

Concordia Theological Monthly



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ARCHIVES

HOMILETICS

Outlines on the Swedish Gospels (Alternate Series)

SEPTUAGESIMA

MATTHEW 19:27-30

May a follower of Jesus expect a reward for what he has done in the Lord's kingdom? Like Peter we do at times come with the question: "What shall we have therefore?" The situation in our text repeats itself again and again today. We consider therefore

The Rewards of Following Jesus

I. *See what these rewards are*

- A. Some believe them to be honor and prestige, freedom from trouble, and material blessings. This thought is evident when the child of God faces difficulties and cries out: "Why did this happen to me? I've always tried to be a Christian and to do what is right!"
- B. Jesus points to the rewards the followers of Jesus will enjoy
 1. in heaven with Him.
 - Sharing His glory and exalted position (v.28). The disciples will enjoy this position in special degree, and all Christians in lesser degree. (This does not refer to a millennial reign on this earth.)
 - Inheriting everlasting life, the greatest of all blessings (v.29 b.)
 2. but also on earth (v.29 a). The rewards for following Jesus we enjoy not only after death but already now on this earth. "We shall have fathers and mothers and brethren and sisters and house and home in the Church of God. If we forfeit the friendliness of the world, we gain the friendliness of God and of the children of God; if we lose our earthly property, we receive the blessings of grace; if we are deprived of peace with men, we win that peace which passeth all understanding." — Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, p.456.
We have these blessings also mentioned in Matt. 12:48-50; 1 Tim. 6:6; and Ps. 37:16. The word *hundredfold* points out that these rewards are bountiful also on this earth.

Application: What an encouragement to forsake all and follow Jesus! The devil, the evil world about us, and our sinful flesh would have us believe that following materialism is better than following Christ with the sacrifices entailed. Here Jesus in His love encourages us to be faithful in following. When we become discouraged and perhaps envy the lot of the nonfollower, we turn to this word of Jesus for encouragement.

II. *Remember that these rewards are by grace*

A. Note the words of Jesus in which He describes the kind of following which enjoys these rewards.

—“Followed Me” and “for My name’s sake” (v. 29). These words point out that the works which receive the reward have the motive of serving Christ. Any motive other than Christ eliminates the reward. We do the works out of love for Christ because of what the Savior has done for and to us, not out of the desire to gain and to earn.

—“Inherit everlasting life” (v. 29). To inherit something implies that we have not earned or merited it. Thus the everlasting life is something given, not earned, by grace and not by merit.

—“Receive an hundredfold” (v. 29). So great is the reward that we must realize that it is by grace too, even as our condition as God’s children is by grace (Eph. 2:8-10).

B. Note the warning “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (v. 30). If ever we come to the position of pride and arrogance in our work for Christ, if we come to think that we deserve greater honor because of what we have done, we may have been leaders in the eyes of men, but we shall be so far in the rear in the eyes of God that we shall not even enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

While there are indeed rewards of grace for following Christ and we rejoice in the encouragement we receive, yet we avoid coming to think and believe we merit anything thereby.

Salvation is truly by grace for Christ’s sake. Even the rewards we receive for following Him come from His grace and love.

SEXAGESIMA

MATTHEW 10:2-16 (read vv. 7, 16)

Theme of the Service is the Word of God. The regular Gospel for this Sunday gives what is essentially the fate of the Word of God as it is sown in a variety of hearts. We might think, then, of the regular Gospel, which emphasizes the different kinds of hearers of the Word. Often criticisms are made of preachers; here we have a critique of the hearers, and it should be noted that there is real emphasis on "good and honest hearts." The regular Epistle shows us one of the greatest sowers of the Seed recounting his personal experiences in performing this task, which had been committed to him by the Lord. The work is difficult and points up by way of application what we have in our text (v. 16). But the work is done because of the grace of God given a Paul. It must be done by us and for the same reason and in the same power and dedication.

Our text gives us what we might consider:

Instructions for Missioners

I. *The missioners are chosen and sent by Christ Himself*

- A. The choosing is reflected in the choosing of the Twelve (vv. 2-4). These apostles were twelve men specially chosen by Christ to do a specific task. Unless there be some sort of recognition similar to this, the missioner is hardly a herald because he has nothing to proclaim; he is not a sower because he has no seed to sow and no field where to sow it. Perhaps much of the weakness in this area is failure to see oneself as chosen by Christ for this same kind of modern sending.
- B. Christ chooses in order to send forth (vv. 5, 16). This is what makes missioners: they are people with a mission. When the mission is recognized as coming from Christ, the degree of obedience is determined by the relationship with Christ. In this sense we are like Christ: "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you."

II. *The mission is established by Christ Himself*

- A. Christ always sends to a specific group (vv. 5, 6). In our text those immediately at hand were the first concern. Later the mission would be broadened to include all men. There is, of course, the special privilege of the Israelite involved here

and also emphasized by Paul in Romans. But it would not be a mistake to insist that

1. The mission is always to a specific people and not just to people in general and thus to no one in particular.
2. The mission had better begin at home, or it will not get very far.
3. The mission had better have a very direct aim for each sending, or it will fizzle into nothing.

B. Christ has only one message for His missionaries (v.7). This message has not changed over the years. It was the message of the prophets of old, of John the Baptist, of our Lord Himself, of His apostles. Missioners with this message stand in a great tradition: they tell of the rule of God in Christ. Here the full Gospel must be proclaimed, and here also is the power for winning missionaries to go out on Christ's mission.

C. Christ Himself provides the power in which missionaries go (v.8). It would not pay to enter into a lengthy discussion of whether this identical power is available today. But it should certainly be noted that when Christ sends He also empowers. The power that we need today for the performance of our mission comes from the same Christ and is ours as surely as what was bestowed in v.8.

D. Christ sends missionaries for God's glory and not the missionaries' gain (vv.9,10). It should be pointed out that the concern to make provisions for every kind of imaginable exigency is failure to trust in Christ who does the sending. But it should be specially noted that Christ speaks here also of gain, that missionaries should not go with any kind of self-seeking attitude. Anyone who first asks what he gets out of it is an unprofitable servant.

III. *The mission is accomplished when Christ is obeyed regardless of results*

A. The missionary is to speak peace (v.12). The missionary is not first to determine the worthiness. He speaks his message of peace, the Gospel of the Kingdom at hand (v.7). And this speaking of peace is the actual bestowal of the peace, not merely a pious wish, because it is by the command and the power of Christ.

- B. Where the peace is received there is real blessing on the house (v. 13).
- C. Where the peace is not received, there it returns (vv. 13-15).
In no instance is the effort wasted: the missionary himself is always blessed in speaking peace. The judgment upon those who do not accept is all the greater because the privilege is greater than before the peace was spoken.

Mission work is not always regarded as the most desirable work, but since we were chosen by Christ and sent by Him whom we own Lord, we have no choice. But what glory to do what He did and to finish His work! We are wise as serpents because in faith we know what we are doing, and we also know the outcome, regardless of what men might throw up against us. But it is never in arrogance, Satan's approach to man, but in simplicity and harmlessness, in the Spirit of Christ, whose Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove. In this manner v. 16 can become a kind of conclusion to the whole sermon.

Minneapolis, Minn.

WM. A. BUEGE

QUINQUAGESIMA

JOHN 12:20-33 (read 23-28)

During Lent we take a journey with the suffering and dying Savior. The Gospel for this day bids us turn our faces toward Jerusalem, the scene of Christ's Passion. This text tells us that the hour had come in which the Son of Man would die with the weight of the world's sin upon Him. It was His darkest hour. The mystery of it will not be fully understood until we stand in heaven with all the fruits of His Passion about us. How does He bring glory out of suffering, life out of death, triumph out of trial, victory out of defeat, and the crown out of the cross? We do not have to know how, but we do believe He does.

Like the Greeks of our text, we would see Jesus again in His Passion and death. We would learn from Him there is

No Glory Without Price

- I. *The price of our glory was the road of suffering Jesus walked for us* (v. 23)
 - A. This road began for Him at birth and continued to the moment of His death.

1. It involved the suffering of humiliation through the incarnation. He had to leave the glory of heaven to enter human life and live as our substitute.
 2. It involved rejection throughout His ministry (Is. 53:4). This rejection did not leave Him unmoved (Luke 19:41). He was even rejected by His country, His coreligionists, and His friends (Mark 8:31).
 3. It involved the suffering of compassion over the needs of people.
 4. It involved His Passion; the agony of a body whipped and broken; the agony of a soul forsaken and alone.
 5. It involved the greatest of all suffering—His death as the Prince of life. This death was His glory. The pall of Good Friday was essential to the glory of Easter.
 6. More than once He was tempted to take another road. Cf. temptation in wilderness and prayer in Gethsemane.
- B. This road was the only means of glory for us (v. 27).
1. Without His willingness there would be no redemption (John 10:18).
 2. His death alone could produce the fruit of the living church. He died that we might have life. This truth is confirmed by the analogy of a seed dying to produce fruit (v. 24).

While we cannot add to what He has done, the constraints of love and gratitude and obedience make requirements of us before the fullness of glory is experienced.

- II. *The price Jesus paid for our glory requires we walk the road of suffering with Him and for Him* (v. 25)
- A. Our very coming to faith involves the suffering of humiliation through repentance. Confession of guilt is not easy.
 - B. Through faith in Him we enter into His suffering and death (2 Cor. 4:10, 11). We are crucified with Him (Gal. 2:20).
 - C. We are also to die to sin that we may be alive unto God (Rom. 6:11; 1 Peter 2:24).
 - D. In all of our Christian life we must renounce ourselves that He might be glorified and that we might share His glory (Col. 3:3, 4).

- E. The price of glory involves the pain often associated with Christian service. We pay the cost of discipleship. "If any man come after Me, let him take up his cross."
- F. It involves cheerful acceptance of our share of personal trial (Job. 1:21; 2 Cor. 4:17). Such trial is often the springboard God uses to bring greater triumph (1 Peter 5:10).
- G. The very fact that we follow Christ often means rejection, consciously or unconsciously by others (Matt. 10:22; Matt. 5:11).
- H. Like Christ, we are often tempted to seek an easier road. The temptations which engulfed Demas are ever around us. There is no detour from the Way, no relaxation in the fight of faith that leads to eternal life.
- I. It is only through repentance and suffering of every sort that glory finally comes. Through trial to triumph is the life Christ wills for us. "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Glory."

Let us employ Lent properly, renewing our faith in Him who suffered to achieve glory for us. In Him we find the secret of victorious living, victory over sin, victory over self, victory over suffering, and the final victory, which brings our glory. Through Him we are enabled to face our suffering and know of the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Baltimore, Md.

GEORGE H. SOMMERMEYER

INVOCAVIT

LUKE 10:17-20

Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness moves us to ponder the horror of the devil's work. We too are subject to his conspiracy (Eph. 2:2). But that story, as well as today's Epistle, holds before us not simply the power of the opponent, but the victory of him who trusts in the Victor. Our trials are to lead us not simply to ponder our sad plight, but to rejoice in Christ's triumph.

Our Joyful Victory over Satan

- I. *We rejoice in victory through Christ's name*
 - A. The Seventy rejoiced in mastery over the devils (v. 17). The special efforts of Satan in the days of Christ.
 - B. Their joy was sensible, for they saw that they were victors through the name of Christ (not simply their speaking "Jesus")

as a magical formula, but their trust in the meaning that Christ had for the forces of Satan; Jesus' corroboration [v. 18], a statement of the program of His redemptive mission).

- C. That victory is ours too. Cf. John 16:11, the Spirit's ongoing demonstration of power over the devil because of His work in those who believe in Jesus' redeeming work. (Rom. 16:20)

II. *We rejoice in the marks of this victory*

- A. The vanquishing of the devil's reign revealed itself in many tangible proofs among men (v. 19).
- B. This demonstration goes on to the present moment. The new converts of our church in New Guinea and their pageant signaling their repudiation of demonic forces. The conquest of the symptoms of sin even in a materialistically advanced civilization, as sin itself is conquered.

III. *But let our rejoicing be true*

- A. It may be tainted with self-indulgence and selfishness.
1. The Seventy rejoiced in their power over demon forces; hence their prestige earthlywise. This was the heart of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, that He should be given control over men as a ruler and hero but still be subject to the archdemon. Conquest of the demons is of little worth if the inner heart is still turned to self.
 2. Thus the temptation besets the church today to rejoice in its apparent victories, its amassing of the best people, its guarantees of physical comfort.
- B. Our Lord wants us to rejoice in His rule.
1. His counsel to the Seventy (v. 20). Heaven is the domain of God's rule; that names are written there means that men are under that rule. He wants His disciples to be grateful, not simply for freedom from Satan and from the discomforts of his rule but for allegiance to the new authority of God.
 2. This new freedom and allegiance is Jesus' to give by virtue of His fulfilling the Father's plan of conquest through vanquishing the devil and bringing men forgiveness of sin (John 8:31-47). Note the clash between Father and Satan in this account of the redemption, and preach the Savior's work to the goal of giving the hearer the joy of having his

name written among those who owe allegiance to God and live under His reign.

Jesus the Victor over Satan. But not in isolation; that was only in the wilderness. Now as the incarnate Word He rides to victory at the head of all His saints. (Rev. 19:11-20)

He's by our side upon the plain,
With His good gifts and Spirit. . . .
The kingdom ours remaineth.

St. Louis, Mo.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER