

Sermon Notes on Jn. 7:40-52, Trinity XIX

1. Read the whole chapter. This took place at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall only six months before Jesus' death. There is much confusion about the identity of Christ. His brothers did not believe in Him (vs. 5). The multitude had various ideas about Christ. He's good, vs. 12. He misleads the people, vs. 12. He has a devil, vs. 20. No one knows His origin, vs. 28. He is the Prophet, vs. 40. He is the Christ, vs. 41. Won't He come from Bethlehem? vs. 42. This cursed multitude knows nothing, vs. 49. Paul reminds us that unbelievers are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." II Tim. 3:7. True preaching about Jesus often brings confusion but it's of man, not of God. However, midst all of this confusion there were true believers who identified Christ because of His miracles, vs. 31. Twice Jesus cried out, vss. 28 and 37. He cried: "The Father in Heaven sent Me to give your thirsty souls the everlasting water of life!" He also cried out twice on the cross. The first when He suffered hell for us, Mt. 27:46, and the second when He willingly handed His soul to the Father in death, Lk. 23:46.
2. Likewise today there are many, many opinions about Christ. Read Mt. 16:13-20. If we can make the true confession with Peter, vs. 16, Jesus blesses us as in vss. 17-20. The Father in heaven revealed the identity of Christ to us. Many false Christs will deceive many, Mt. 24:5. In the last time the Antichrist and also many antichrists will appear. I Jn. 2:18. We must make sure we are following the true Christ.
3. In vss. 16-24 Jesus is dealing with the Jews and the multitude. When He is accused of having a devil He refutes this false charge by speaking about His divine origin and His teaching. In vs. 21 He speaks of the one work of healing the lame man (Jn. 5:16) which happened two years before. He tries once more to justify healing on the Sabbath. If a child was born so that the eighth day fell on a Sabbath, they would circumcize. Why, then, should the Jews be angry because Jesus healed the whole body of a lame man? Their anger did not even make good sense. In vss. 25-30 Jesus is dealing with the Jerusalemites on the question of His origin and the divinity of His person. All they wanted to do was to arrest him. Cf. also vss. 32 and 44; 8:20; 10:39; 11:57 and 5:18. They treated Him like a criminal. In vss. 31-36, perhaps on another day, Jesus is again dealing with the multitude many of whom, because of His miracles, came to faith in Him. This angered the authorities who sent officers to arrest Him. Jesus warned them that He was about to return to His Father, to suffer, die, rise and ascend but the authorities were blind as to what He meant. In vss. 37-44 we find Jesus on the last day of the feast. He makes every effort to save the multitude. There are four reactions: 1) He's the Prophet; 2) He's the Christ; 3) A Galilean can't be the Christ; 4) Some wanted to arrest Him. Vss. 45-52 deals with officers, authorities and Nicodemus. The officers did not arrest Him because they were deeply impressed. The authorities, totally confused and angry, condemn the multitude for its ignorance. But Nicodemus, who had become a Christian, reminds the authorities that a man should not be condemned without a fair trial.
4. At Jn. 4:10-14 Jesus speaks of Himself as the life-giving water which saves people. But in 7:37-38 Jesus speaks about the effect of the Gospel on people after Pentecost. Ever since Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been causing rivers of living water to flow from Christians to benefit the world. For example, the three creeds, the Apostolic Word, the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) declared that the One Christ has two natures, one divine, one human, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably. These are examples of what Jesus meant by "rivers of living water". And Christians are still giving forth rivers of living water because the Holy Spirit through the means of grace produces them. The rivers of living water are caused only and always by the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament.

Theme: JESUS' COMING CAUSES DIVISION

Introduction: Jesus says at Lk. 12:51: "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. This does not contradict Jn. 14:27. What causes the division? The blind sinfulness of man. Jn. 7:43; 9:16 and 10:19 give us examples of this division which the coming of Christ causes. Jesus tells us about this so that will not be offended because of Him. He says: "Blessed is he who is not offended of Me." Mt. 11:6.

I-THIS DIVISION AND ITS CAUSE.

A-A description of this division. Jn. 7:11-10:21 tells us of Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles only six months before His death. Three times this section speaks about division among people because of Jesus. See 7:43; 9:16 and 10:19. Jesus' person, Word and miracles caused division. It caused grumbling, 7:12. It caused amazement, 7:15. It caused anger, 7:23. They wanted to arrest Him, 7:30. It caused fear of the Jews, 7:1. It caused stupid remarks, 7:35-36. It caused the officers not to obey the chief priests and Pharisees, 7:45-47. It caused the Pharisees to curse the common people, 7:48-49. Read Lk. 12:51-53. This division occurs in families. Members of the family fiercely oppose each other. Read the book of Acts. Wherever the Apostles preached, division followed. Satan causes this division. Lk. 8:12; Mt. 13:24-30.

B-The cause of this division. Why did Jesus say: "Blessed is he who is not offended of Me"? Because not Jesus but sinful man causes the division. Even Jesus' brothers, on this occasion, did not believe in Jesus. 7:5. Had He failed them? No, they failed Him. Why were the people grumbling about Him? 7:12; 7:32. Because they could not agree on Who He was. They had wrong opinions. Why were some saying that Jesus misleads the people? Because they were of the devil. Mk. 1:23-24. Why did the people fear the Jews? 7:13. Because the Jews did not believe that He was the Son of God. Why were the Jews puzzled about His teaching? 7:15. Because they did not believe that He came from heaven. Why did they reject the miracle of Jn. 5:16, referred to in Jn. 7:21? Because the commandments of men meant more to them than Jesus' Word. What caused the division? The sinfulness of man.

II-HOW JESUS REACTS TO THIS DIVISION

A-He loved them to the end (Jn. 13:1). Why does I Jn. 4:8 and 16 say: "God is love"? Because He was sent so that man could find life. Man did not love Him but He loved man and gave Himself as a payment for man's sin. I Jn. 4:10. He who remains in the love of God, God remains in that person. I Jn. 4:16. The more the people rejected Him and were divided because of Him, the more He loved them. He even prayed for their forgiveness while He was being crucified. He was despised and rejected of men (Is. 53:3) but He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows (Is. 53:4). Our text today is a good example of how Jesus truly loved people when they were divided over His identity.

B-His love caused Him to cry out to His people. Read vs. 25-29. The first time He cried out to identify Himself to them: "You know Me and where I've come from. I did not cause Myself to come. The One Who sent Me is genuine and true." Read vs. 37-39. The second time He cried out to them offering them the Water of Life which would cause rivers of water to flow out from them.

C-What this reaction caused. Many believed in Him. Vs. 31. Some said: "This is THE Prophet." Cf. Deut. 18:15. Some said: "This is the Christ." Vs. 41. The officers were very impressed by what He said. Nicodemus who had very likely become a believer defended Him. See Jn. 3:1; 7:50-51; 19:39. The Word of the Lord does not return void. Is. 55:10-11. God always preserves a remnant of believers in this hostile, confused sinful world. Rom. 11:5. God assured Elijah that 7000 had not yet bowed the knee to Baal. Let us not be offended in Jesus!

Sermon Notes on Mt. 9:1-8, Trinity XIX

1. This passage is paralleled ^{at} Mk. 2:1-12 and Lk. 5:17-26. For the first time in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus calls Himself "the Son of man." (The reference to "the Son of man" at Mt. 8:20 follows Mt. 9:1-8 chronologically.) This term was used of Jesus prophetically at Dan. 7:13,14 and Ps. 8:4. The divine nature of Jesus gave His human nature divine powers. Therefore Jesus says in all three accounts: "The Son of man (true man) has authority on earth to forgive sins." This proved that this man, Jesus, was true God. Furthermore, this God-man, Jesus, later gave the church the authority to forgive sins on earth. See Mt. 18:18 and Jn. 20:23. This is what Lutherans call The Office of the Keys, the fifth chief part in the Catechism.
2. In vs. 2 of our text we read that Jesus "saw" the faith of the four men who brought this paralyzed man to Jesus. In vs. 4 we read that Jesus "saw" the thoughts of His accusers. This shows the omniscience of Jesus, the God-man. Neither the bearers nor Jesus' accusers had said anything.
3. Jesus knew that their thoughts were wicked. He was holy. The wicked scribes and Pharisees had come from Jerusalem to Galilee (quite a trip) to trap Jesus. They had blasphemous thoughts. They denied that He was true God. Therefore, when He gave forgiveness of sins, they accused Him of blasphemy because only God can forgive sins.
4. As often, Jesus employed logic, not Scripture, to answer His enemies. He asks them: "Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Arise and walk'?" He does not say: "Which is easier FOR ME?" but simply "Which is easier to say?" Both are equally difficult. Only God could make a paralyzed man walk. Only God could forgive sins. Jesus had already forgiven the paralytic his sins. Jesus' enemies ^{see} could not see that with their eyes. But they could the man get up and walk. Very likely these Pharisees and scribes did not believe the miracles. In Jn. 9 Jesus healed a blind man. In Jn. 11 Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. In neither case did Jesus' enemies believe the miracle. They rejected it. But in all three cases the common people rejoiced and praised God. Only the Gospel can create faith. But miracles assist the people who are weak in their faith. Read Jn. 2:11. But, most important of all is the fact that Jesus first forgave the paralytic's sin. Sin is the cause of all evils. "Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." Jn. 1:29.
5. The four men who brought this paralytic to Jesus worked very hard. First, they had to carry him to the top of the house. Then, they had to make a hole in the roof right over Jesus to let the sick man down in front of Jesus. Their faith in Jesus caused them to do this. Vs. 2 says: "Jesus saw their faith." They believed in Him.
6. Jesus healed this man very personally. In vs. 2 He said: "Your sins are forgiven." And vs. 6 says: "He said to the paralytic." Jesus deals with each one of us personally.
7. Mk. 2:6 tells us that Jesus' enemies were sitting. We know that it was a crowded room because the four men had to let down the paralytic from the roof in front of Jesus. Evidently these Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem considered themselves important and therefore were allowed to sit while others stood. They had come a long way to spy on Jesus.
8. Jn. 1:11-13 reads: "He came to His own but His own did not receive Him. But as many as did receive Him to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of a man but (were born) of God." People become Christians only through conversion which is a gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man. But man can resist this work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' enemies refused to believe in Him. Many of the common people did believe in Him. It is still so today.

Sermon Outline on Mt. 9:1-8, Trinity XIX

Theme: THE SON OF MAN'S REACTION TO THE THOUGHTS OF HIS AUDIENCE

Introduction: The preacher should study also the parallel accounts at Mk. 2:1-12 and Lk. 5:17-26. Jesus had returned to Capernaum. One day He was teaching. In His audience were some Pharisees and teachers of the Law who came from Jerusalem to spy on Him. While Jesus was speaking, five believers approached Him, one carried by four. They came to Him through the roof because the room was crowded.

I-THE SON OF MAN'S REACTION TO THE THOUGHTS OF FIVE BELIEVERS

A-The five believers. Four men carried a paralyzed man to the roof and let him down in front of Jesus. The text says that Jesus saw their faith. That must mean all five men. Not only did their actions prove their faith, but also the Son of man could look into their hearts. None of them had said anything. But He knew their thoughts. Jesus' divinity gave His humanity the power to know all things. We know also from the text that the Son of man had special care for the helpless.

B-What He did for them. He said to the paralyzed man: "Cheer up, my son, your sins have been forgiven!" The faith of this helpless man received the most important gift, a spiritual gift, the forgiveness of sins. *man* → The text does not say that his paralysis was a punishment for some particular sin. God permitted this sick man to come so that He could prove to people who Jesus was. Did all five men receive forgiveness of sins? Very likely they did. All of them believed. All of them received His help.

II-THE SON OF MAN'S REACTION TO HIS ENEMIES

A-The enemies. From the three accounts in Mt., Mk. and Lk. we know that these Pharisees and scribes had come eighty miles from Jerusalem to spy on Jesus. The room was crowded but these enemies were seated. The people respected these leaders and therefore gave them seats of honor. But they had evil hearts. They thought: "This man (Jesus) blasphemes. He makes Himself God. He claims He can forgive sins." But Jesus said to them: "Why do you have evil thoughts in your hearts?" First He tells them plainly about their sins. Then He asks: "Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Rise up and walk'?" Both of these are equally difficult and only God can do them. Then He gives them proof: "So that you might know that the Son of man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." He wants them to believe in His forgiveness of sins. Why did He command the paralytic to walk? To prove to His enemies that He was their Savior from sin.

B-What was their reaction? The three Gospels do not tell us how Jesus' enemies reacted. When Jesus healed the blind man (Jn. 9) and raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11) Jesus' enemies would not accept the miracle. They denied that He was the Son of God, the Son of man, the man whose divine nature gave Him the very power of God. We do not know what Jesus' enemies thought, and said on this occasion. But the text is written for us. What do we think?

III-THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE

Mt. says: "They were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to man." Mk. says: "They were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'" Lk. says: "They were all seized with astonishment and began glorifying God, and they were filled with fear, saying 'We have seen remarkable things today'." The purpose of miracles was to show the glory of Jesus' divinity (Jn. 2:11). Miracles helped people believe in Jesus. Conclusion: Here we see Jesus, the author and completer of our faith, the one who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases. Let us glorify and thank Him and live for Him Who died for us!