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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein weiden, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den Woelfen wehren, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verfuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24*

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? — *1 Cor. 14:8*

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Outlines on the Standard Gospels

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 22:15-22

By putting their question to Jesus the Pharisees thought to force Him into a trap and so to discredit Him; whether He answered yes or no, He would offend one or the other party. — There have always been attempts to discredit Christians, specifically Lutherans, because of their attitude toward civil government. Because under certain conditions (Acts 5:29) they refuse to obey, they were called rebels. Modern historians like to call the Reformation the "Protestant Revolt" (Do we note the gentle pressure of a fine Italian hand? They "revolted" against a false government, the Pope's); others persist in the claim that Luther taught unconditional obedience to government. — The Christian (and therefore Lutheran) attitude toward civil authorities is based on the rule laid down by Christ in the text:

**Render unto Caesar the Things Which Are Caesar's; and unto God
the Things That Are God's**

1

Caesar the *de facto* government. The Romans had attained this position by trickery and force; yet the Jews themselves acknowledged their authority by using their coinage (Talmud: "He is the king of the country whose coin is current in the country").

This government, no matter what form it takes, is God's ordinance (Fourth Commandment; Rom. 13:1 ff.; 1 Pet. 2:13). Therefore ("for conscience' sake", Rom. 13:5) Christians render to the government *all* the things that are Caesar's: honor, obedience, taxes, support, if necessary, to the extent of blood and life. They who refuse this shall "receive to themselves damnation." — Finally, Christians do not forget the divine injunction: 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Luther: Even the poorest government is better than anarchy.

2

God is the Ruler of the universe; as such He has the right to constitute various realms: That of Caesar (civil government) and that of the Church; into the latter realm belong all the things which He has not put into the hands of the secular government. His realm here on earth is the Church.

Our duties toward this realm are just as definite as the others. It is not really a matter of man's free choice whether he wants to be a member of the Church or not; he is a rebel against God if he is not; he does not render unto God the things that are God's. —

Membership in the Church requires faith, a sanctified life, willing support of the Church with earthly goods and service, with our physical and mental gifts.

3

There need be and there should be no collision between the two (Augsb. Conf., Art. XXVIII, 12; *Triglotta*, p. 85). The Lutheran Confessions and other statements of Luther show awareness of the fact that the then existing mingling of the two realms was not ideal, but a stopgap required by the emergencies of the time. The ideal, for the first time in history, in our country; that accounts for the remarkable growth of the Church here.

There must be no mingling of the two realms; that would be contrary to the rule laid down by Christ (if the government interferes with the Church, or the Church with the affairs of the State, they demand that we render to Caesar the things that are God's, and to God the things which He has definitely relegated to Caesar). In such a case, and in every case of collision (if State demands disobedience to God, or Church rejects just demands of the State), we must refuse to obey and rather suffer anything than transgress Christ's rule (Acts 5: 29; Dan. 3; Matt. 10: 28; Christians in the early persecutions; Protestants in post-Reformation times, the religious wars, under the Inquisition).

Jer. 29: 7. One of the greatest blessings of God that in our blessed land we may follow fully and freely Christ's rule laid down in the text. Let us *watch* and *pray* that we may not lose this blessing.

THEO. HOYER

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 9: 18-26

The sermons of the past church year were designed to strengthen our faith. At the conclusion of the church year let us review the blessings of faith.

The Marvelous Power of Faith

1. *It draws the believer to Christ.*

Jairus (Luke 8: 50) and the woman (v. 22) believed. In this faith they approached Jesus in the hour of need. They had good reason for doing so. As ruler of the synagog, Jairus will have had firsthand knowledge of the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7: 3). Surely, Christ could also help his daughter. Disregarding the open hostility on the part of other Jewish leaders, he put his entire trust in Jesus. (Mark 5: 22 f.) — The woman "had heard of Jesus" (Mark 5: 27). What she had heard about Jesus assured her Jesus would help her also. In both instances faith drew the suppliant to Jesus to ask His help.

The degree of faith of Jairus and the woman is a matter of speculation. The need of each arose from different situations. For twelve years Jairus had had the pleasure of having his young daughter with him; now he is confronted by a sudden yet very serious condition, v. 18. The woman was faced by a condition of many years' standing (twelve years' illness; helplessness of physicians), v. 20. Trust when help has been long delayed, may call for greater heroism of faith than under sudden crises. In both instances implicit trust is the faith which drew these believers closer to Christ.

Desire for help from Jesus and trust in Him draws also us ever closer to Him. — *Lutheran Hymnal*, 422:4.

2. *It draws Christ to the believer.*

"As a magnet attracts the iron, faith draws the power of the Lord to itself; power of salvation for the recuperation of body and soul." — *Stoeckhardt*.

Having heard Jairus' call of sorrow, Christ at once left his seat at the banquet which Matthew gave on the occasion of his call "and followed him," v. 19. In the case of the woman, Jesus at once turned to address her. Speaking words of tenderness, He called her "daughter." Gently He encouraged her by saying, "Be of good comfort," v. 22.

Though our burden be ever so heavy, our grief ever so crushing, our care ever so great, if we but cling to Christ in faith, He will draw closer to us. Is. 41:10; Ps. 145:18; *Lutheran Hymnal*, 356; 647:4.

3. *The mutual contact produces wonderful results.*

a. With regard to the believers: Having approached Jesus in faith, the woman was not disappointed. Her faith made her whole, even though her illness was protracted and pronounced incurable. Mark 5:29. The delay caused by healing the woman gave people time to assure themselves that Jairus' daughter really was dead. The commercial mourners were present (v. 24) and knew she was dead, Luke 8:53. Taking the girl by the hand, Jesus restored her to life, "and her spirit came again." What joy especially for parents and friends! As a person believes, so will he receive from the Lord; only that, in bodily need, faith does not dictate type and time of help.

Spiritual benefits are of even greater importance. By singling out the woman, Christ gave her strength to confess Him publicly, Mark 5:33. He praises her faith. The girl's parents likewise were blessed at seeing their daughter raised. They were astonished. They became confessors of Christ's power, v. 26.

b. With regard to Christ: Men glorified His name. His fame spread abroad. His majesty and power, His kindness and readiness to help, were magnified in the eyes of the believers.

We are far removed from the scenes of Capernaum, yet faith remains the same. If we believe on Christ, we will approach Him; and He will draw closer to us. He will be also our help, and His name will be made glorious.

VICTOR MENNICKE

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Matt. 24: 15-28

“Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel,” Amos 4: 12. The world and all that therein is, is hastening toward dissolution. As a thief in the night, the great Day of the Lord will break upon all created beings (2 Pet. 3: 10). We Christians, too, must see the end of all things, “for here have we no continuing city,” Hebr. 13: 14. In a world that is tottering on the brink of ruin we Christians turn to God’s Word for instruction and ask

What Shall We Pray for in These Last Times?

1. *For eyes to see the signs of the times*
2. *For feet that flee from present temptations and dangers*
3. *For hearts that seek strength and rest in God*

1

A. In Matt. 24: 4-12 (cf. Mark 13: 5-9; Luke 21: 8-12) Jesus had spoken of various signs that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus emphasizes *see, hear* (vv. 6, 15). The Apostles and early disciples saw the signs Jesus had spoken of, and many of them lived through the fall of the Holy City.

B. The signs preceding the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the city are, according to the words of Jesus, a picture of the end of the world. He who has eyes to see may read as he runs and recognize the “abomination of desolation” standing in the holy place. (Cp. Dan. 9: 27; 12: 11; Popery, *Trigl.*, 234, par. 23, 24.) Instead of Titus and his hosts before the gates, we see the myriads that despise the Law of God, spurn the Gospel of Jesus, and wallow in the cesspools of sin. We see apostasy even within the Lutheran Church: worldliness, neglect of God’s Word, etc., within our own midst. Our prayer to God in these last times is for eyes to see these signs.

2

A. Fleeing feet are to be coupled with seeing eyes. When the woes and calamities broke upon Jerusalem — and they broke suddenly and swiftly — Jesus’ disciples were to flee and let nothing

hinder them in their flight, vv. 16-21. Personal possessions must be sacrificed. Expectant mothers and women with little children would be exposed to particular danger, because they must try to take care of themselves and their own flesh and blood (Luke 23: 28, 29; 1 Tim. 2: 15; Ps. 127:3; 128:3). Those who were caught in the destruction of Jerusalem suffered untold agony and death.

B. Jerusalem fell because of the wrath of God. God has told us the world must come to an end because of its wickedness and unbelief. All the signs pointing to the dissolution of our world are multiplying with increasing rapidity. Jesus' word to us is not only that we pray for eyes to see the state of things, but also that we beseech Him for feet to flee from the wrath which inevitably will break upon mankind, vv. 23-28. Materialism, neglect of the Word of God, vice, pride, worship of military power, love of money, the many promptings of the flesh, are dogging our steps daily. "Flee these things," says Jesus. "Flee and live!" — "O Jesus, give me courage to flee the 'abomination of desolation,' courage to flee the 'pollutions of the world,'" 2 Pet. 2: 29.

3

A. Without a doubt, those who saw the evils and fled from them when Jerusalem sank into dust gave their hearts to God and found in Him strength to live through the ordeal and rest from all their anguish. God's promise to them was sure and effective, v. 22.

B. As the world is rushing toward the final Judgment and temptations and dangers are multiplying, our hearts in particular need strength and rest. Human resources fail in fortifying the hearts, only God can make the heart strong and steadfast. We turn our hearts to the hills whence our help comes, Ps. 121:1. We pray God that we may not strive to seek strength and rest at the foot of Mount Sinai with its demands of holiness and perfection. We beseech Him to enlighten our heart as we stand before Mount Calvary and behold the Lamb of God, slain for sinners. We entreat Him to teach us to exclaim with Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," Matt. 17:4. As the eagles of judgment are gathering together, let us lift up our hearts to God, have our conversation in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and gather treasures for the mansions above (Matt. 6:20).

So we shall have comfort and everlasting peace when the Son of Man comes at the end of the world, v. 27. ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT

Thanksgiving Day

Rom. 1:16-23

Brief remarks on the origin and the purpose of Thanksgiving Day. Is its purpose accomplished in our nation? Few observe this day as they should. — The Holy Spirit accuses and convicts the unbelievers of ingratitude. The knowledge of God is the only source of true gratitude to Him, and cheerful service to Him is the expression of such gratitude.

Let Us Thank God for His Goodness and Mercy to Our Nation by Renewed Missionary Efforts in Behalf of Our Nation

1

The natural knowledge of God is not lacking in our nation; yet most citizens do not acknowledge the true God, neither are they thankful; therefore the nation is in danger of its doom.

A. The natural knowledge of God is the conviction of man by reaction of his senses, mind, and conscience to the visible revelation of God's existence and of His wisdom, power, and goodness. — His revelation is not lacking, but is superabundant, in our country, where milk and honey flows. The physical features of our country, its varied climates, the abundance of its minerals, plants, animal life, the multiplicity of its resources, the rich harvests, flowing rivers, dense forests, and the sky above us: evidences which compel us to believe that there is a God. We may add the study of events under the government and providence of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the invisible God. Only the fool will say that there is no God, while his conscience yet urges him to seek, worship, and thank the true God.

B. Most of our fellow citizens are, by choice, just such fools as the text describes. They know from the visible things about them that God exists; but they do not seek Him, neither are they thankful. They do not react to His revelation, and they obstinately resist compelling evidences. Therefore their refusal to thank God is conscious, deliberate, willful. These ungrateful people are without excuse. — Though we as a nation know not where we are and whither we are going nationally, internationally, economically, socially, morally, the slogan is: We can, we must, we will. What? Idolized human intelligence turns from idolized images to idolized man power, money power, mind power. Thus the truth is suppressed and smothered in unrighteousness.

C. The consequences are inevitable. Unbelief, self-reliance, ingratitude, lead to other sins (see vv. 28-32). These have become national sins, many of them legalized. — They challenge the wrath of God revealed from heaven and are worthy of death. Examples

from the history of nations and of individuals are plentiful. — Hence our ungrateful nation is ripe for judgment. Notwithstanding internal and international victories, resources, harvests, military strength, things look insecure, gloomy, hopeless. Niniveh.

2

We Christians must proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ that, with us, our fellow citizens may repent, thank the true God, and be spared.

A. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must reach the individual citizen for his personal knowledge of the true God and for his personal salvation. — We Christians (Matt. 5:13-16; 28:19, 20) must not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but proclaim it with boldness. This is our foremost duty to God and to our fellow citizens, and it is the first and greatest evidence of our own gratitude to God for all His spiritual and temporal benefits. — The Gospel is the power of salvation as to the Jew and Greek, so to the American. To human reason the leap from unrighteousness and death to righteousness and salvation is illogical; but verse 17 is meant for the American citizen. The trust and faith of Niniveh was not collective; it was individual.

B. As unbelief is the source of ingratitude, so faith in Jesus is the source of gratitude to God. — We thank the true God, because we know Him in Christ Jesus. The unionistic services of today, arranged by Modernists, cannot be acceptable to God because of their Christless character. They are a form of idolatry.

C. The Gospel does not promise heaven to any nation as such. It reveals to all nations the way of repentance by faith. It reveals the Creator as the Redeemer. As impenitence evokes the wrath of God, so faith receives the righteousness of God through the redemption in Christ. — Let us by word and example lead others to such faith. For Jesus' sake, for the Gospel's sake, for the sake of His mercy and truth, for the sake of the righteous, God will spare our nation. Let us renew our missionary efforts in behalf of our nation.
Ps. 100.

G. H. SMUKAL

Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

First Sunday in Advent

Matt. 11: 25-30

Standing at the threshold of a new church year, our hearts tremble with fear at the thought of the fate of the Church and the individual Christian in these dark and dubious times. The Lord Jesus, Heb. 13:8, comes to us with a message of instruction, admonition, comfort, hope. Let us hear

**Christ's Message to His Church at the Beginning
of the New Church Year**

1. *He praises the Father for His marvelous revelation*
2. *He offers rest and peace to all that are heavy laden*

1

Five times Jesus calls God "Father," not, however, in the sense of Modernism, which proudly hoists the banner of the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, denying the sinful depravity, the holy wrath of God, and everlasting punishment. The Father as He is known and revealed only by the Son is the eternal Father of the eternal Son, who became the Father of apostate mankind, the children of wrath, Eph. 2:1-3, only by sending His Son to become their Reconciler through His vicarious suffering and death, Is. 53; 2 Cor. 5:18-21.

This Father in turn reveals the Son to mankind in His Gospel; reveals Him as only the Father knows Him, not only as a wise man, a teacher, an example of virtue, but as His own Son, Ps. 2:7; the mighty God, Is. 9:6; John 1:1-3; our Redeemer, Gen. 3:15; Is. 7:14; 9:6; 53:1-12; Jer. 23:5, 6; etc.

These truths surpassing man's understanding, 1 Cor. 2:6-11, the Father has revealed in such a manner that even babes can thereby be saved, v. 25c, instituting Baptism as the water of regeneration, a means of creating faith in infants, and teaching the way to life in language so plain and simple and so powerful that even babes in intelligence, despised by the world, may become God's children, cp. Is. 35:8c; 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

This Father is the Lord of heaven and earth, v. 25a. The almighty Creator and Ruler of the universe is our reconciled Father through Christ, who still governs the world for the welfare of His Church, His children, Ps. 46; Is. 40:26-31; 43:1, 2.

That is the glorious self-revelation of the Father for which the Son thanks Him. This revelation we have enjoyed during the past years; with this marvelous revelation of the Father's love and power we are greeted on the first Sunday of the new church year. With Jesus let us thank our heavenly Father, accept His revelation in humble hearts, and remain His loving, trusting children.

2

V. 28. This is an invitation such as Jesus alone can truthfully extend. It is based on His entire life's work, His perfect fulfillment of the Law, His atoning sacrifice for our sins, which He bore for us. He offers rest. This term means "ceasing from any movement or labor in order to recover and collect one's strength." Thayer. It is what Christ Himself calls His peace, John 14:27; 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26. It is rest from anything and all things that may disturb the soul or

body of man, from all burdens, be they physical, mental or spiritual; rest from all efforts to establish one's own righteousness; rest from the agonizing accusations of a violated conscience, of Satan, of one's fellow men; rest from all worries and heartaches that harass the spirit and weary the body; rest and peace and quiet in Him, our Savior, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who holds us firm and fast in His loving arms.

He asks us to accept His yoke, assuring us that it is easy, vv. 29, 30. It is not the yoke of Satan and sin for our condemnation; it is entering into the service of Him who is our Righteousness and Strength, who by forgiving our sins engenders, strengthens, preserves that love to Himself which gladly does His will. He is our Example and Teacher, meek and humble, never harsh, never losing patience, always ready to come to our aid, always willing to supply new strength. And He is our Savior, covering our imperfections with His perfection.

This He has done in the past. Today He again invites us to come to Him for rest and joyous service. O Lamb of God, I come!

THEO. LAETSCH

Second Sunday in Advent

Luke 17: 26-37

Standing before His unjust judges, Christ tells them, Matt. 26: 64. Forty-three days later, angels announced to His disciples, Acts 1:11. The Letter to the Hebrews informs us, Heb. 9:28. In our lesson the Lord calls this day the day when the Son of Man is revealed, and exhorts us all:

Stand in Readiness for the Day of the Revelation of the Son of Man

1. *This day shall be a day of judgment*
2. *This day shall come unexpectedly*
3. *On this day only the righteous shall escape destruction*

1

The day of the Son of Man is compared to two outstanding examples of God's judgment upon wickedness. On the conditions in Noah's time, cp. Gen. 6:1-7; at Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 13:13; 19:4-11. These descriptions fit our time and age. The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John 5:19, and this wickedness increases and grows from century to century like a malicious cancer, Rom. 1: 21-32; 2 Tim. 3:1-13, until now the world is like a putrid carcass, carrion rotting away in its vices and shameful wickedness. Already we see the eagles of judgment and perdition sweeping down upon their prey. At any time the final Judgment Day may come. Are we ready?

2

This judgment comes unexpectedly, vv. 26-30. Neither the people of Noah's time nor the people of Sodom expected so sudden and complete a destruction, although they had been warned. Carelessly, indifferently, they continued to live as they had been accustomed — until it was too late.

The world has been warned of the final Day of Judgment. 1900 years ago Christ foretold the day and the signs. Before that, prophets had uttered their warnings, Is. 2; Zeph. 1:14, 15; Jude 14, 15. Man's conscience tells him that Judgment Day impends. Still most men do not take these warnings to heart. While at all times there are scoffers, 2 Pet. 3:3, 4, the mass of mankind goes on its way neglecting the signs of the time, taking interest only in this world, giving little or no thought to eternity. Are we ready? Ready today? Ready now? When are we ready?

3

In the judgments named vv. 26-29 all were destroyed save Noah and Lot and their families. Why? Because God regarded them righteous, Gen. 7:1; 2 Pet. 2:7. Like Abraham, they were accounted righteous because of their faith in the promised Messiah, cp. Gen. 15:6. On that Day one shall be taken, lovingly accepted, as the bride is received by the bridegroom, Matt. 1:20; the other, left, forsaken, sent away, as a convicted criminal is sent to prison. Judgment Day will not be a day of indiscriminate mass destruction, it will be a day of just and impartial individual judgment on the basis of Mark 16:16; John 3:36. Though there may be no difference between two individuals with respect to profession, culture, sex, etc., yet the Searcher of hearts knows His own and will publicly acknowledge them, while publicly disowning all that refused to accept His grace, vv. 34-36.

The Lord describes the folly of those who seek to save their life, v. 33, who make their life in this world the sole or chief object of loving care and solicitous attention. Their heart will cling to their treasures even on the Last Day, and together with their treasures they lose their soul, v. 31. While there is opportunity, repent! And obey the Lord's every word! Lot's wife perished because in disobedience to the Lord's word she looked back, v. 32. Escape for your life! Thank God that you have a Savior who opened heaven for you, and for His sake and in His strength deny yourself, crucify your flesh, die to the world. Make Paul's motto your own, Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21, then you can also exclaim, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

Conclusion. Deut. 30:19. What will you choose?