retained; (4) the assurances concerning our redemption as found in the Introit and Gradual; and (5) the Holy Gospel of the Day (John 16:27).

Illustrations: The friend at midnight; the father-child relationship illustrated from experiences in the home. The Epistle shows us how as God's instruments we can respond in His name to the cries of widows and orphans. Jesus and Stephen show us how one may pray for his adversaries. Give also practical examples how the various Petitions of the Lord's Prayer can be made effective in our homes, our churches, our schools, our communities, and in the world through us.

Outline

The Lord Teaches Us to Pray

- I. He shows us how to construct our prayers.
 - A. The two versions of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6; Luke 11); His own prayers (John 12:27, 28; Matt. 26:36-44; John 17); other prayers in Scripture; the Psalms—all indicate that the forms of our prayers may vary.
 - B. The Lord's Prayer, however, may serve as our model, showing us how through petition and praise we may present our many needs before God in their proper perspective (Matt. 6:33; 7:11; Luke 11:13; Matt. 6:3-32).

II. He shows us how to approach God in prayer.

A. Like children coming to their Father (Luke 11:2; John 1:12, 13; 14:6; 6:37-47; Gal. 3:26; 4:6).

B. Like children who come to their Father even with the most trivial needs, with insistence and persistence (present imperatives, "keep asking," etc.); using every possible means of approach (asking, knocking, seeking).

C. Like children who are confident that their Father will keep His promises, that He will give them nothing hurtful, only the best, and who are therefore willing to commit themselves to His will whether the answer be "Yes" or "No" or "Wait" (Matt. 6:10; 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13; Job 1:21; 2:10; Heb. 12:5-14; John 2:4).

Chicago, Ill.

THEO. F. NICKEL

ASCENSION DAY

LUKE 24:49-53

The Text and Its Central Thought.—In the last verses of his Gospel St. Luke telescopes the Savior's resurrection appearances and instruction. Possibly v. 49 belongs to such telescoping, although Acts 1 seems to place this word on Ascension Day itself. In this "I send the promise of My Father" the Holy Spirit is inseparably linked to both the Son and the Father, although distinct from both. This promise also characterizes the Ascension as a prelude to Pentecost. That blessing could not occur without this one (John 16:7). Conversely the Ascension commission (v. 48) could not occur before the fulfillment of the promise. Perhaps Luke knows the promise of John 14:26 and 15:26, although he himself has the eschatological promises in his Upper Room discourses. (Luke 22:18, 30.)

"You" in v. 49 is in the emphatic position in the Greek. "As for you, remain in the city. . . ." The RSV "clothed" is much more vivid and clear than the AV "endued." Also the RSV "parted" is nearer the intransitive sense of the Greek verb than the AV "was parted." "Then" in v. 50, that is, after the word of instruction, after the mission challenge, after the promise of the Spirit's power. The Greek word for "bless," used in v. 51 of Jesus and in v. 53 of the disciples, is the same. (Cf. Rev. 5:12 ff.) The textual variant "And was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him" has rather widespread substantiation, although not found in the best manuscripts.

Bethany was the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, where the Lord had eaten six days before the Passover (John 12:1) in the house

of Simon the Leper (Matt. 26:6), from where He had set out on Palm Sunday (Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29), and where Jesus had made His headquarters during Holy Week (Mark 11:12). And nearby Olivet (Acts 1:12; Luke 22:39; Mark 14:26; Matt. 21:1), together with Bethany, were the scenes of the beginning of His triumph and of His suffering. Ylvisaker in *The Gospels* (p. 787) believes that Gethsemane lay on one side of the mountain, while the Ascension occurred on the opposite slope facing Bethany. Edersheim comments: "From where He had made His last triumphant entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion, would He make His triumphant entry visibly into heaven" (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, II, 651).

A central thought would be: The promise and blessing of the ascending Christ brings His followers joyful worship.

The Day and Its Theme.—The Swedish Lectionary suggests "From Humiliation to Exaltation." "Bethany" reminds us that the work of humiliation is now past as the exalted Lord is crowned with glory. In the Epistle (Acts 1:1-11) there is the fullest account of the Ascension, although even there faith is necessary to see the glory of the simple coronation. V. 11 mentions the last stage of the exaltation, Christ's second coming. In the Gospel (Mark 16:14-20, a part of the disputed "longer ending") the passive voice indicates the Father's role in this exaltation. Then, too, the session is joined to the Ascension. Although the contrast is plain between the lowly Jesus whom men had killed and the ruling Lord, nevertheless it is still "this same Jesus" who raises "His hands" in blessing. Introit and Gradual echo the joy at Christ's triumph, while the Collect stresses the faith implication of the ascension into *heaven*. "Home and Church Conquer Together," the May theme in *Parish Activities*, can be linked in this way: Our Savior's coronation means joyful worship in home and church.

The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.—To bring the hearer to a joyful awareness of the implications of his Savior's ascension for his personal faith; joy in the promise and blessing of my exalted Brother; joy that means joyful worship.

Sin and Its Fruits Diagnosed.—The terrible sin of rejecting Christ's promised Spirit, although not explicit in the text, can be implied. There is also an implicit rejection of the virus of American activism that rushes to do and serve without waiting on the Lord. The "Christian" sin suggested by this text would be a mere mental assent to the creedal statement of the Ascension. Of course, such head faith will be joyless, and the worship of such "believers" will be equally joyless.

Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.—"Promise" (v.49) is a great Gospel word. The Holy Spirit, bringing all of Christ's person and work, is a "given," a "sent." The power and joy for worship is not in us. But we "are clothed" with the Spirit of Him who lived for us, died for us, rose for us, ascended for us. "Blessed them" (vv.50 f.) is another pregnant Gospel word. Finally there is the reference to "His hands." The exalted Savior is still our Brother with the same hands that touched the sick, caressed the young, and were pierced on the cross.

Illustrations.—The joyful expectation of children when they are given a promise; the Advent characteristic of Ascension Day, reminiscent of the joy of pre-Christmas days; the farce of a man rushing to work unclothed; the picture of Christ's blessing dramatized with the preacher's uplifted hands. Our temple (v.53) will be more than the church sanctuary. It will be found wherever two or three are gathered in His name.

Outline

The Promise and Blessings of the Ascending Christ

- I. Christ has gone from humiliation to exaltation.
 - A. His second trip to Bethany was for His coronation.
 - B. This going meant joyful worship for His disciples.
- II. Yet there is joylessness today.
 - A. A rejection of Christ's exaltation means no worship.
 - B. Mere head faith in His ascension means joyless worship.
- III. The Savior still gives us His promise and blessing.
 - A. He is our exalted Brother.
 - B. He promises us His Holy Spirit.
 - C. He places His hand of blessing upon us.
- IV. That gift means joyful worship for us.
 - A. We, too, rejoice with great joy.
 - B. In church and home we bless God.

Charleston, S. C.

HENRY W. REIMANN

EXAUDI

JOHN 15:18-25

The Text and Its Central Thought. — It will be noted that the present text precedes the old Gospel selection for this Sunday. It is apparent that Christ was eager to supply His followers with a comprehensive appreciation of the primary elements of successful discipleship after His departure from their midst. He wanted to supply them with an understanding of those things which would stand them in the good stead when they "were on their own." In the present text it is clear that He is picturing to them some of the conditions which they can expect to encounter in the sincere, earnest, and complete discharge of the obligations of discipleship. The word "hate" ("hated" and "hateth") is used with emphatic repetition and force to show that they can expect hateful opposition to their meeting the requirements of discipleship. He shows for all time, for Christians in all ages and under all conditions, that they can most certainly expect strenuous and hateful opposition, antagonism, and virulent disfavor in the world. With due impressiveness He accounts for the source and nature of this hatred and opposition. "They hated Me." "Ye are not of the world — therefore the world hateth you." "They have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." "Because they know Him not that sent Me." "They hate My Father also." "That the word might be fulfilled" — all these expressions in their strong settings make opposition, hatred, and kindred conditions the logical expectation of Christians. The knowledge of this opposition is a prime factor in helping His followers always to lay hold on those things which can give them strength to overcome, to emerge victorious, to be valiant in the discharge of their responsibilities, to take their obligations seriously, to re-evaluate the great things which they possess by virtue of their relationship to Christ, so that they may ever appreciate that no price is ever too high when it comes to the simple blessedness of being a follower of Christ, a sincere believer in Him as the true Savior and Redeemer.

Essentially the text serves to excellent advantage in demonstrating that this continued hatred on the part of men toward Christ and His followers is testimony to the fact that it has its origin in the sinfulness of mankind. Christ says: "But now they have no cloak for their sin." It has been brought out into the open. It is easy to see its real source and nature. There is no longer any opportunity to cover it up, to keep it concealed. He says again: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." It is well for the Christian who comes face to face with opposition to appreciate its real

source, namely, the inborn, innate, stubborn, willful sinfulness of man by nature. More comprehensive meditation upon the text would reveal this central thought: No amount of hateful opposition should keep a sincere follower of Christ from displaying a valiant, vigorous, and victorious Christianity at all times.

The Day and Its Theme.—This Sunday is sometimes known as "Expectation Sunday," no doubt from their "waiting for the promise of the Father." In the light of the present text, and also the regular lessons for the day, the emphasis could well be placed on "expectation" in another sense. When God gives us the full blessing of His Spirit, so that we are truly brought to real, living faith in Christ as our Savior, as followers of Christ we can expect to meet with certain hindrances, hardships, opposition, and hatred in His kingdom here on earth. In spite of this expectation a true Christian will always sense a secure feeling of triumphant and courageous power to be a disciple "in the world, but not of the world." This thought can easily be harmonized with the basic theme in *Parish Activities*—"Home and Church Conquer Together."

The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.—To stir a deep realization on the part of the hearers that although true Christianity will always be challenged by severe opposition, yet we can always be certain of victory and triumph through true loyalty to Christ, our Savior, in all things.

Illustrations.—Use examples from the Book of Acts and early Christian history to show that this hateful opposition did frequently descend on them in terrible fury. Use examples from modern mission history in China, Russia, elsewhere, to show that such opposition still continues.

Outline

The True Christian's Perpetual Victory over Hateful Opposition

I. Why such opposition can always be expected.

A. Because it was manifested so strongly against Christ (vv. 18, 21).

1. Such hateful opposition led to His death.

2. Such hateful opposition meets His followers.

B. Because there is such a sharp difference between Christians and the world (v. 19).

1. Difference of faith, purpose, life.

2. Difference in motives and power.

C. Because sin shows its awful nature in this opposition (vv. 22-24).

1. Sin is hatred against God and Christ.
2. Sin is vicious and ruthless in its expression.

II. Whence perpetual victory is always assured.

A. In maintaining sincere love for Christ (vv. 18, 19).

1. We love Him because He first loved us.
2. We use the means to maintain such love.

B. In full appreciation of the wondrous things Christ has done for us (v. 19).

1. We are chosen by Him for great privileges.
2. We owe all we are and have to His work for us.

C. In truly humble, faithful following after Him (v. 20).

1. It is a rare and distinct honor to do so.
2. It is a privilege to suffer for His sake.

Applications can be direct and practical in terms of the things which are expected of a true Christian and of what a true Christian can expect in His whole life.

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WHITSUNDAY, THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

JOHN 14:15-21

The Text and Its Central Thought.—Meditate on John 14—17 in preparation for the study of this text. Jesus assures the church of His continued presence and victory. Note when Jesus spoke these words and to what special need of the disciples He was addressing Himself. V. 18 offers the key to the text. If Jesus would no longer be present with them in the body, would God still be present with them? He would not leave them "comfortless" (orphans). But how would He come to them? How would He assure them of God's continued fellowship, of His own continued presence in their midst? V. 16 is the answer. He would pray the Father and the Father would give. What? The Comforter! Study ἄλλον and παράκλητον for finer shades of meaning. People ought to understand "Comforter" as well as they understand "Creator" and "Redeemer." Who is the promised Comforter? "The Spirit of truth" (v. 17). "Holy Ghost" (v. 26). "Proceedeth from the Father" (ch. 15:26). Nicene Creed. Can the Com-

forer be recognized? The world can neither receive nor recognize the Spirit of Truth (v.17; 1 Cor.2:14). "But ye know Him" (v.17). How? "He dwelleth with you." In the Word (1 Cor. 1:20,21; 2:8-14; 1 John 4:6). "He shall be in you." Explanation of the Third Article. So, then, while the world cannot see Christ after His resurrection (v.19a), the believers do see Him (v.19b). This does not merely refer to His visible appearances to chosen witnesses. All believers see Him with the eyes of faith wrought in them by the Holy Spirit. The risen and living Christ is really and truly present with believers, and they live in Him. "That I may be His own," etc. With the bestowal of the Holy Spirit will come the knowledge of that marvelous mystical union described in v.20. God and His people living and working in fellowship. Cf. Gal.2:20. Where this Spirit-wrought fellowship exists, there the believers bring forth the fruits of love. The text opens and closes on this note. V.15 approaches the subject from the point of cause (if ye love Me) and effect (keep My commandments). "Keep" may be either indicative or imperative. V.21 treats the significance of the effect as evidence of the indwelling Christ. Cf. J. B. Phillips' translation. Having and keeping Jesus' commandments, especially the precept of love, is evidence of our love for Jesus, which proceeds out of Jesus' love for us. Whom Jesus loves the Father loves. Where that fellowship of love exists, there Christ is manifested.—The central thought of the text: "The gift of the Spirit is our assurance of Jesus' continued fellowship with us."

The Day and Its Theme.—Pentecost commemorates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the New Testament Church. The Epistle (Acts 2:1-13) relates the first miraculous fulfillment of the promise in our text. The Gospel (John 14:23-31), is a continuation of our text and describes especially the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Introit and Gradual both stress the office of the Spirit and the joy which is ours through Him. In the Collect we beseech God to accomplish in us what He has promised us in the text.—The connection between the central thought of the text and the theme of the day is obvious.—As the Spirit dwells in the people of God, "Home and Church Conquer Together," monthly theme of *Parish Activities*.

The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.—We are not alone. God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is really and truly present with us, working in and among and through us.

Sin and Its Fruits to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.—A feeling of aloneness without the visible presence of Jesus. The idea that the church is hardly more than a voluntary association of believers plying

their own way. The denial, in whole or in part, of the living Jesus. Wrong opinions of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. False criteria by which holiness bodies measure the presence of the Spirit. Minimizing the wonderful effect of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.—The gift of the Holy Ghost, who, through Word and Sacrament, makes the blessings of Christ's redemption our own. When we have fellowship with Christ through faith, we have the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Explanation of the Third Article.

Illustrations.—Choose with great care in this particular sermon. Jesus' illustration comparing the Spirit with the wind (John 3:8). Copious illustrations which can be drawn from the Epistle. Orphaned children as contrasted with children who have loving parents.

Outline

The Holy Spirit Is Our Assurance of Jesus' Continued Fellowship with us (We Are Not Alone)

- I. We need such assurance of fellowship.
 - A. The disciples would soon need it (v. 18).
 - B. We need it in a world that "seeth Me no more."
- II. The gift of the Spirit is that assurance (v. 19a).
 - A. Jesus' promise (v. 16).
 - B. The promise fulfilled.
 1. Miraculously on Pentecost.
 2. Through Word and Sacrament in the N. T.
- III. The evidence that we have the gift.
 - A. He dwells among us in the means of grace and in us by faith (v. 17).
 - B. He is at work in us, making and keeping us alive in Christ, in keeping the commandments (vv. 19b, 15, 21a).
- IV. The Spirit assures fellowship.
 - A. Knowledge of the wonderful fellowship (v. 20).
 - B. A fellowship of love (v. 21b).

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