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Homiletics: Outlines on the Synodical Conference Gospels Second Series

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HOMILETICS

Outlines on the Synodical Conference Gospels, Second Series

JUDICA

MATT. 23:34-39

The PTR and its effect on the congregation and the community. The Lenten preaching. How is it faring? Really nothing new. We have been preaching, teaching, and reaching through our personal contacts and those of our missionaries, including the radio and TV witness, for many, many years. Does the fact that a spectacular success eludes us serve to dampen our enthusiasm? True, there has been progress. In the aggregate the results are heartening. But defections to the world, militant agnosticism, and resurging heathenism tend to offset gains made. What of those who refuse our witness? We are not out for blood. Nor are we interested in heaping maledictions on those who will not walk with us. But folks must face up to the fact that rejection of the Gospel is a crime and that punishment surely follows. God will judge.

Crime and Punishment

I. *How great the crime*

A. God's wonderful salvation provided freely. (1) The deep depths of man's despair because of sin. (2) The only remedy for sin—God's gift. (3) Nothing man can or need do to receive it.

B. God's salvation offered freely. (1) Old Testament prophets, wise men and scribes. To Abel and Zachariah are to be added Noah, the preacher of righteousness, the prophet Baalam and lesser lights, as well as those generally referred to under this concept. The parish preachers of that day were prophets. (2) Witness of life. Abel's witness seems to have been as much that of his

life as of his words. Hence under this designation we dare not forget the "living epistles" (Zachariah mentioned in the last book of ancient Old Testament. Hence Abel to Zachariah, though Urijah, historically, is much later. Harmonization of apparent contradiction: (a) Luther: Jehoiada had the added name of Barachiah, (b) Chronicles names Zachariah after his illustrious grandfather, Matthew after his father.) (3) New Testament preachers. From Apostles down to our day and on to the end of the world. (4) Through His Son, who never wearied of pleading. Offers salvation once more (v. 39) at the time of the triumphal entry.

C. But men rejected it. (1) Those rejecting are not heathen, but members of God's covenant people. "Pharisees and Scribes" "Jerusalem." (2) Brutal manner of rejection. Were not satisfied as those in Noah's day simply to reject, but viciously "hunted from town to town, flogged in their synagogues, killed, and crucified" those sent unto them (parable of the wicked husbandmen), Peter, Simeon (Eusebius 3, 23), James, Stephen, Paul (five scourgings). Many more. Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*. Blood, blood, blood, was the answer to the Lord's offer of grace. (3) But modern man's rejection of God's grace in the present day as emphatic and as damning though not as brutal. Russia. Modern intellectuals.

D. What effect on us? (1) Redoubling of preaching, teaching, reaching efforts and continuance throughout the year. (2) Holier living. (3) Greater giving for church and missions. (4) More fervent "wrestling with God" in prayer.

II. Punishment

A. God's patience. "Mills of God grind slowly, but nonetheless very fine." Long delay of punishment. Repeated efforts. "*How often*," v.37. 120 years in Noah's case. But the day of grace will end. Examples. Flood, destruction of Jerusalem, end of world.

B. Crime and punishment are cumulative, v.36. "The iniquity of the fathers upon the children," Ex. 20. Failure to profit by previous lessons from history and Scripture brings severe punishment.

C. The punishment is not death or annihilation, though God has used these in the past many times, but "your house left you desolate." Religion and religious exercises devoid of their heart and center, Christ. Man is religious. He has a god, but false god. Failure to heed the call of God results in a religious system devoid of the true religion. Mere superstition. Amos: famine of the Word. The greater punishment.

D. How is it with you? (1) Day of grace still at hand though the long shadows of evening are evident. Are you a believer holding penitently to your Savior? (2) Don't be dissuaded from your God-given task. Let difficulty spur you on to snatch the brands from the burning from among your contemporaries. (3) Take comfort from rejection, since "they so persecuted the prophets before you." Puts you into select company.

San Francisco, Calif.

ARTHUR C. NITZ

PALM SUNDAY

JOHN 12:1-11

"Hosanna; Hosanna! . . . Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Garment-carpeted streets, a sea of waving palm branches, the thunderous shout of the multitude singing the Messianic song, the delightful chorus of children's voices—all these

things give this day a gay, festive air. But in the propers of this Sunday we heard the deep overtones of pathos, of melancholy, of sadness. Again and again we hear the cry of our Savior, pressed from the anguish of hell, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Lamb is about to be led to the slaughter, for evil hands will take Him and nail Him to a tree. Yet on this day there is the definite note of triumph. We hear it come through in the Gradual, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." There will be a congregation. There will always be those who will sing the Palm Sunday anthem, "Hosanna," save now, O my Lord and King. On this festival day our text presents not only those who accepted Him, who came unto them meek and lowly, but also those who would destroy and crucify Him. To bring these two groups vividly into focus to the end that we may ever acclaim Him our Lord and King, I shall weave my remarks about this thought.

The Broken Alabaster Box or the Bag of a Thief

I. Jesus came to establish His kingdom

A. "The Kingdom of God"—this was the New Testament theme. Christ's herald John had come to prepare the way for the King and the establishment of His kingdom. "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." He pointed to the type of king this kingdom would have, "Behold, the Lamb of God. . ."

B. When Christ began His public ministry, He had but one theme, His kingdom. On Palm Sunday He wanted all men to know that He, their King, was coming to them. This week He would openly come out as the King when before Pilate He would regally announce: "You say that I am a King. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness of the truth" (John 18:37 RSV). On Good Friday His

brow would be crowned with cruel thorns. The scepter would be pressed into His bound hands. "Behold, your King!" On Golgotha He would be enthroned on a cross.

II. The people of Jesus' day were confronted with the alternative of either accepting or rejecting this King

A. This King calls for a decision. "He that is not for Me is against Me." The question of Pilate, "What then shall I do with your King?" is inescapable for all of us.

B. Even some human beings evoke either our strongest affection and loyalty or our most intense dislike and animosity. We are either all for them or all against them. With Jesus Christ this is true even to a greater degree. Either you are Saul the persecutor of Christ, or Paul the persecuted for Christ.

C. This is very evident in our text. Either Mary with the broken alabaster box of ointment or Judas with the bag of a thief. Mary of Bethany knew what kind of king Jesus was. She understood what His kingdom was. She knew that He was about to be taken and put to death (v.7). She knew that He was the Lamb of God come to suffer and die for her sins. So did Lazarus, who sat at meat with Jesus. He had experienced at first hand the power of Jesus over the consequences of sin. He was a living proof of that. So was Simon the Leper, who had arranged this banquet. Jesus had freed him from the ravages of sin. He, the erstwhile leper, was clean. The blood of Jesus, he knew, would cleanse him from all sins. So did Martha, who served. She had heard the King say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. . . ." She had stood next to the King as Lazarus was brought back to life. She believed in Him. She, too, would live.

D. If He was the King, then nothing could be spared. He demanded the best. He demanded Mary's all. (The value of the spikenard represented the average earnings for one year.)

E. Judas, in turn, had not accepted the Meek and Lowly One, the One who had come to give His life as a ransom for his sins. Therefore he complained about the waste on such a king. That is why he stole from the King's treasury.

III. We are still confronted with the alternative of either totally accepting the King or rejecting Him

(If confirmation is observed on this day, the preacher will have an opportunity to set before the confirmands the challenge of either breaking the alabaster bottle over the Savior or clutching the bag of a thief.)

A. You can be a Simon, a Lazarus, a Martha, a Mary, or you can be a Judas, a chief priest, a Pharisee. (V. 10)

B. Pray to God that our entire life may ever be an evidence that we have spilled the spikenard of our love and devotion upon Him who is our Lord and our King.

Minneapolis, Minn.

FREDERICK E. GESKE

MAUNDY THURSDAY

LUKE 22:7-20

(The goal of this sermon is that at every celebration of Holy Communion during the year the believer will have a more pointed remembrance of Christ in some particular aspect of His grace and mercy and power and strength and love. Under the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, such Gospel remembrances will enrich his experiences at the altar.)

An old cracked cup on a shelf in the apartment of William Somerset Maugham seems completely out of place. Here is how the British dramatist explains its presence amid the luxuries of his home. During World War II Maugham was in southern France when France fell: He was one of a group of British subjects herded into two small cargo vessels. The passengers were crowded and tense, food and water were scarce, and enemy

submarines were all around. The big moment of each day came when the skimpy supplies were doled out. Then that cracked cup held Maugham's daily allotment of water. Now, in his apartment, it says, "Call to remembrance the former days." That cup brings him back to earth when he starts taking too much for granted. Tonight a cup stands on our altar. It's not a cracked cup; rather, a cup that is precious in more ways than one. It, too, is a reminder—not of privation but of plenty, the plentiful riches and bounties of God's grace. As we prepare to drink from that cup and eat the bread that goes with it, our text urges us:

Remember the Lord, Who Remembered You

I. *In preparing our salvation God remembered everything that was necessary*

A. From eternity God gave attention to every detail in arranging for the banquet of eternal salvation. His plans reached their climax when His Son became our Passover, sacrificed for us (vv. 15—18). Holy Week holds before our eyes this glorious Gospel truth, which is brought into especially sharp focus in the night He was betrayed.

B. One night long ago the Lord graciously "passed over" certain houses in Egypt, but He passed over no detail in preparing our salvation.

C. There is only one thing that He does not remember: our sins. (Ps. 79:8; Is. 38:17; 43:25)

D. Following the pattern of being "mindful of us" (Ps. 115:12), our Lord, on the first Maundy Thursday, gave attention to every detail in arranging for a meeting place where He would eat the last passover with His apostles. (Vv. 7—13)

E. He also remembered, in the foot washing (cf. Gospel), to give us an example of true humility, the kind of humility that should mark our relationship to Him and

our approach to His altar as well as our relationship to one another.

F. Looking across the years, Jesus remembered that His apostles and we would soon tend to forget a Lord that cannot be seen. So He accommodated Himself to our earth-bound ways, and recognizing our need for something tangible to remember Him by, He gave it to us. Tonight we celebrate the institution of this heavenly meal and thank Him for His thoughtfulness in leaving us this ongoing reminder and assurance of His love for every single one of us. (Vv. 19, 20)

II. *In communing at His altar, we should remember everything that Christ has done and all He is and means to us* (vv. 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:25)

A. It is impossible at each Communion to remember all or even most of the many different representations of Christ in the Scriptures. However, it is good that we do more than just remember that He died for us. Some communicants never seem to get beyond this consideration. To be sure, in our communing we do always proclaim our faith in His atoning death. We also agree that it is impossible to overemphasize the significance and importance of that death. Nevertheless the Bible does tell us other things about Christ. We are to remember Him in these other connections also.

B. The Gospel and sermon on each festival or Lord's Day present Christ in some particular light and stress some special aspect of His life or love or work. Remember *that* about Him as He meets you at His altar. E. g., on Easter Day, as I commune, I remember that it is my privilege to take right into my own person the same body and blood that Joseph and Nicodemus once laid on the cold slab of the garden grave. But it is a living body, for on Easter morn He rose victoriously out of the tomb. This is the same Christ who by the miracle of the sacrament would

live and dwell with me, the same Christ who would be the Lord of my life through all eternity. Alleluia!

(Include other examples of linking the presentation of Christ in the Gospel for a given day and doing "this in remembrance of" Him. Use the post-Easter Sundays. The same Christ who was patient with Thomas is patient with me and imparts to my body the same body that Thomas was privileged to handle; the Good Shepherd gives me His body and blood beneath visible forms as evidence of the fact that I am one of the straying, silly sheep for whom He gave His life—this I remember as He says, "given into death for you . . . shed for the remission of your sins." Bearing in mind how much of this procedure will be helpful to his particular flock in achieving the goal of the sermon, the pastor can at his discretion continue or cut off this procedure.)

C. If we follow these suggestions, our Communion remembrances will actually become more studied and deliberate and happier receptions of His many-sided grace. Let there be no misunderstanding. These are remembrances triggered by the Holy Spirit and the promptings of the Word. Our remembrance does not make the sacrament or improve the meal as such. Christ alone makes the sacrament. His Word alone gives it power. He alone has the gifts to offer. At this meal He is always the Host. I am His guest, invited by boundless grace. But the guest who is dull and listless and indifferent, who has his mind fixed on only one part of the banquet, is going to miss many of the fine offerings of the Host.

Whenever you come to His festive board, make it a point to remember the Lord, who has so graciously remembered you. Remember, the very Christ who spoke to you in the oral Word would now strengthen and enrich you with the "visible Word." He would keep you spiritually strong and healthy so that the prayer of your dying hour might be, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy

kingdom." Be sure of this, His thrilling answer to that prayer will be, "Today thou shalt feast (!) with Me in Paradise!"

Fairview Park, Ohio

BERTWIN L. FREY

GOOD FRIDAY

JOHN 19:17-30

(Fifteen hundred years ago Bishop Ambrose of Milan ascended his pulpit and said: "I find it impossible to speak to you today. The events of Good Friday are too great for human words. Why should I speak while my Savior is silent and dies?" He could not do justice to the event. Neither can we, and yet we must preach on this theme, for it is the heart of the Gospel message of God's love and man's salvation.)

A year ago the most infamous Nebraskan of the last decade, Charles Starkweather, was scheduled to die on Good Friday. He was reported to have killed 11 people during his "mad dash to freedom." While the killer was still loose and body after body was being found, doors and windows were locked, guns and weapons were tested, and sleep was light and fitful among the people living on the great plains. The killer was tried and sentenced to death. However, Charles Starkweather didn't die on Good Friday. He was granted another reprieve because 1930 years ago, on another terror-filled Friday, Christ died. Without regard for due process of law, men basing their actions not on justice but on personal hate, vengeance, pride, and prejudice,

They Crucified Him

I. *They*

A. The chief priests (v. 21; Matt. 26:59—chief priests, elders, council). The spiritual leaders of Israel crucified Him. When the 11 top Communists were tried, Judge Harold Medina sought to give them a fair, honest, and unbiased trial. Involved in the trial were nine months of time, 50 witnesses, 761 exhibits, 5 million words, and 21,157

pages of testimony. The total cost was one and a quarter million dollars spent on these avowed enemies of the United States. Jesus' trial was "history's most infamous trial." Among illegal and unlawful actions committed were beginning the trial at night; holding court on Friday (day before the Sabbath) and before a high festival (Passover); denying the benefit of favorable witnesses; conducting a trial and pronouncing sentence of capital punishment on the same day; calling known false witnesses; condemning the accused before trial, etc. And still they crucified Him.

B. The soldiers carried out the crucifixion (vv. 23, 24). The earthly possessions of the condemned were divided among them. They crucified Him as they were commanded by Pontius Pilate, but the blame lies not only on the chief priests and elders, on Pilate, and on the soldiers.

C. We crucified Him. Our sins, too, sent Him to death. Our guilt helped hammer the nails. The iniquities of the inhabitants not only of Jerusalem but of every Jerusalem today—of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Omaha—caused His death by crucifixion. All people had a hand in the scourging, torture, and crucifixion. His blood is also on us. He took our sins with their deadly curse, their painful punishment, and bore them in His own holy body. Christ died for us. (Isaiah 53, Epistle)

II. *Crucified*

A. They crucified Him on Golgotha, the place of the skull (v. 17). At grim and gory Golgotha we realize the crushing power of sin. The terrifying weight of transgressions was so heavy that God paid the highest price in all human history, the death of His own Son. What an ugly mountain of sin was heaped on Golgotha! Yet only on Calvary does the Savior's love and mercy completely overshadow and cover that ugly mountain of sin. From Calvary shines forth the full

brightness of God's love. On Calvary sin was vanquished. The bonds of iniquity were broken. Complete forgiveness and final victory were won. On Golgotha Satan's skull was crushed. They crucified Him on Golgotha, but He won the great battle.

B. He died willingly when they crucified Him. He died for you. Is your heart heavy with hatred, with strife and selfishness, with spite and jealousy, with pride and envy? Stand beneath the cross. Fall on your knees, and ask forgiveness. Look up to Him who was crucified. Accept this marvelous truth, He died for me! Your sins against neighbor, family, self, conscience; your sins of soul, mind, and body; your sins of hands, hearts, and lips—all are forgiven. On Calvary, "heaven's highest Love" took your place, and He removed your sins from you. They crucified Him, but He died for you.

III. *Him*

A. When they crucified Him, they crucified God. Above Him was the title "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (vv. 19-22). When they took Him captive, and He replied, "I am He," they fell back helpless to the ground. Though crucified between the two thieves, naked and terribly alone, mocked and ridiculed, He who died was the Christ, the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews. "Let these go!" was His command in Gethsemane. "Let these go!" is His command in every hour to sin, death, devil, and hell. And they obey, for He is God, the Almighty, the King of kings.

B. He finished His redemptive work (v. 30). The cross, an adornment for us, was an accursed tree, stained with His lifeblood. Crucifixion was a most inhuman means of execution, designed to make death as painful and as lingering as possible. Finally the agonizing hours came to an end. The price was met. He walked the last mile, suffered the final agony, and then cried out, "It is

finished." You need nothing more than Him for your redemption.

Cling to Him. He beseeches you, "Come unto Me." He assures you, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Come, receive forgiveness for your sins, comfort for sorrows, strength for weakness, light for a darkened pathway, and hope for all tomorrows. Accept His invitation for pardon here and Paradise hereafter. Amen.

Omaha, Nebr. ELMER E. MUELLER

THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

MATT. 28:1-10

(Easter itself can be a pitfall for the preacher. The temptation to scold about church attendance and Easter finery is no small one. The preacher would do well to avoid this completely and stick to the great proclamation. Another pitfall of Easter preaching is the attempt to marshal rational proofs for the resurrection. The Easter texts offer none. But the New Testament is freighted with evidence and signs that God did raise Jesus from the dead. Someone has said they are the "craters left by the explosion" of the resurrection. These are discerned by the gift of faith, and they are decisive to the Christian faith and witness.)

The Gospel changes people. This is obvious in the disciples of our Lord as they appeared after the resurrection in contrast to their behavior before. Why? Because the resurrection was decisive. It should be so for us. Let us re-examine how

The Resurrection of Our Lord
Cheers Us and Compels Us to Action

1. *The news of the resurrection of our Lord is cheering news that God has performed salvation for His people*

A. God gives witness to salvation by a dramatic sign in the cosmos. (1) An earthquake is a sign of terror to the unbelieving. Guards are terrified by the earthquake and the signs of the Holy One (vv. 1-4). These

signs create terror, anxiety, fear of death. Really fear of God's wrath. So it is in the old order, under sin and death. (2) An earthquake is a sign of redemption to the believing. Jesus had enumerated earthquakes among the cosmic signs of the last days (Luke 21, Matt. 24). Last days are to hold no terror for the believer. The believer is to take comfort that God has accomplished salvation for His people (Luke 21:28). God has radically changed the old order. We are to take comfort. We live in the new aeon. Nothing should hold terror for us. God has provided salvation in the risen Christ.

B. God gives witness to salvation through a Word. (1) The empty tomb in itself is not convincing testimony. Guards and officials are entrenched in their unbelief (vv. 11-15). The women expected something different (v. 5). Mary Magdalene not convinced by the empty tomb (John 20:5). Our doubts, too. Natural and normal. (2) The Word contains the revelation that God raised His Son. At the tomb (vv. 5, 6): "As He said." (v. 7): "I have told you." This is revelation from God. The tomb becomes a sign through the Word. Thus we also recognize and discern the risen Christ in Word and Sacrament.

C. God gives witness of salvation in the resurrection appearances. (1) The mode of the appearances is not clear. Apparently not to unbelievers. Appears to be some change. Difficult to recognize. Yet discernible in His Word (vv. 9, 10; Luke 24; John 20). Our ability to discern the Christ by the same Word. (2) The purpose of the appearances is clear. To dispel fear (v. 10). Fear which grows out of our sin and guilt. Fear of punishment of death. To give assurance. "My brethren." The adoption of sons. To proclaim victory. To share life with God. "They shall see Me" (John 14). Paul's use of appearances in 1 Cor. 15. This peace is ours.

II. *The news of the resurrection of our Lord is news that compels us to share this Gospel with others*

A. Those who discern the resurrection of our Lord must tell others. (1) The command is given. V. 7: "Go quickly and tell." V. 10: "Go tell My brethren." No options. (2) The world needs this Word of hope. Imagine the despair of the brethren. Not only for our Lord. For themselves. Hopes crushed. So many faiths and hopes go begging for a word of victory from the grave. Here it is. Share it.

B. Those who discern the resurrection of our Lord will tell others gladly. (1) This is no ordinary hope for a future life. This is not Socratic or Platonic. Not the story of a "beautiful death." Think of our funeral parlor talk. Not a wishful dream of immortality. This is the resurrection. Our hope (Rom. 10:9). He has become the First Fruits of them that sleep. (1 Cor. 15:19, 20). Also contains hope for final consummation. The risen Christ comes again (v. 20). (2) This is no ordinary hope for the present. Life comes by death. Women witnessed the price for the empty tomb—Calvary. We come by this new life by Baptism (Rom. 6). Thus we must daily die to sin. But in Christ we rise to newness of life.

The resurrection Gospel is the story of radical change. God has reversed the old order that we might live in the new.

He is risen! Let us take heart. Let us go quickly and tell.

Palos Park, Ill.

HARRY N. HUXHOLD

QUASIMODOGENITI

JOHN 21:1-14

We read in the papers that politicians like to have "breakfasts." During these "breakfasts" important discussions sometimes take place, and notable figures confer.

Imagine having breakfast with Jesus. After the resurrection the disciples enjoyed such a breakfast. Important discussions took place, and certainly notable persons conferred—our Lord and the apostles. Breakfast is a good time to review and verify the events of a previous evening. Our Lord used this breakfast as one of a number of occasions and "appearances" to corroborate His recent resurrection. Breakfast is also a good time to plan the coming day's work. Jesus used this breakfast to help prepare the disciples for their work in the immediate future. What Jesus wanted to teach the disciples we also need to learn. We therefore do well this morning to join in spirit our Lord and His followers in this

Breakfast with Jesus

I. *Jesus wants to make His disciples sure of the resurrection*

A. Jesus wants to make His disciples sure of the resurrection (vv. 1, 14). The Eleven were slow to believe (Matt. 28:17). The terrible Good Friday experiences were not yet forgotten. The Holy Spirit had not yet been fully poured out on them. There were doubts. Cf. today's Gospel, John 20:19-31, the incredulity of Thomas. Jesus made many post-resurrection appearances. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15)

B. The disciples had returned to their accustomed trade (v. 3). They acted as if the cross had been the end of the Lord's potential Messiahship. They were returning to their occupations as fishermen. For all the power of the message of Lent and Easter we act the same way. We are slow to believe and are settling into the same rut we were in before Ash Wednesday, before the great news of Christ's redemption was again vividly portrayed for us.

C. The Lord shows the futility of returning to old ways without recognizing the meaning of His death on the cross and the resurrection (v. 3). The attempt to return to the fisherman's trade was a fiasco. The

fishing was fruitless. Just as futile is our life if we are not "baptized into His death" and, "as Christ was raised from the dead," walking in "newness of life." (Rom. 6:3,4 RSV)

D. Jesus convinced His disciples in a loving and tender way (vv. 6, 7, 12). He performed a miracle and produced a great draught of fish. He invited them to breakfast on the beach. Doubts were erased (vv. 7, 12). Similarly He operates among us with the tenderness of His Word and the miracle of the Sacrament of His body and blood.

E. The renewed recognition of the living Christ produces enthusiasm for the Lord (v. 7). Impetuous Peter leads the way. The post-Easter season is a time for high level enthusiasm, not a returning to old ways. Cf. the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau's "Easter to Pentecost Church Attendance Crusade."

II. *Jesus wants to prepare His disciples for their work*

A. Jesus wants to prepare His disciples for their work (John 21:15-19). The catch of fish could remind them of their appointed

task as "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). The narrative which follows the text is part of the account of this breakfast and is an important discussion of the disciples' future work.

B. Our chief duty in the church is the same as the work of the original disciples. We are to feed His sheep and lambs. We are to be "fishers of men." We are to show the living Christ to men.

C. The great catch of fish might direct us to the returns that can be expected from carrying out the Lord's appointed work (vv. 8, 11). We can at times toil all night and end up with nothing. But when the miracle of the Spirit works through the Word there is a harvest. Parallel: Is. 55:10, 11. This breakfast was one of Jesus' last intimate contacts with His earthly followers, but He left a promise: Matt. 28:20.

Apply the two purposes of Jesus' breakfast with His disciples to our lives in this post-Easter season. We need this instruction just as desperately.

Delmar, N. Y.

HAROLD W. SCHEIBERT