

# Concordia Theological Monthly



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# HOMILETICS

## *Outlines on the Nitsch Epistles*

### SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ROM. 10:11-18

There was once a universal language. Sin caused the confusion of tongues. Unsuccessful attempts have been made to produce once again a universal language in order that man not only might easily communicate with all peoples of the world but also might, particularly through one language, establish a feeling of brotherhood (Esperanto). In the beginning there was only one race. I don't suppose we shall ever know how the various races came into being. There are those, however, who feel that the time will come when at least in the United States we shall through intermarriage have but one race. The efforts to establish a world government, one culture, and one economic system. Communistic ideology. No matter what language you speak, of what race or nationality you are, there is one glorious, universal force that can unite all people. It is the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### The One Glorious, Universal Religion

##### *I. There is one universal need*

This burden of man's universal need was Paul's chief concern. God has concluded all men under sin, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is no difference. Whether Jew or Gentile—those who have had the divine revelations or those who have lived with nothing more than their natural moral instincts and sin-tainted conscience—all alike stand in the need of salvation.

##### *II. There is only one way of salvation*

A. V.11: The Scripture-substantiated religion knows of but one way of salvation for Jew or Gentile, namely, through Him who alone is the Truth, the Way, the Life, Christ Jesus, our Lord. His salvation is universal in character.

B. This salvation is by grace alone and is appropriated only by faith in the Savior. (V.9)

### III. *The saving faith is very simple*

A. A sincere, childlike confidence and trust.

B. Such faith will always find expression through joyful confession of the mouth. This faith is not complicated or abstract. It is centered in a person, Christ Jesus, crucified and resurrected.

### IV. *This faith is produced through preaching of the Word*

A. This faith is not bestowed on sinful men through wishful thinking. It comes as a result of a joyful proclamation of the saving message. Through the preaching of this Word the Holy Spirit bestows the faith.

B. It therefore behooves those who have the faith to confess it boldly that by such confession others might be led to the same faith.

C. This is the church's mission.

### V. *It is obvious, therefore, that this salvation is for all*

All are sinful. All are loved by the same Lord, with the same love, even unto death, the death of the cross. There is only one way of appropriating this glorious salvation—faith. There is only one way that the Spirit of God operates in the hearts and lives of all men—the glorious Word. There can be but one conclusion—the glorious, universal religion is for all without distinction.

*Concl.:* A. How comforting this must be to all of us! Not one of us is excluded from the saving grace in Christ! Salvation is for all who call upon Him, Jew or Gentile, white or colored, etc.

B. Such a glorious, universal religion must be a powerful uniting bond. It wasn't easy for Paul, with a long Jewish tradition of isolation, prejudice, and feeling of superiority, to come to this conviction. As a typical Pharisee he, too, felt that every Samaritan has a devil. As the heir of generations of teaching he despised every Gentile, making the word synonymous with "sinner." And yet this glorious, universal religion of God's impartial love in Christ made him lose all feeling of racial or social prejudice. Today every Christian must once again rethink, restudy, reapply, and reappraise the one glorious universal religion.

Minneapolis, Minn.

FREDERICK E. GESKE

## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

1 TIM. 1:12-17

Going to talk about sin and grace today. That topic too prosaic, dull, uninteresting? You can afford to let your thoughts make hasty exit from the church, for you have heard this topic propounded so often before? Not at all! You need to learn, better and better, how to deal with sin, the number-one enemy of your soul. And you need to understand better and better the greatness and the glory of the grace of Christ, for until you have grasped the magnificence of His mercy, you have not learned half of the fullness of the love of God for you.

## Where Sin Abounds, Grace Abounds Much More

I. *Sin needs to be dealt with*

## A. It needs to be acknowledged

1. Paul was sensitive to sin. Could not forget his sins, even after Christ had forgiven them. V.13a: "Blasphemer": railed against Christ; spoke against the name of Christ. "Persecutor": "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1). "Injurious": insolent; treated others outrageously and spitefully. — V.15b: "Chief": foremost. — V.13b, no excuse. Merely means by these words that he had not committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. — Compare also Eph. 3:8, where Paul, acknowledging his sin, calls himself "less than the least of all saints."
2. We need a sharpened sense of sin. Acknowledge sin, like Paul. Many have such a faint sense of sin. Modern man gives sin a more attractive title: inhibition, complex, perversion. Sin due to evolution (it is said), to the legacy of the jungle, for which man cannot be held responsible. Not even a sense of guilt today in regard to gross sins. When will men acknowledge a sense of sin in regard to "lesser" evils: unkindness, pride, the unforgiving spirit, failure to do our duty to those who pay us to do it, the neglect of the suffering, causing the weak to stumble? — Need to acknowledge sin. Need to acknowledge like Paul: I have been a man of unclean lips, of vengeful temper, of mean envy, of base desire. Need to make a perfectly honest, manly claim to our sins and say, "I did it." When we thus deal with sin — ready for the Gospel and its powerful grace.

## B. It needs to be brought to the Cross

1. Only one thing to do with sin after acknowledging it. Confess it, repent of it, take it to the Cross. Paul did.
2. Only one way out for us: penitence, confession, forgiveness. Ps. 51:17.

II. *Grace needs to be understood*

## A. Paul knows it well and talks about it

1. "but I obtained mercy" (v.13). Paul never could get over that overwhelming fact.—Note the "before and after" contrast brought out in this verse.—Here compare today's Epistle (Rom. 6:19-23), which also describes the "before and after" in a Christian's life.—So astounding is the mercy of Christ that, despite his dark past, Paul is appointed by the Lord to service in the holy ministry, v. 12. (Cp. Eph. 3:8b)
2. "grace . . . was exceeding abundant" (v.14). Grace had to stretch far to reach Paul the persecutor.—Eph. 1:7 ("riches of His Grace"); 2:7 ("exceeding riches of His grace"); Phil. 4:19 ("according to His riches in glory"). Cp. Ps. 108:4; Micah 7:18.
3. "faithful saying" (v.15). The all-important saying is announced, like heralds announcing the approach of an important person. And what is this all-important pronouncement? Grace for sinners!
4. "all long-suffering." Grace, magnificent grace, is slow to anger and suffers long (Is. 48:9; 54:8; Joel 2:13). Compare the long-suffering of God with the people before the Flood. Also see Luke 13:7-9.—This long-suffering, Paul says, is a "pattern" (v.16b). Future believers are to see in Christ's dealings with Paul the exact pattern of the long-suffering which they might expect for themselves.

## B. Paul sings about it

1. Doxology (v.17); Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:21).
2. We do well to extol the glory of God's grace. Stand in awe of it: sinners, yet obtaining mercy! Sing the praises of His love, Rev. 1:5b,6. (This quote also serves as the *conclusion* to the sermon.)

## EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ROM. 11:11-21

(Purpose of the sermon: To show that we must maintain a high personal appreciation of our salvation so that it may have a proper effect upon our attitude and life.)

How much is it worth? What is its value? These are questions which we are asking all the time in countless ways and about countless things in our daily lives. Many things we discard and cast aside because we no longer see or appreciate their value. From time to time our sense of values has to be straightened out and realigned. It gets all lopsided and distorted. New and different values intrude to crowd old values into the background. The things which we value have a tremendous effect on our lives. They influence our attitudes and our conduct.

True as this is in the field of the material and transitory things in life, it is much more true in the field of spiritual things, particularly those things essential to the salvation of our souls. How much do we really appreciate the fact that we know that there is salvation for us? What price tags do we really place on the things which go together to make us sure of our salvation? How do these things influence our attitude and conduct from day to day? It is thoughts such as these which should engage us in relation to the text before us. Perhaps we can set forth the strong truths which the apostle Paul here presents when we discuss the theme:

## The Highest Evaluation of Our Personal Salvation

I. *Are we sure that our personal salvation is as valuable and important to us as it should be to all men everywhere?* (Vv. 11-14)

A. God's deep concern involves and includes all men in the plan of salvation. God could not, and would not, exclude or leave anyone out. Unless we take the same attitude that God takes toward all men, we cannot have the proper evaluation of our own personal salvation.

B. Paul's great personal objective and goal in life was to be instrumental in bringing salvation to as many as possible. He was concerned about the Gentiles as a "special messenger" to them. Still he employed every agency and opportunity to bring salvation to his own people, the Jews. Unless we keep in mind that our highest Christian objective in life must always be to bring salvation to men everywhere, we really do not have the highest appreciation of our own salvation.

II. *Are we sure that we have personally shared in all its rich benefits?*  
(Vv. 15-20)

A. There is no question but that the blessings of salvation available for all really belong to each individual believer. Actually we should always feel that God would have provided salvation in its perfection, with all its benefits, if we personally had been the only sinners on earth.

B. We should constantly think of all the benefits which salvation has supplied so that we remember its source in the grace and love of our God in Christ Jesus. We have reconciliation. We are holy. We have laid hold upon the riches of divine grace. Surely we should give the most earnest thought each day in our lives to the personal manner in which all these benefits have come to us. This should keep our evaluation of our personal salvation at the highest level.

C. We should never lose sight of the means which God has used and employed to make these things available to us personally. Paul interprets the manner in which the Gentiles had received the benefits of salvation in the light of what God had done to make that possible. A Christian should ever and always think earnestly of the things which have come to pass in his life to give him the benefits of salvation which he enjoys so that he may be sure that he really possesses all these things as his very own. We treasure our own personal possessions most. The personal assurance that salvation really belongs to us leads to high evaluation.

III. *Are we always very deeply concerned that it shall not be taken away from us?* (Vv. 18-21)

A. It was taken away from the Jews at Paul's time. Unbelief took hold of them. They trampled salvation in Christ underfoot. They resisted the Holy Ghost. The cross was a stumbling block to them. How easy it is for faith to change to unbelief! What forces there are round us all the time to corrupt our faith into rank unbelief! We see much evidence of the fact that people who once believed did not appreciate their salvation enough to be on guard against those things which could take it away from them.

B. We ought to maintain a spirit of real humility so that we may not take any credit for the things which make us what we are. The danger of pride and boasting are always present in us. We like to look at others who have lost what we have and boast about the reasons which make us what we are. Boasting, pride, self-righteousness—

these are the things which change our sense of values when it comes to salvation.

C. We should never lose sight of the stern attitude of God over against those who have received the blessings of salvation at His hand but do not appreciate them. He wants all to be earnest about keeping salvation. He doesn't want anyone to treat it with disrespect or lack of appreciation. Take heed lest He "spare not thee." When we look at our salvation from God's vantage point we ought to maintain an earnest spirit of appreciation of God's grace and ever place the highest value on it.

*Concl.:* When we prize something we show it even in small things. How does your life and mine show that our own personal salvation is our chief and deepest concern? Much opportunity for practical applications here at the end drawn from the three parts.

St. Charles, Mo.

ERICH V. OELSCHLAEGER

#### NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ROM. 11:25-32

O Christian, View the Jew Without Pride!

##### I. *Know his mystery and have hope (vv. 25-27)*

A. *The mystery that Jews will be converted until the end of the world.*— Paul devotes Rom. 2; 3; 9—11 to the Jews. He is interested in them and does not want the Gentiles to feel proud over against them. Here he reveals the mystery that Jews will be converted until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, which means to the end of the world. Hence there will be Jews until the end of the world. (Luke 21:32.) No doubt Paul speaks of mysteries because people were acquainted with the mystery religions. His mysteries were always revealed ones. The mystery that Jews will last until the end of time and that some of them will be converted is strange. Lewis Brown, in *How Odd of God*, describes this as follows: "We Jews are very few in number. We make up less than one hundredth of the world's population. Yet . . . we seem to glut the earth; you see and hear of us everywhere. And this obtrusiveness on our part disturbs you . . . It is strange enough that we should have been able to survive at all. But that we should have actually thrived — that smacks of black magic."

B. *The hope this mystery gives.*— It is not useless to do mission work among Jews. In *The Relations of Christians and Jews in Western*



*Civilization*, 1958, Reinhold Niebuhr says there really is no difference between Jews and Christians. He says Christians should stop trying to convert the Jews. He has lost hope. Arthur U. Michelson was once a prominent lawyer and judge in Germany. He and his wife were converted to Christianity. He had been a strict Jew. He came to this country and established a Hebrew-Christian Church in California. He started broadcasting over the country and won many Jews to Christ. Jacob Rosenthal was converted to Christianity, and his wife left him. A New Orleans Jewish butcher almost killed him with a meat cleaver. But he himself helped win over 500 Jews to Christ. There are as many Jews brought to Christ proportionately as Christians are made out of Gentiles. We believe the "all Israel" in v.26 supports this hope. It refers to all those who will be saved, not to the conversion of the entire nation. That means many Jews will yet be saved. May we not neglect Jewish missions.

## II. *Know his blessing and be thankful (vv. 28, 29)*

A. *The blessings of the Jews.*—It is admitted there are many vices among the Jews. They bring discrimination upon themselves. They often construe love to mean only love to fellow Jews. But they have great blessings (cf. Rom. 3:2; 9:4,5). Christ came from them. Among them are chosen ones. They had, and have given us, the Law and the promises. Edersheim, the great commentator, was a Christian and Jew. So was Neander, the church historian. Paul says the Gospel is meant for them, too. God can never repent of these blessings. The Jews may turn from them, but they still are there for all who penitently receive the Gospel.

B. *How these blessings should develop thankfulness.*—Thankfulness is a vital, Christian virtue. We learn thankfulness from the Gospel. We learn it also from Jews who believe.

## III. *Know his mercy and be repentant (vv. 30-32)*

A. *How God shows mercy to Jews and Gentiles.*—God had mercy on Gentiles through the disobedience of the Jews. Now the mercy of the Gentiles brings the Gospel to the Jews. We do not bring the Gospel by discriminating against them or by emphasizing their vices and curse. One reason the Jews are so hard to convert is the lack of mercy on the part of the Gentiles, the discrimination and persecution inflicted on the Jews.

B. *Importance of repentance in our attitude to the Jew.*— We must repent of our sins against the Jews. God has concluded all in unbelief; both Jew and Gentile. That should make us repent instead of being proud. We show unbelief when we despise the Jews. In Spain there are Jews who have been Christians for centuries and yet are discriminated against. They are called *marranos*, "swine." They had to wear special badges in 1562 and were kept out of the universities in 1630. Jews know of this. No wonder they do not want to become Christians. We win them by mercy.

Too often our dealing with Jews is along lines of tabloid thinking. We want to put them in a certain category because that is easier for our mind to do and we find it appeals to our pride. Instead, we should treat them with mercy, thankfulness, hope, as individuals. They can be saved.

Caldwell, Idaho

WALTER LANG