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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. 14:3

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ἰλασμοῦ περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. Here the Scripture has our last ἰλασμός, the very same ἰλασμός that flows so freely from the mercy-seat, the *kapporeth* of Moses, down to the ἰλαστήριον of Greek-speaking and -writing Christianity. There is forgiveness from Moses to John, throughout the Scriptures, and a study of the LXX and the Greek of the New Testament brings rich reward in a fuller appreciation of its soul-cleansing force and universal application.

Chaplain U. S. Army

RICHARD T. DU BRAU

## Outlines on Gospels Adopted by Synodical Conference

### First Sunday after Easter

Matt. 12:38-42

Context: The rising and increasing conflict. Then text.

#### Are You Looking for Special Signs on Which to Base Your Faith in Christ as Your Savior and Redeemer?

1. Christ has given you the pre-eminent sign in His resurrection
2. If you reject this sign, your doom is sealed.

#### 1

V. 38. The scribes and Pharisees sought a sign. Cp. Matt. 16:1; John 2:18. But did they not have occasion to see many of His signs and miracles? Yes, indeed, vv. 12, 22; Matt. 11:5; John 21:25. But they wanted a very special sign, perhaps like the one recorded 1 Kings 18:38.

Vv. 39 b, 40. The Lord directed them to a pre-eminent sign that would prove Him to be the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, a sign that would surpass all other signs, the sign of the Prophet Jonah, which pointed forward to the Lord's resurrection. Jonah 1:17. Are you among the sign seekers? Perhaps not, at least not in a class with those spoken of in the text. But are you not somewhat impressed by the signs and miracles reported from Lourdes, Treves, and other so-called holy shrines? Or the "miracles" of Christian Science and other so-called divine healers? Remember that the Apostle Paul tells us in the name of Christ that he who is described 2 Thess. 2:4 is coming "with all power and signs and *lying* wonders," 2 Thess. 2:9. Christ Himself warns us against the signs and wonders of false Christs and false prophets, Matt. 24:14. Or do you find yourself wishing that your Church could perform some outstanding miracle so that your faith would have something tangible to stand on? Do not forget that your senses can be deceived, as are the senses of many others,

into taking signs and lying wonders to be the real thing. You do not want to rest your faith upon deceptions, but upon the sure and everlasting Word of God. Cp. John 4:48. When the Christian Church was first established in the world, signs and wonders were given; now that it is firmly established, they are no longer needed.—Or do you wish that you could have seen the miracles of Christ with your own eyes because it would then be easier to believe? The Jews saw them and yet did not believe. John 12:37. Miracles are no means of grace. Christ does not perform them to satisfy mere curiosity. Matt. 13:58. They were His credentials which proved Him to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world (cp. John 11:4, 5 with Is. 35:5, 6) and are recorded in God's Word for your sake. John 20:31.

He has given you the sign of all signs—His resurrection. Keep in mind all that preceded His resurrection: His life, His death—all for you. And His resurrection! What a sign! Read Rom. 1:4; 4:25; John 14:19; 11:25, 26. Do not look for other signs. V. 39 b.

2

V. 39. Christ is addressing not only the scribes and Pharisees, but also those who, like their leaders, refused to accept His miracles for what they were, and rejected Him and His message. He calls them an evil generation, steeped in every kind of wickedness. An adulterous generation, spiritual adulterers. Cp. Jer. 3:20. They would continue in their opposition in spite of all that He did to bring them to repentance. Now He tells them of their doom.

V. 41. Jonah was a mere man, a sinful man; but here was the Son of God Himself. Jonah was a Prophet sent by God; but here was the Author of the message Himself. The Jews refused to repent and hardened their hearts. Small wonder that the Ninevites would condemn them.

V. 42. A greater than Solomon is here. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom. Col. 2:3. In fact, He is the personal Wisdom. Prov. 8:12; vv. 22-36. But to Him the Jews would not hearken. Small wonder that the queen of the South will rise up in Judgment. They seal their own doom.

Do you reject the miracles of Christ, especially the pre-eminent sign of His resurrection? Then you are also rejecting all that preceded it—His life, His death. Then your doom is sealed. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:12-19. It is true, there will be another sign—the sign of the Son of Man. Matt. 24:30. But when this sign will appear, then it will forever be too late to repent.

But you are Christians. You do not intend to reject any of the miracles of Christ, least of all His resurrection. By the grace of God you are determined to cling to Christ, the Son of God and

your personal Redeemer. Heb. 10:39. But you and I are in constant need of warning against apostasy. 1 Cor. 10:12. Besides, there is the constant danger of deceiving ourselves into believing that all is well, that we are firmly established in our faith, while in reality it is nothing but sham. We are so easily beset with doubts that endanger our faith. Let us by the grace of God stand firm, refresh our faith by diligent use of the Word of God and the Sacrament. And let us pray without ceasing. Mark 9:24.

R. NEITZEL

## Second Sunday after Easter

John 10:1-11

"The more abundant life!" Again and again it is promised to the suffering masses. And when life continues abundant in nothing but sorrow, war, trouble, they are disillusioned, become cynical. Why?

The reason is that the term is abused, misrepresented, and misunderstood. Good, therefore, that all of us study text, verse 10 b, which presents

### The Truth About "the More Abundant Life"

#### 1. Who first promised it.

Text. Modern statesmen are credited with coining the term. But the truth is—they have merely appropriated it. Verse 10 b, "life more abundantly," proves its author was Jesus, that Jesus who in the same passage solemnly asserted that He is "no thief come to steal, kill, destroy," vv. 1, 8, 10, but a "true, good Shepherd come to give His life that men may have life," vv. 2, 11.

*Application:* Consider well, *Jesus* is the Author. Since He coined the term "more abundant life," it may well arrest our attention. Since He, the ever faithful, self-sacrificing, life-giving Shepherd promised it, we may well put confidence in it. As it came from His sacred lips, we can be sure this is no mere campaign pledge or politician's slogan. Bear that in mind!

#### 2. But what did He mean by it?

Text. Modern reformers claim He meant material life more abundant in wealth, peace, leisure, etc. But the truth is—He predicted no earthly abundance, rather "much tribulation." And v. 10 b in its context proves He meant a spiritual life more abundant in (1) salvation, vv. 9, 11: "shall be saved"; (2) spiritual knowledge, vv. 3, 4: "know His voice"; (3) divine fellowship, v. 4: "calleth by name, goeth before." A glorious spiritual life, abounding in spiritual blessings!

*Application:* Of course, in that kind of "more abundant life" our materialistic age is not interested; it dreams only of material abundance. (Chiliasts also.) That "a man's life consisteth not in abundance of things," Luke 12:13, it does not understand. Yet it is evident that without Christ's saving Word (John 6:63: "are life") the most abundant material life is bare existence. Nay, worse, Rom. 8:6: "To be carnally minded is *death*." But to be "spiritually minded is life." Oh, be careful, therefore, to cherish the life of faith in Christ!

### 3. *How men can obtain it.*

Text. Materialists say such life is beyond reach. But the truth is — Christ has put it within reach of all. V. 10 b He declares "they might *have* it." And to show how easily, He uses illustrations of sheep "hearing," "knowing," "following," shepherd's voice, "entering door," vv. 4, 7, 9. So simple! Hear Christ's saving Word. Act upon it by entering upon enjoyment of His salvation. Then you are no longer dead in sin, but alive, having life, and always more abundantly.

*Application:* What a contrast to the difficulties of obtaining more abundant material life! How world has studied and worked through science, education, invention, political reform, bloodless revolutions, bloody wars, legislation, etc., to attain it. And still we have never had more universal sorrow, death, hunger, etc., and more lovelessness, immorality, etc. Thank God, Christ's "life more abundantly" is not so unobtainable. He gives it freely, without our doing. Simply take it by faith!

### 4. *How real and certain it is.*

Text. Materialists scorn it as visionary, uncertain. But the truth is — nothing is more real and sure. Christ's verse 10 b is prefaced with two asseverations: "Verily, verily, I say unto you," vv. 1, 7. A double Amen, intimating the certainty and reality of it. This life, given to dead soul, with abounding salvation, pardon, peace, power, comfort, hope eternal — is no dream, no escape mechanism, but a glorious, positive reality.

*Application:* How illusive and unreal, on the other hand, is the modern's dream of a materially abundant life! Think of Europe, which was promised peace for a thousand years! But Christ has never disappointed. In every age, amid terrors and afflictions, His believers have had His promised life with all its abundant treasures. Though, like Paul, they were crucified with Christ, suffering, dying — they could shout exuberantly: "Nevertheless we *live*; yet not we, but Christ liveth in us!" Gal. 2:20. A. WAGNER

### Third Sunday after Easter

Mark 2:18-22

The traditional pericope for this Sunday points out the sweet blessedness which the disciples of Christ enjoy, John 16:16-23. (a) After their little while of sorrow they shall have endless, perfect joy. (b) Their prayers, addressed to God in Christ's name, are truly heard. — Because of their tribulation, Christians must constantly be shown how blessed they are in view of their divine, living Savior, whose own they are. Our text speaks of

#### The Blessedness of Christ's Disciples

They are blessed

1. *Because their Savior is with them*
2. *Because their Savior has made them free*

#### 1

A. It is obvious why the disciples of John and of the Pharisees asked Jesus the question in v. 18. John had been put into prison, Mark 1:14. Their fasting was no doubt a token of mourning, v. 20. But John's disciples were also in error; they had not obeyed their master's message, John 1:29-51; they did not believe in Christ, Matt. 11:2 ff. For this reason they found fault with Christ's disciples, as also with Christ Himself, against whom really the charge was raised. So today unbelievers often prefer charges against Christ's disciples which have their source in unbelief, hatred, envy, and the like.

B. Christ answered the question put to Him readily and without qualification. His disciples had no reason to fast or mourn because He was with them and so theirs constantly was the joy of a spiritual wedding feast. They could apply the words of Psalm 23 to themselves (supply examples of Christ's never-failing love). As the divine Truth, Christ foretold that the Bridegroom would be taken from them, so that they then would fast (mourn), v. 20. But before that took place, He comforted and strengthened them (cf. John, chaps. 14-17), and as soon as His work of redemption was finished, He greeted them with the message of peace (cp. John 20:19 ff.). Really Christ never left His disciples, though they had left Him. Even His ascension did not remove His presence from them, Matt. 28:19 f.

C. To this day Christ's disciples enjoy the blessedness of His gracious presence: (a) His presence in the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, Rom. 10:6 ff.; (b) His presence throughout their lives, Ps. 73:23 ff.; (c) His presence in tribulation, Acts 5:19 ff.; 2 Cor. 12:7 ff.; (d) His presence in death, Acts 7:55 ff.

Men trusting in men are never blessed; even John was helpless to protect his disciples after he had been cast into prison. But blessed are all disciples of Christ, for in His constant, omnipotent, defending, guiding, and guarding presence they find joy unspeakable, 2 Tim. 4:6 ff.

2

A. Just because the disciples of John did not believe in Christ, they relapsed into the bondage of the Jewish Ceremonial Law, regarding fasting as necessary (cf. Luke 18:10 ff.) and making common cause against Christ with the disciples of the Pharisees. Vv. 21, 22 must be regarded as a severe rebuke (cf. Luke 5:39, a reproof) for holding to the old garment and the old bottles of the Ceremonial Law. Christ had come with new cloth and new wine to bring men spiritual freedom, and with this new spiritual freedom in view, His disciples no longer had to fast or observe any other provision of the Old Testament Ceremonial Law, in which the Pharisees took so much pride (cf. Matt. 12:1 ff.). Christ's Gospel freedom did not comport with the bondage of the ceremonial directives, Gal. 5:1 ff.

B. As Christ's true disciples we, too, find constant blessedness in the freedom with which Christ has made us free, John 8:31, 32. Our freedom in Christ (a) from the Ceremonial Law, Gal. 5:1 ff.; (b) from the curse and condemnation of the Moral Law, Gal. 3:13; (c) from sin, the transgression of the Law, 1 Cor. 15:3; (d) from death, 1 Cor. 15:55 ff.; (e) from hell, Matt. 25:46; (f) from Satan, 1 John 3:8. In Christ Jesus we have freedom from all our spiritual foes and are therefore unspeakably blessed already now as we walk by faith.

C. This blessedness remains ours only as we cling to Christ. If we adhere to men in opposition to Christ, we fall under the condemnation of Christ's reproof in our text. May we remain sincere disciples of Christ, our blessed Savior.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

### Fourth Sunday after Easter

John 5:19-29

God knows you. Ps. 139:1-4. Do you know God? John 1:18. "By Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy will." This prayer is answered also today; for in the text

### Jesus Christ Affirms His Deity

We learn to believe and confess

1. *This is the true God*      2. *This is eternal Life*

## 1

A. Doctrine. In answer to the Jews, Jesus refers to the trinitarian relation, vv. 19, 20. The activity and work of the Trinity is not parted or separate. It is but one action and work, each Person performing with the other Persons the same and identical act, all co-ordinately, in unity of wisdom and power. Jesus identifies Himself here as a Person of the Trinity.—The Son of Man and the Son of God (vv. 27, 25) appears as the identical Person. The Savior of mankind is a Person of the Trinity, the true God. Rom. 9:5; John 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Titus 2:13.—Jesus displays visible divine works, which He mentions in His affirmation: vv. 19, 20, referring to all divine works, and vv. 25, 28, 27, 29 to specific divine works.—Jesus reveals a complete knowledge of God and of His will and works, v. 20. He is omniscient, Col. 2:9. In fact, all divine attributes shine forth from this affirmation in all their brilliant splendor.—Jesus affirms His identity under oath, v. 19.—Nor did He make Himself equal with God, v. 18; for He *is* God. What Christ does is done of God. Our Lutheran Confessions are right, and our personal faith in Christ as God is the true faith.—Because He is the true God, v. 23 must be proclaimed with force, power, and joy.

B. Reproof. V. 23 b. All who deny the deity of Christ are idolaters, 1 John 5:21, though they may aver a faith in Him a thousand times. What a terrific blow to antichristian lodgery, to Modernism, cults, etc.

C. Comfort. We worship the true God, not mental images.—God is our Savior.—The Gospel, with all its promises, is true.—God uses all His divine attributes in behalf of His Church and of the individual believer.—Our trust and reliance is rightly placed in Jesus Christ.—Our prayers to Him are heard and answered by Him.

## 2

A. Doctrine. God is the living God. His life is underived and independent. Ps. 90:2. As the Father, even so the Son (v. 26): Life in the Son is the same and exists in the same manner as in the Father. But the Father has committed life to the Son in His official capacity as Savior and Mediator. The entire Christ, the God-man, is eternal Life. John 1:4; 11:25; 10:18. What majesty is His!—Christ imparts life to whom He will, v. 21: physical life, John 11:43; Luke 7:14; Mark 5:41; spiritual life, v. 25; and to the true believer He has already given eternal life, v. 24.—Again an oath, v. 24.—We confess: This is the true God and eternal Life.

B. Reproof and warning. The eternal God-man is the Judge. None can escape Him. They shall hear His voice (which they dis-



regarded), and they shall come forth (though they denied the resurrection), v. 25. — Prepare for the resurrection day! For there will be a simultaneous resurrection of believers and unbelievers, vv. 28, 29; Heb. 10:31; 12:25-29. The believers already are in possession of eternal life, vv. 24, 29. The unbelievers will rise to their eternal doom, because they rejected the living Giver of life, v. 29. Repent and seek life in Christ. — Again an oath.

C. Comfort. We believers have eternal life as certainly as we have Him. John 10:11, 15, 28; 11:25-27. This is victory. Jesus and I: we live. Ps. 42:11. Jesus reveals and identifies Himself as my Life. Col. 3:4.

G. H. SMUKAL

### Fifth Sunday after Easter

Luke 18:1-8

The lesson of the parable is stated v. 1: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." Not merely prayer in general is the subject of our Lord's parable, but specifically persistent prayer in the face of conditions that would discourage suppliants, cause them to "faint," to tire of, and discontinue their prayers as hopeless.

We are in need of this lesson in our days.

#### "Men Ought Always to Pray and Not to Faint"

Note

1. *The danger of fainting*
2. *The encouragement to persevere in prayer*

#### 1

A. Text. The widow in the parable was confronted with discouraging conditions.

a) Evidently her "adversary" was powerful and influential and she a helpless widow. Widows in Orient synonyms of helplessness. Matt. 23:14.

b) The character of the judge, vv. 2, 4. Neither of the motives which usually prompt men to do right and refrain from wrong influenced this judge. Brazenly boasts of his disregard of God and man. What hope of redress had the widow with such a judge!

c) "For a while," probably a long time. Little wonder if she had given up in despair!

B. Application: (a) Similar discouraging conditions arise for the Church, ever opposed by powerful adversaries—Satan and the world—and in the lives and the experience of individual Christians. Time and again in the course of her history the Church appeared utterly helpless, *e. g.*, the times of persecution. And in the lives of God's elect conditions arise that seem utterly

beyond control. The common ills of life. — Present world conditions. How helpless we are!

b) The fact that God seemingly delays. 1. The parable refers to the last coming of the Lord for the final deliverance of His Church (chap. 17:22 ff.), for which His elect fervently pray. How long the days of great tribulations of the last days! Many indeed will "faint" and lose faith. V. 8.

2. But the parable applies also to circumstances in general, when in the lives of Christians prayers seem unheard and trials continue. How fervent the prayers today! And still the carnage, the cares and anxieties, the griefs and the heartaches, go on. From many a Christian heart the cry goes up: Ps. 22:2. — Yes, there is danger of "fainting."

But the Lord offers ample and effective encouragement in the parable.

## 2

A. Text. The widow in the parable finally prevailed over the unjust judge to "avenge" her. She "came." The tense in the original indicates her persistent, continual coming. Though only for reasons of self-interest, to rid himself of her continual pleading and avoid further annoyance, the judge finally avenged her. — So despite all discouraging conditions the widow's perseverance in pleading obtained the desired redress.

B. Application. Vv. 6-8 a. (a) The parable gives emphatic assurance that persevering prayer will prevail. The argument is from the lesser to the greater, from the human to the divine. Its convincing force lies in the contrasts suggested. 1. The judge is unjust, corrupt, and selfish. — God is righteous, loving, full of compassion. 2. The unjust judge had no interest in the widow. There was no relationship to encourage her hope. — God loves His elect with an everlasting love. They are His precious, blood-bought own. Ps. 103:13.

b) V. 8 a. God's seeming delay is not actual delay. "Speedily" He will avenge. Time is of the essence of help. The speediest help is that which comes at the right time, which God in His wisdom knows best. (Elsewhere in Scripture abundant light is thrown upon God's purpose of love in seeming delay.) In His own time, and that is "speedily," God will help in answer to prayer. That is the emphatic promise of the parable.

c) Faith in God's promises, in His love and truth, should prompt us to persevere in prayer, not sheer stubborn insistence. Cf. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, Vol. II, p. 285. Such was the perseverance of Jacob, Gen. 32:26; and that of the Syro-phoenician woman, Matt. 15:21-28. — God grant us such faith and resultant perseverance in prayer till its glorious vindication. — Hymn 520:10, 11.

AUG. F. BERNTHAL