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BOOK REVIEW

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HOMILETICS

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY OF THEM HE CHOSE TWELVE

LUKE 6:13

Propers for the Day

Today's Epistle (1 Cor. 12:1-11) speaks of the gifts of the Spirit. The context of spiritual gifts is that of Christ's body and "within our community God has appointed, in the first place apostles . . ." The Gospel (Luke 19:41-48) bids us remember that the treasures of His grace are not to be kept to ourselves as men would do in "a robbers' cave," but they are to be shared in a "house of prayer for all nations."

Introduction

There were precisely twelve tribes in Israel and there were precisely twelve disciples. Not eleven nor twenty. In Jesus the life of God's people is to be constituted as it once was. The relation to the number of first Israel is clear. (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30)

Of Them He Chose Twelve

I. *Jesus Did the Choosing*

A. Moses did as he was told. Jesus acts on His own authority. This is His kingdom, His church, His body. "To receive you is to receive Me, and to receive Me is to receive the One who sent Me" (Matt. 10:40). They are *His* disciples.

B. They are not "volunteers." He chose twelve "from among them." They were not only "disciples," that is, "followers." They were "apostles," that is, the sent ones. He bids all men to follow Him, and whoever comes He will not cast out. He needs workers in His kingdom, but everyone has his assigned place, his spiritual gift. We need pastors, but it is God who sends them. "The crop is heavy, but the laborers are scarce; you

must therefore beg the owner to send laborers to harvest his crop." (Luke 10:2)

C. God's choice is not always man's choice. Seven of the twelve had previously been called to be followers. Of the remaining five, three remain obscure. Two are better known (Thomas and Judas). Two of them were "untrained laymen" (Acts 4:13). One of them was a publican (Matthew) and another a Pharisee (Paul). Two of them were doubters (Philip and Thomas). And the biggest surprise is that the disciples' choice of a replacement for Judas is one who is forgotten in the record, but God chose one who "labored more than all put together." God's choice is seldom man's. It is by Spirit, not flesh and blood!

II. *The Choice Is Twelve*

A. Here is the "new Israel," the founding fathers, the first workers, the first council.

B. They are different in background and personality, but they are one. Even when one betrays, they are still known as "the Twelve." Their unity is their Head. They are not "zealots only" nor "publicans only." Their company is not "for saints alone." Any church that becomes restrictive has lost its Head.

III. *They Are His "Apostles"*

A. Christ sends us. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself . . . as if God were appealing to you through us: in Christ's name be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:19). God in Christ, Christ in disciples, disciples as His ambassadors, fathers of the new people of God.

B. They shared in distributing bread and fish in the wilderness. They sow the seed of His Word. They participate in His work. Whether Barnabas, Andronicus, Junias, Silvanus, or Peter or Paul, they are "sent men" whose power is from Another.

C. Two things they did together as apostles. They saw the risen Lord. They partook of the Lord's Supper. We as His present-day disciples and apostles witness to His resurrection. We rejoice in His presence.

D. We not only know about Him but we know Him. In His presence and with His power we are knit together with one another and with Him. No power can lay hold of our lives, for we are His. We are with Him and one with Him.

17:13; Matt. 26:49; Mark 9:5; 10:51; 11:21; 14:45)

D. He looked upon His ministry as an anointed prophetic one. Luke 4:14: "Armed with the power of the Spirit . . . He taught." John 18:37: "My task is to bear witness to the truth. For this was I born; for this I came into the world."

II. *Prophet's Work Begins at the House of God.*

A. Judgment begins "with God's own household" (1 Peter 4:17). When the people of God said, "We have Abraham for our father," John the Baptizer answered, "Already the axe is laid to the roots of the trees." (Luke 3:9)

B. A church is a family of God's people, the *communio sanctorum*, that is, the place where the holy ones are communicated with holy things by the Holy Spirit. The church is committed to proclaiming and to listening to the Word. As the pastor's work begins in his own home (1 Tim. 2:4, 5), so a prophet's work begins in the church. Jesus came first for the Jews, first for Israel.

C. It is difficult for the prophet to speak to his own. Cf. Matt. 18. Later they may honor (Luke 11:47), but now they persecute the one who speaks of love and of loyalty to God's truth. Jerusalem feels it is the "Holy City." It becomes the "robbers' den" instead of "a house of prayer for all the nations" (Is. 56:7; Mark 11:17). The "leaven of the Pharisees" (Luke 12:1) had added burden upon burden.

D. The parable of the supper and the observations at the meal show the prophet's work is to teach of God's kingdom. The parables of the lost coin, lost sheep, lost son — all stress that God's people ought not wait for the coin or sheep or son to come back, but to go out, search, find.

The prophetic work of the church today is to proclaim that God looks for acts of mercy as well as sacrifice; that life is more

THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

CHRIST IS PROPHET LUKE 13:33

Introduction

Christ's mission has been described as that of Prophet, Priest, and King. In Old Testament life certain offices were bestowed with ceremonial anointing. Kings (1 Sam. 16:3; 1 Kings 19:16; Ps. 105:15), Priests (Ex. 30:30; 40:13), Prophets (1 Kings 19:16; Is. 61:1).

Christ was a fulfillment of Old Testament predictions in that He was a Prophet (Deut. 18:15-19), Priest (Ps. 110:4), King (Ps. 110:1, 5, 6; Ps. 2:6; Ps. 72:8, 9, 11). In the next three sermon outlines we deal with these three offices and their message to the church today which continues His work.

Christ Is Prophet

I. *Christ Is Recognized as Prophet*

A. He claimed to be a bringer of God's message (John 8:26-28; John 14:10-24; John 17:8, 26). He is God's first (John 1) and last Word (Heb. 1).

B. People recognized Him as prophet. (Matt. 21:11, 46; Luke 7:16; Luke 24:19; John 3:2; John 4:19; John 7:40, 41)

C. He is addressed as "teacher" and "rabbi." (Luke 5:5; 8:24, 25; 9:33, 48-49;

than possessions; that the love of God requires that we both know Him and do His will.

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY
AFTER TRINITY

CHRIST IS KING

JOHN 6:15

Background

Today's Gospel (Mark 7:31-37) is another of His "signs," that is, demonstrations of His kingly authority. The Epistle (2 Cor. 3:4-11) demonstrates not His kingdom of power (as does the Gospel) but His kingdom of grace. His rule has a greater splendor than that of Moses, for Jesus rules His church and builds His church by grace through Word and Sacrament.

Introduction

The contrasts between Christmas and Calvary:

1) A *king*, Herod, inquires of *scribes* where Jesus is to be born. A King's vicar, Pilate, refers to that Manger-Child grown to manhood, "Here is your king." And they respond, "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:15)

2) Swaddling *clothes* are exchanged for kingly robes. Manger of *straw* for reeds for His back and thorns for His head. *Animals* of stable for beasts around cross.

At Gabbatha they seized Him to make Him a mock king, but in the background of our text they "meant to come and seize Him to proclaim Him king." for He had fed the thousands with the miracle of the bread and fishes.

What *we* do with Him is now more important than what they did.

Christ Is King

I. *Full Acknowledgment of His Kingship*

A. His Kingship is prophesied in the Old Testament (Gen. 49:10; Ps. 2:6; 45:6, 7;

110:1, 2; et alias.) Even more than in these "royal" psalms, the Davidic hope of royalty is proclaimed in Is. 9 and 11, Micah 5:1 ff. Christ is the King of the new Israel.

B. Jesus taught much about His kingdom. Miracles displayed His power, even as the feeding of 5,000. Many miracles of Old Testament displayed God's power in punishment; most of Jesus' miracles displayed His power in love and grace.

C. Even though some then and now did not recognize His kingship, "His is the primacy over all created things" (Col. 1:16). "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow — in heaven, on earth, and in the depths" (Phil. 1:10). "He is the Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14). When heavenly voices shout: "The sovereignty of the world has passed to our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever!" then it is that others echo: "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, sovereign over all" (Rev. 11:15-18). The Kingship of Christ, now acknowledged by some, then will be fully acknowledged.

II. *Full Acceptance of His Kingship*

A. "Even the unclean spirits submit" (Mark 1:27). Cf. Matt. 12:22-28 — against Satan He is king.

"Preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). His fame spread through the whole of Syria; He cured all manner of illness. (Vv. 24, 25)

His presence and authority is in His church. (Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:21-23)

"All who are in the grave shall hear His voice and move forth . . . to life . . . to hear their doom." (John 5:29)

B. Because of His kingship over sin and death we are not under the dominion of death, nor should we let sin reign in our body. (Cf. Rom. 6:9-14)

Like Nathanael (John 1:49), we only partially recognize His kingship. Nathanael recognized only part of His knowledge, but

there is more to His kingship than partial knowledge. There is more to Jesus' kingship than the miraculous feeding. Jesus is King not merely to fill our jewel boxes with rhinestones, to heal our cut fingers or broken dolls. His kingship is over Satan, sin, sepulchre. He wants our full acknowledgment of His kingship in all of our needs and desires.

Conclusion

Let each incident of His power and provision make you aware of His kingship. Pledge loyalty and obedience to Him, King of power, of grace, and of glory.

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

CHRIST IS PRIEST

LUKE 23:45

Propers

The covenant is the basis for the Introit's plea that we are His sheep. The Gospel (Luke 10:23-37) of the Good Samaritan underscores that love must be boundless. Thus the Epistle context (Gal. 3:15-22) points out that God's boundless love is "extended to the Gentiles" and that God's love, our inheritance, is not bound by a "temporary measure pending the arrival of the 'issue.'" God's promised blessing is given to those who in faith accept Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Within two weeks (Sept. 27) the Jewish New Year begins, and 10 days later (Oct. 6) is the Day of Atonement. In synagogues Micah 7:18-20 with Jonah 1:1—4:11 will be read in the afternoon, and Is. 57:14—58:14 in the morning. But the most important lessons of the day, read from the Torah, will be Lev. 16 and 18. These lessons speak of the first Day of Atonement and its ritual of the two goats. The high priest by this rite announced "at-one-ment" and reunion of God and man.

We have even more clear lessons of atonement through Jesus Christ.

Christ Is Priest

I. *Within the Veil*

A. The high priest entered within the veil to make atonement for the priests and for the people. (Lev. 16:11-14, 15-22)

B. Christ needed no cleansing for Himself. He was without sin. (Heb. 7:26: He has no need, for He is "devout, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners.")

C. The scapegoat (KJV) was thereupon delivered to the wilderness, "outside the city wall," and the high priest announced, "Ye are cleansed." Within the veil he has sprinkled the ark of the covenant with the blood of the sacrifice.

D. We need reconciliation because we were "enemies in heart and mind, and our deeds were evil." To present ourselves before God, "without blemish and innocent in His sight," (Col. 1:21, 22) we need to enter the veil with the blood of the Perfect Sacrifice.

II. *The Veil Is Torn*

A. Christ's life was one of suffering: birth, childhood; estrangement in family and nation, unpopularity in church and country; loneliness and trial before God and man; betrayal and denial by disciples.

B. Now the suffering Servant is at Golgotha. True man, He takes man's place. "Without spot" and "without blemish," He becomes the "spiritual and eternal Sacrifice." (Heb. 9:14)

C. His cry, "It is finished!" is an announcement of the end of His work of redemption. The veil is torn, for its purpose is finished. Sin has been atoned for in His body. "Now, my friends, the blood of Jesus makes us free to enter boldly into the sanctuary by the new, living way which He has opened for us through the curtain, the way of His flesh." (Heb. 10:19, 20)

III. *Without the Veil*

A. Titus' destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, destroyed temple, priesthood, and sacrifice. No altar in Jerusalem since then . . . sacrifices in Jerusalem are finished.

B. Lev. 17:11 is the basis for what the writer of Hebrews (9:22) says: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Blood was the mystery and secret of life (Deut. 12:23; Gen. 9:4). The last and full sacrifice took place that Great Day of Atonement. No more veil.

Conclusion

Christ lives. Now He intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34) as He did for persecutors at Calvary. Believe, work, pray, that all may know Christ is Sacrifice and Priest.

THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

CHRISTUS VICTOR 1 COR. 15:20-28

Background

With this Sunday the series dealing with the narratives of the evangelists is brought to conclusion. That the resurrection of Jesus is discussed in the "fall" rather than in the "spring" has implications for the church programs now getting under way.

Introduction

Within two days the season of autumn commences. In another hemisphere it is spring, and life is being resumed with new vigor.

Life and death, two motifs, are remembered on tombstones by two dates. Is this all there is to life?

Christus Victor

I. *Christ Has Won Where All Men Were Defeated*

A. "It was a man who brought death into the world."

Adam was not the first to die. Was Abel?

Mankind is marked for death. A crime leader, Valachi, said his crime syndicate boss gave him "the kiss of death"; he was a marked man.

Gen. 2:17; death of soul and ultimately of body.

B. "In Adam all men die."

The solidarity of the flesh is here, for none of us is separated from sinners. We are all one by nature.

"Flesh of flesh," we are towers of Pisa, leaning toward sin as did our elders.

Medication, education, efforts of peace-makers, charities, law-enforcement agencies — all strive to prolong life. But the accent is "death." The unbroken chain binds and trips all efforts.

C. "A man also brought resurrection of the dead."

Christ was "incarnate." Flesh, not the kind that wins beauty contests nor Atlas "Physical Culture" prizes. Is. 53:2, 3: "He had no form or comeliness."

He humbled Himself and became man, to redeem man, to restore man to the image of God. By resurrection Jesus wins man back from his own defeats and failures.

D. "In Christ all will be brought to life."

Sin's wages have purchased death. The anticipated delights were temporary; the expected satisfactions left us wanting. We cannot start life over. Regrets and remorse give no second chance.

Christ was no debtor to death. Christ died not by His sin. "Christ died for *our* sins, in accordance with the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3)

II. *Christ Leads the Way for All to Follow*

A. "Christ the firstfruits."

Deut. 26:5-10; Lev. 23:9-14 tell us of the offering of the firstfruits at the beginning of the harvest of barley in Canaan.

No harvest of the dead until Christ rises.

Emphasize the causal clause: "Because I live, you too will live." (John 14:19)

B. "Afterwards, at His coming, those who belong to Christ."

The Grim Reaper will find his work in vain. The dead in Christ will rise. "At the last trumpet-call" (1 Cor. 15:52), at His coming. His death paid for sins but also delivered our body from the consequence of sin. He freed us from that which felled us so that now we rise again. "He who puts his faith in the Son has hold of eternal life." (John 3:36)

C. "Then comes the end."

Christ has abolished all dominations, all authorities, all powers. "All the nations gathered before Him" (Matt. 25:31), He makes a judgment for "eternal punishment . . . and eternal life." (Matt. 25:46). "Then will be the time for each to receive from God such praise as he deserves" (1 Cor. 4:5). Cf. Rev. 20:12. The harvest of life came with Christ's resurrection. He has the keys of life and death.

III. *The Enemy Death He Has Destroyed, and It Rises No More*

A. "The last enemy to be abolished is death."

Every power opposing God is at last done away. God raised Jesus and showed His love for mankind, His power over death, but also His justice and righteousness. Christ wins over *all* enemies. Death's sting of sin is removed. Death's victims in the harvest have been raised. "Death and Hades were flung into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:15)

B. "God has put all enemies under His feet."

1. Jesus Christ is Victor over all. Before the Father He places all the trophies He has won, even the trophy of death.

2. Christ reigns. He reigned before death attempted its temporary rule. "By the

wrongdoing of one man death established its reign, through a single sinner" (cf. Rom. 5:17). Christ reigns after death has been defeated.

3. "He shall reign for ever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15). Human empires and kingdoms pass away. Only Christ's kingdom endures. Death cannot destroy it, for death rises no more.

4. God gave Jesus a work to do. "He humbled Himself and in obedience accepted even death — death on a cross. Therefore God raised Him to the heights. . . . Jesus Christ is Lord!" (Phil. 2:8-11)

Conclusion

Christ came conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:2). It is this victory that is ours.

THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THE CHURCH — HER POWER

I COR. 12:14-26

Introduction

The corporation of believers which is the holy Christian church has its source and sustenance in the Holy Spirit. He incorporates us with one another and in Christ. The figure of the one mystical body of Christ of which we are members emphasizes a "togetherness," a "fellowship," a "communion." We enter this one body by Holy Baptism (Gal. 3:27, 28). We become limbs and organs of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15; 12:12). This "togetherness" is brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:5). Regardless of station — slave or free, or stock — Jew or Greek (1 Cor. 12:13), we are "all of one Spirit."

The apostles and the young church quickly learned of their togetherness and to share (Acts 4:32—5:11). The Holy Spirit alone could make them know "Jesus is Lord!" (1 Cor. 12:3). He alone could provide them with gifts from the one Source (1 Cor.

12:4). By Him they were baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). He was the power of the church.

The Church—Her Power

I. *The Church Is One But Many* (1 Cor. 12:14)

A. In the *physical body* there are different parts and functions. There are various chemical and physical portions. All are necessary and vital, but all are different. The body is one, but there are many members. In the *spiritual body* of the church and of Christ: one but many. Our task is not to learn ten ways to be a hand or foot, but to be a hand and foot together. Each builds up the other's faith; faith adds to faith.

B. To feel that I am not a part of the body is improper. In spite of our failure to keep God's law, failure to contribute to the working of the body as other members do, grace holds us in the body. Each has his part; we function not in isolation. (Cf. Rom. 8:26.)

C. To feel that I am the only one who is the body is improper. "Only one left" said Elijah. God told him of 7,000 others who had not bowed to Baal. To criticize other members for not functioning is not our responsibility. He who is the Head is Judge. Our responsibility is to help our fellow-members.

II. *The Church Is Many Yet One* (1 Cor. 12:20)

A. God appointed each to serve. Various powers (cf. Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:12). The eye cannot walk nor the ear smell. But when the eye fails, it fails not only itself but also the other members. We are chosen to serve, not merely to maintain self.

B. Christ was such a servant, the suffering Servant, not trying to save His life but willing to lose it. We are one with Him in this, serving one another, dying to let others live.

C. Together we share common life

(1 John 1:7), the promises of Christ (Eph. 3:6), the sufferings (1 Cor. 12:26), the rejoicings in the Lord's fellowship (Phil. 4:2). The symbol of the service of the church is the towel.

Conclusion

The church's power is not in miracles but by the Spirit being the body of Christ in the world, sacrificing, sharing, assisting, thus demonstrating the love of Almighty God.

THE CHURCH—HER WORK ACTS 6:1-7

Introduction

The disciples of Christ increased in number. Believers were summoned to select seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom the disciples would appoint to handle some of the work, giving the disciples greater freedom to propagate the faith. When the Spirit of Christ is utilized, the church's work gets done.

I. *Difficulties in the Work Are Inevitable*

A. Such difficulties arose early in the church. Jewish-speaking widows would receive preferential treatment; Greek-speaking widows felt neglected.

B. Today's difficulties may be social or cultural. "Integrate or disintegrate," men say. Fight the blight of flight from the blight of the inner city. Help those whose faith falls short, or help those who never had a first chance to have faith. Which is it — trailer camps or high-rise apartments? Vacant pulpits filled with less adequately trained clergymen if we have insufficient numbers of fully trained clergymen. The church at work in shopping centers, in airports; cell groups for Bible study; special ministries to miners, lumberjacks, fishermen, dispersed Lutherans, the handicapped; midweek and day schools. Shall we have "social action" to prevent "social mishaps" that we are called upon to

serve? The church faces decisions on mission fields, on spending programs, and on concerns that consume time and energy.

C. The "human element" enters in; "skin for skin" (Job); jealousies; demands. In home, school, church society these cannot be escaped. The root of the difficulties. God's judgment against man's sinfulness.

D. "First things first" demands that the Word be promulgated and propagandized. For this is the work of the church, to teach the Word even as did Jesus. (John 17)

II. *Difficulties in the Work Are Not In- vincible*

A. The difficulties can be met by *trust*. The disciples consulted with the body of believers; they were all one in Christ; none Master but Christ alone. Truly "indigenous," for they were "born into" the church by the same Spirit. The Spirit of Christ, who gave His life for us, now gives His life to us.

B. By "frankness" the disciples confessed their need; faults, shortcomings, need for rearranging. Trial and danger faced together (Acts 4:9 ff.). The Spirit makes us brothers, as we accept Christ as the Brother who gave His life in the greatest love.

C. The "kingdom" is placed first because of the King. His Word requires more fields, more sowers, more time, more supply, more relief.

D. The workers are given the work and then titled. "Stop acting like a minister and start ministering," said an elderly man to his pastor. God's work is done by the people — call them presbyters or pastors, reverends or rectors, fathers or brothers.

E. The "Seven" were all "witnesses." No office in the church is free from witnessing. No office is an escape from witnessing to the love of God in Christ. Jesus Christ was the first "Martyr," that is, Witness Number One to the love of God. No disciple is above the Master.

F. Result — the Word of God spread more rapidly and widely; the number of disciples increased.

Conclusion

The church's primary work is to announce forgiveness; the church functions in spreading the Word; everything else serves this purpose.

GEORGE W. BORNEMANN

Elmhurst, Ill.