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## Homiletics: Outlines on the Nitsch Epistles

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## HOMILETICS

### *Outlines on the Nitsch Epistles*

#### NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

2 COR. 9:6-15

I suppose your first reaction on hearing these words is: "Another sermon on giving!" Not true! This is a sermon on thanksgiving, not giving. And this is the theme:

#### I. *Your Gift*                      Thanks, God, for Your Gift

A. It's not cash from God; it's Christ, a person. God didn't give us a present from Himself. He gave us Himself as the present. For God was in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:19)

B. This Gift has made us fabulously rich (2 Cor. 8:9). 1. Our riches: God's love, pardon, the pleasures of heaven, the Lord's government and guidance in our life, every imaginable blessing and benefit from on high. These we have 2. only through Christ's poverty (Phil. 2:5-8). He gave up heaven's greatness, gladness, and glory. He lived a life of want and woe, worse off economically than the birds and the foxes. He didn't just lose cash for us; He lost His life on a cross. But don't forget, He found it again on Easter! And because of it you find yourself in God's favor and forgiveness. He became poor for us even to the poverty of hell, so poor that He was even without His Father's presence, protection, and power as He suffered hell, forsaken on the cross.

#### II. *Your "Thanksgiving"*

A. Self-offering must precede wealth offerings (2 Cor. 8:5). You must be a living sacrifice before you can sacrifice your money (Rom. 12:1 f.). And a living sacrifice is dead to sin. You can't even hear sin's promptings and commands, let alone do them. You're dead to sin (Rom. 6:11), but alive to God and godliness. It all happened in your Baptism. (Rom. 6:3-9)

B. Even as you yourself should be a sacrifice, so should be your gift (2 Cor. 8:3). A sacrificial gift is one that hurts! Not leftover dimes and dollars, but the "cream" of your cash. Still your generosity and sacrifice shouldn't cause others to coast (2 Cor. 8:13). The "haves" should ease the burden of the "have nots." Even we middle-class Ameri-

cans have plenty! Not when you compare yourself with millionaires, but surely when you compare yourself with the people in China, India, or even Europe.

C. Your giving proves your love (2 Cor. 8:24). It was that way with God. "He *loved* the world . . . so He *gave* His only Son" (John 3:16). To love is to give.

D. The more you sow, the more you'll reap (2 Cor. 9:6), a fact we recognize and live by in farming. Don't say, "I'd better be careful not to sow too many seeds." No; the more we sow, the more we reap. Yet in our living and giving we reverse the principle and say: "I'd better be careful not to give too much—too much of myself, my time, my interest, my money—for others. If I do, I'll be losing out, and won't have as much, and I'll be poorer for it." That's not true! People who are stingy, afraid to give, are actually making themselves poorer, cheating themselves of greater wealth. For the more you give, the more you get. The only way to "find your life" is by "losing it"—losing it in love for others. Don't be so miserly in "sowing the seeds" of your love and cash. For you're only reducing the harvest of your own happiness!

E. Don't be afraid to give. But you are, because you don't think you'll have enough left over to pay debts and premiums. You and your family will suffer if you give too much. Don't be afraid, because God won't let you down. You'll always have what you need (2 Cor. 9:8-11; cf. Matt. 6:31-33; Mal. 3:10, 11). Dare God to break His promise to supply your physical needs by generous, sacrificial giving! (Mal. 3:10)

F. Give gladly and not with a grudge (2 Cor. 9:7). If yours isn't a glad gift, perhaps you're not giving enough. For as with every other virtue, so it is with giving. The more you give, the more you want to give, and the happier you are in giving.

G. Look what your giving does! It produces praise in others (2 Cor. 9:11), not praise of you or of your gift but of God's grace, which enabled your gift (v. 14). It produces prayer in others (v. 14). Generous giving sparks prayer in the recipients and in those who observe. It produces love in others (v. 14—"they long for you"). Love is aroused only by love.

H. There is only one proper motive. It isn't God's or the church's need. For certainly our selfishness and our failures aren't going to frustrate God's will and plans. Rather it's God great gift to us

(v. 15). We give only because God first gave us Christ, i. e., Himself. Giving out of any other motive is not "thanksgiving." In fact, it's not giving at all. "Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!"

Richmond Heights, Mo.

H. HOHENSTEIN

## TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

HEB. 4:1-11

(Texts from the Epistle to the Hebrews may be difficult to translate into a 20th-century tongue for 20th-century people without a wearisome discourse on the purpose of the writer and the parallels which are drawn between Judaism and Christianity. The hearers' limited knowledge of Old Testament history may be particularly frustrating to the preacher in this text. We therefore approach it at that point which is most familiar to the experience of our people, at the concept of "rest," and expand this concept to the Gospel use of the word. The burden of the text, however, is in v. 7, a quotation from Ps. 95, which is here applied to the Hebrew Christians and which has a timely urgency in this day. The preacher should also clarify briefly the concept "the people of God.")

"Tired old men" is an apt description of this "beat generation." Unrest, high tension, high pressure, psychoses, neuroses, strained nerves—these are the familiar terms of our vocabulary. There is no rest for the wicked, nor for the righteous either. Time is at a premium, and even the people of God have been towed under by the tides of unrest and busy-ness. Everyone is busy: doctors are busy, pastors are busy, the 40-hour-a-week men are busy. But the greatest obstacles to rest come from within, not from without. The obstacles to rest are not the things we have to do, but the multitude of things that disturb us, distress us, and weary us from within. It is not leisure that we need, but rest.

You need the rest!

### I. *God has promised a rest for His people*

A. The "rest of God." We are not speaking of physical rest, the precious bit of treasure that is sleep, the relaxing hours at the fire-side or on the man-made heaven of the backyard patio. Sleep and relaxation and recreation are essential to everyone. But we are speaking of the rest of God, "his rest" (v. 1), "my rest" (v. 3, 4), the rest our Savior promised with His invitation "Come unto Me!" It is the rest of peace with God, freedom from everything that spoils life as God intended it. It is the rest of soul, the peace of mind, the satisfaction of the heart. This is what He promised.

B. God's rest was typified by the Sabbath Day and in the promised rest of Canaan. Before the foundations of the world were laid, God

in His gracious will had resolved upon the possession of a people who would serve Him. This was the intent of creation. His Sabbath of rest was a type of the rest of His people in perfect harmony with Him. And even after the advent of sin the institution of the Sabbath Day for Israel was a type of the rest into which they could enter through the promised Christ. Canaan, too, was a type of that rest, not its fulfillment. (See v. 8, where the AV renders Joshua as Jesus.) From Egypt, where Israel dwelt as strangers and foreigners, through the wilderness, where they wandered restlessly, their goal was Canaan. But Israel never had a restful life in this land of milk and honey. Canaan was but a type.

C. God's rest is vastly more than something earthly. An aged pastor often used Mark 6:31 at the hospital bedsides of patients whose sickness was not apparently unto death, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." For here where life seemed to take a turn into a desert place, there was a rest, the rest of leaning on the everlasting arms, the rest of freedom from the world's distractions, the rest of confidence and trust in Him who is the Author of our every breath and heartbeat, who has redeemed us for His own, and whose every thought toward us is one of love. God has promised us the rest of perfect harmony with Him.

## II. *God has provided a rest for His people*

A. He has provided it for us in Christ. This is the fulfillment of the promise and the type. He is our Sabbath rest. He is our Joshua. He removes all things that hinder rest: the power and guilt and consequence of sin. His invitation is Matt. 11:28.

B. This rest is a present possession of every believer. "For we which have believed do enter into rest" (v. 3). This is not always evident. For many Christians, too, this rest is something quite elusive, a peace that might come tomorrow but has not come yet. This is our mortal weakness, the failure to understand fully the glorious inheritance we have in Christ, the treasure of peace and rest which we possess in coming to Christ. But it is also not always evident because

C. This rest is the future inheritance of His people (see v. 9). In the eternal rest of heaven, our rest shall be perfected and fully realized. Here we shall rest from the struggle against sin, rest from suffering and anguish. Here we shall be perfected in the likeness of God and enjoy in full "the rest of God." (Rev. 7:16, 17; 21:4)

D. This rest is promised, provided, and assured in the Word. This is the means by which the rest which Christ has provided is offered and sealed to us. This is our Gospel (v.2). See also v.12, which follows this text.

III. *And this is the rest you need!*

A. It is the rest for our unrest. St. Augustine wrote, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." We are beset by sin, bent and bowed beneath a load of daily care, weary with the struggle against Satan and temptation. What is there to sustain us but the promise and provision which the Gospel supplies?

B. But it is also a holy unrest for the rest of heaven. It is a laboring, therefore, to enter into that rest. Here cite the example of Israel's unbelief. See vv. 1 and 11 by way of summary. "Let us therefore fear," in reverent, watchful, prayerful spirit! The Israelites had no rest; they were not at peace with God; they perished in the wilderness, and only Joshua and Caleb entered into the rest of Canaan. No rest for you? There remaineth a rest for the people of God, in Christ.

C. And you need the rest. There is only one thing we can do! Tell Him that you need His rest. Tell Him that you are tired, sinful, nervous, burdened, fearful. Tell Him that temptations are too much for you, that you need His help. Then go where He gives it, for you need it.

St. Louis, Mo.

ALTON F. WEDEL

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JAMES 2:8-13

This is a text for Christians. Unbelievers won't find salvation in it. While the unconvinced sinner can be shown the impossibility of saving himself (v.10) and can be directed to the freedom from sin which Christ gives (v.12), the emphasis is on the Christian's keeping of God's Law. Those who have "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.1) want to keep God's Law in a manner that pleases Him.

Do You Wish God's Approval on Your Keeping of His Law?

I. *Then keep His Law without respect of persons* (vv. 8,9)

A. The royal law according to the Scripture—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Royal because of its majesty and pre-eminence, proving our love to God (1 John 4:20) and our discipleship (John 13:35). On it hang all the Law and the prophets (Matt. 22:40). This is our highest obligation to men. (Rom. 13:8)

B. If you show partiality in your love, you commit sin. If you love one person more than another because he is richer, has a better education, is more polite or friendly, or has the same color of skin as you have, you are showing respect of persons. If you love the "favored" person as you love yourself, you are then loving the other "unfavored" less than yourself. Then you stand condemned by the Law, which says you should love your neighbor as you love yourself.

C. Therefore for God's approval keep the Law without respect of persons. This means not only that you love one neighbor as much as another but that you love each as much as yourself. Your own person is included in "without respect of persons."

## II. *Keep the Law in every detail* (vv. 10, 11)

A. The Law of God is a unit (v. 11a). The same God who gave individual commandments gave the summary of the Law as love. (Rom. 13:9)

B. To break one point of the Law makes us guilty of the whole Law (v. 10). The Law of God, although given in ten commandments, is not like ten bowling pins, as though you could knock one down and the rest remain standing. Rather it is like a costly vase, which is shattered when broken at any one point. Any transgression of the Law, even one sinful thought or word, makes you guilty of the whole Law, for you have spoiled the perfection the Law demands.

C. Therefore give attention to every detail of the Law. Guard even your thoughts (v. 11 b), for lustful thoughts are adultery (Matt. 5:28), and hatred is murder. (1 John 3:15)

## III. *Live in the light of the liberty Christ earned for you* (vv. 12, 13)

A. You are to speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of liberty, which sets you free from the condemnation of the Law. "Law" in this verse means entire Word of God (Ps. 19:7; Jer. 31:31-34), which includes the Gospel. "Law of liberty" is the Word of God which gives liberty, the same as "the Word of truth" (Ch. 1:18), which has brought you to faith and "the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls" (Ch. 1:21). This liberty is in Christ (John 8:31, 32). This liberty does not free you from the obligation to keep the Law, but from the condemnation of the Law, which you fail to keep (Ch. 3:2). Therefore speak and act "as free people," who are liberated from the slavery of sin in order that they might freely serve God as those who love Him (Ch. 1:12; 2:5). Being judged by the law of liberty means that Christ will judge your words and actions

on the Last Day as evidences of your faith in Him. Christ's work, not yours, will give you the crown of life and the promised kingdom. (Ch. 1:12; 2:5)

B. Avoid unmerciful judging of your fellow men (v. 13 a). Joseph's brothers showed no mercy; they expected to be judged without mercy (Gen. 42:21). The rich man, who was unmerciful to Lazarus, found no mercy when he asked for it (Luke 16:25). You have received mercy; be merciful to your brother.

*Conclusion:* By now you see that you cannot keep the Law of God sufficiently to meet His demand of perfection. You cannot save yourself by keeping the Law (Rom. 3:20). But as a person who believes in Christ and is therefore forgiven before God, you have here a guide for showing your love to Him who first loved you. Let us spare no effort in serving Him who spared not His own Son to redeem us.

Riverside, Calif.

WM. GRAUMANN

## TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JAMES 1:9-12

A German Christian who recently visited the U.S.A. said to one of our pastors: "Your people have so much—so many comforts, so many luxuries. They have it so good in this world. How can you get them to think about heaven?" It is hard for a rich man to maintain a true sense of values. Material prosperity tends to make a man arrogant and to keep his thoughts glued to the stuff of time, to the exclusion of eternal matters.

We live in a nation of wealth. We live in a land that vaunts its riches. We live in the only country in the world where you could find a magazine article (*Harper's*) titled "Going Broke on \$10,000 a Year." Our text is sobering as it reminds us of

Life's Most Important Consideration: God Has a Crown of Life  
Here is for You and Me

### I. *Ballast for the rich* (v. 10, 11)

A. Although riches tempt a man to fly high and live high, the very fact that the crown of life is associated with temporal death (Rev. 2:10) brings us down to earth and keeps our feet on the ground. It reminds the rich man of the fleeting value of all his earthly goods. (Luke 12:15)

B. The eschatological emphasis of these last post-Trinity Sundays (cf. Epistle: "until the Day of Jesus Christ," v. 6; "Till the Day of



Christ," v. 10) teaches the rich man that someday he and his "flowers" will fade away. (Is. 40:6, 7)

C. Eternal life is not a crown which the high and the mighty can gain by shrewd business operations or clever manipulation of securities. It is a crown given only to beggars.

D. God's children, who are blessed with material wealth—and there have always been some—know that they are "by nature sinful and unclean," wretched and worthless before the all-seeing eye. Introit: "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" They know that they can claim nothing, only beg. This keeps them down-to-earth in their self-appraisals.

E. Christ has made the rich man spiritually rich. He did not come to give us savings but to be our Savior. He came not to raise the interest rate on our savings, but He did give us an interest in a home in heaven. This was no casual transaction. It cost Him!

F. The unmerciful servant of the Gospel is an example of a man who abused his gifts. Though he had received an unusual bonus and great mercy, his love failed to "abound yet more and more" (cf. Epistle) in lowliness. He stands as a vivid warning to the rich man who fails to appreciate all that his heavenly Master has done for him, spiritually and materially. In view of all that God has done for us, how bighearted and forgiving, yes, how constantly biggerhearted, we ought to be, "being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God"! (Cf. Epistle, v. 11)

## II. *A lift for the poor* (v. 9)

A. Even in our rich land, unemployment and poverty are not unknown; there are some underprivileged. Poverty itself is a trial. It tempts to discontentment, discouragement, jealousy, and envy. Yet it need not get us down. The Christian who is poor knows that he has priceless spiritual blessings, and he anticipates a heavenly inheritance. (Luke 1:52; Heb. 10:34)

B. Once there was a little old lady who spent her last years in a poorhouse. Her pastor visited her regularly, and one day she asked him to promise her to have a certain song sung at her funeral. When the end came, the pastor honored her request and took with him a soloist. There were no mourners, but the words of this song filled the room where her simple casket stood:

My Father is rich in houses and lands,  
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands;  
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,  
His coffers are full; He has riches untold.

I'm a child of a King, a child of a King,  
With Jesus my Savior, I'm a child of a King!

### III. Assurance for all (v. 12)

A. To prepare us for the eternal crown, God puts us through the furnace of affliction and tries us. To change the metaphor, sometimes God chops and chips and chisels, but only because He wants to ready us for the crown.

B. In His providence, God would use our present circumstance, whatever it may be—poverty (2 Cor. 8:1) or prosperity (Rom. 2:4) or adversity (Ps. 119:71) to draw us closer to Him, that one day He may officiate at your coronation and mine (1 Peter 5:4)

*Conclusion:* Till we obtain the crown, till God completes the good work begun in us (cf. Epistle, v. 6), it means taking up a cross and following Him. This we gladly do as disciples of Him who wore a crown of thorns and took up His cross for us!

Fairview Park, Ohio

BERTWIN L. FREY

### 1959—1960 SERIES OF SERMON STUDIES

Since the reaction to changes in the format of current offerings in the Homiletics Section was evenly divided, we shall continue to furnish study outlines similar to the present series.

The new series will be the second list of Synodical Conference Gospel selections (familiar to clergy of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod from the *Pocket Diary*):

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Text</i>
November 29, 1959	1 Adv.	Luke 17:20-25
December 6, 1959	2 Adv.	Luke 1:67-80
December 13, 1959	3 Adv.	Luke 3:3-14
December 20, 1959	4 Adv.	John 1:29-34
December 25, 1959	Chris.	John 1:1-14
December 27, 1959	S. a. Chris.	Luke 9:57-62
January 1, 1960	N. Y.	Luke 12:4-9
January 3, 1960	S. a. N. Y.	Luke 13:18-24
January 6, 1960	Epiph.	Matt. 4:12-17
January 10, 1960	1 a. Epiph.	Matt. 10:32-39
January 17, 1960	2 a. Epiph.	John 1:35-42
January 24, 1960	3 a. Epiph.	John 4:1-14
January 31, 1960	4 a. Epiph.	John 4:15-26
February 7, 1960	Transfig.	John 4:27-42
February 14, 1960	Sept.	Luke 10:38-42
February 21, 1960	Sexa.	Matt. 16:13-20
February 28, 1960	Quinq.	Matt. 16:21-23

March 6, 1960	Invoc.	John 15:9-17
March 13, 1960	Rem.	John 15:18-25
March 20, 1960	Ocu.	Mark 10:35-45
March 27, 1960	Lae.	John 17:1-16
April 3, 1960	Jud.	Matt. 23:34-39
April 10, 1960	Palm S.	John 12:1-11
April 14, 1960	M. Thur.	Luke 22:7-20
April 15, 1960	G. Fri.	John 19:17-30
April 17, 1960	Easter	Matt. 28:1-10
April 24, 1960	Quas.	John 21:1-14
May 1, 1960	Mis. D.	John 10:17-21
May 8, 1960	Jub.	John 11:1-16
May 15, 1960	Cant.	John 11:17-27
May 22, 1960	Rog.	John 11:28-45
May 26, 1960	Asc.	John 17:17-26
May 29, 1960	Ex.	Luke 11:5-13
June 5, 1960	Pent.	John 6:60-71
June 12, 1960	Tr.	Matt. 28:16-20
June 19, 1960	1 a. Tr.	John 15:1-8
June 26, 1960	2 a. Tr.	Matt. 11:16-24
July 3, 1960	3 a. Tr.	Mark 10:13-16
July 10, 1960	4 a. Tr.	Luke 17:1-10
July 17, 1960	5 a. Tr.	John 21:15-19
July 24, 1960	6 a. Tr.	Matt. 15:1-9
July 31, 1960	7 a. Tr.	Matt. 15:10-20
August 7, 1960	8 a. Tr.	John 5:30-38
August 14, 1960	9 a. Tr.	John 5:39-47
August 21, 1960	10 a. Tr.	Matt. 21:12-22
August 28, 1960	11 a. Tr.	John 9:1-7
September 4, 1960	12 a. Tr.	John 9:24-41
September 11, 1960	13 a. Tr.	Mark 12:28-37
September 18, 1960	14 a. Tr.	Matt. 12:9-21
September 25, 1960	15 a. Tr.	Luke 14:12-15
October 2, 1960	16 a. Tr.	Luke 20:27-40
October 9, 1960	17 a. Tr.	Matt. 12:1-8
October 16, 1960	18 a. Tr.	Matt. 6:5-15
October 23, 1960	19 a. Tr.	Matt. 6:19-23
October 30, 1960	20 a. Tr.	Matt. 7:24-29
November 6, 1960	21 a. Tr.	John 5:1-9
November 13, 1960	22 a. Tr.	Luke 8:27-29
November 20, 1960	23 a. Tr.	John 7:1-13
November 24, 1960	Thanksgiving	Matt. 6:1-4