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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 *Wölfen wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verführen und Irrtum einführen.

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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Homiletics

The Nassau Pericopes

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 18: 7-9

The Text and the Day. — All the Propers for this Sunday stress the need of spiritual grace and the new life in Christ. This text describes this life surmounting one of the chief handicaps, and the blocks for effective living toward others. This sermon will be preached on July 4; it should not be necessary, except by way of illustrations from life in the nation and the community, to make concessions to the civic significance of the day.

Notes on Meaning. — The text is part of a discussion of the attitude of love and concern which a Christian should have for the believer and his spiritual life. The Savior had made a child the representative of the believers — representative in humble faith and in need of tender care. "Offenses" are actions opposed to "receiving" a believer and caring for his spiritual need (v. 5); they are actions by which the faith and life is hampered and destroyed rather than sustained and produced. The text does not specify what such deeds are. The context intimates that they spring from pride (v. 1), and the text that they have their origin in the human flesh acting without the control of God (vv. 8-9). The offending individual has thus himself succumbed to the ravages of sin. Cf. 1 John 2:16. The result of offense is woe: the life of God is cut off from man and from the individual who should have communicated it to men; thus he brings the wrath of God upon himself.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Obviously the preacher will not lapse into a faulty asceticism on the basis of vv. 8 and 9. These verses are a parallel to 1 Cor. 9:25-27. — Note that "offense" does not mean "being offended."

Preaching Emphases. — The emphasis of the context should not be lost, also in this section. This text stresses the problem of facing and meeting the obstacles to proper concern for the believer and the needy soul.

Preaching Problem and Goal. — The fault to be remedied is the pride and apathy which causes the individual to lose concern for the Christian brother and for souls in general. The goal is the more active love and forethought, the true concern, arising from the life of the Spirit and the atonement of Christ, for the faith and life of others.

Outline:

OVERCOMING OFFENSE AND GROWING IN CARE
FOR THE FAITH OF OTHERS

- I. The Christian is in the world for the sake of others. His primary concern is always the other, his effort to help him physically and spiritually. Cf. Phil. 2.
- II. In this program the Christian faces obstacles and temptations to offend.
 - A. The nature of these obstacles: pride and apathy of the flesh.
 - B. The result of the offense, or cause of sin, thus created: sin and spiritual loss of the other; woe of God for self.
- III. The Christian therefore carries out a continuous program of avoiding offense.
 - A. Overcoming the fleshly pride and unconcern which allow the needy soul to languish.
 - B. Growing in the grace of God and love for men, through Christ and the means of grace, so that the fight against the flesh is victorious and the supply of life to the brother constant.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 14:14-23

The Text and the Day. — The Propers for the day point to our heavenly Father as the good and gracious Provider. From Him we receive abundantly all those gifts which are good for us. He guards us from things which would prove hurtful. Praise God for the many good gifts which He has bestowed upon us.

Notes on Meaning. — V. 14: "And He had compassion on them" has the meaning that the Lord's pity not only was directed at the multitude, but was actually resting on them. V. 15: "evening" refers to the first of two evenings reckoned by the Jews. The first commenced about the 9th hour and lasted until the 12th hour. The second evening commenced about 6 P. M. and lasted for approximately 40 minutes. The second evening is referred to in verse 23. V. 16: "give ye" — Jesus commands His disciples to feed the multitude. They immediately went about carrying out His command. They then realized how helpless they really were.

Preaching Pitfalls. — There is a definite danger that God's gracious providing of earthly goods be overstressed. The hearer may be led to think that Christ's work here on earth consisted mainly in providing for man's earthly wants. The hearer may get the impression that he must give up all earthly goods in order to be a Christian. The text proves otherwise.

Preaching Emphasis. — The Gospel must be added. Christ by this miracle showed Himself as the Bread of Life. Cf. John 6. This refers not only to the supplying of earthly wants, but also to the feeding of our souls. The great need is to follow Jesus so that we might be spiritually nourished.

Problem and Goal. — Recognize the fact that all good gifts come from our Father in heaven through Christ. Cf. Fourth Petition. We are worthy of none of the things which we receive. Therefore we should not attempt to take credit for them. We should receive all these good gifts with thanksgiving.

Outline:

FOLLOW CHRIST

I. Because He furnishes His followers with wonderful heavenly gifts, which more than cover all earthly losses.

A. Non-followers:

1. They have a warped sense of values.
2. They treasure what they can see and grasp.
3. They grieve when they lose their earthly treasures.

B. The followers:

1. They have a true sense of values.

2. The heavenly treasures of the Gospel are their choicest possessions.
 3. Having these they are fully content.
- II. Because He provides His followers with all necessities of life.
- A. Following Christ, the 5,000 found their earthly needs supplied.
 - B. Following Christ, we shall not want. (He who redeemed our souls will surely provide for our bodies.)

ROBERT G. HEYNE

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 7:24-27

The Text and the Day. — This text is the continuation of the Gospel for the day and is woven together with it by “therefore,” v. 24. It reiterates and stresses, in the bold imagery of a simile, the declaration in v. 21. The thought of the text is reflected in the Collect, its imagery in the Gradual.

Notes on Meaning. — Compare parallel passage Luke 6: 47-49. The text is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount — impressive, powerful. Hence “these sayings of Mine” refers not merely to the passage immediately preceding the text, but to the entire Sermon on the Mount. Note that this sermon was addressed to the multitudes which followed Jesus, primarily, it seems, to His disciples, Matt. 5:1-2. It emphasizes the fact that it is not enough to hear the Word of God. “Doing” dare not be restricted to keeping the Commandments, but includes believing in Jesus as our Savior, John 6:40. The rain, floods, and winds refer principally, but apparently not only, to the Last Judgment, v. 22.

Preaching Pitfalls. — It would be a mistake to use this text for preaching on “The Two Foundations,” because the simile compares the builder who lays a solid foundation on bedrock with a man who tries to erect a house without laying any foundation at all. — A theme concentrating on the storms of life would miss the intended lesson of the text. — Guard against the omission of the Gospel. In the first place, the Sermon on the Mount presupposes the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ; in the second place, believing in Christ is in-

cluded in "heareth these sayings of Mine and *doeth* them," v. 24.

Preaching Emphases.—The great emphasis of the text is upon doing the will of God. Merely hearing the Word and understanding it will not suffice. Neither will a perfunctory worship of God, v. 21, nor apparently pious activities adorned by the use of His name, vv. 22-23. There must be (1) hearing the Word; (2) acceptance of Jesus as Savior; (3) the conscientious building of Christian character and life as a fruit of faith, in accordance with the Word and patterned after Jesus.

Problem and Goal.—Members of our congregations, especially those who grew up in the Church, are apt to be very complacent and unconcerned about their spiritual welfare or the kind of life they lead, because they belong to a church. The preacher himself is not immune in this respect. Hence Christians need the constant reminder that Christianity is not merely an affiliation with a visible organization, but a way of life growing out of faith in Christ.

Outline:

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BUILD SECURELY FOR TIME
AND ETERNITY?

I. Hear the Word of God.

A. Word the Foundation: Law and Gospel.

B. Hearing the Word is essential also for Christians.
Purpose: Edification.

II. Cling to Christ as our Savior.

A. Unscriptural conception of doing the will of God:
Salvation by works.

B. But doing the will of God implies, above all, be-
lieving in Jesus as our Savior.

III. Cultivate the Christian way of life.

A. Character (Christian virtues).

B. Conduct (Christian works). E. J. FRIEDRICH



NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 25:14-30

The Text and the Day. — Our text is one of three parables, Matt. 24:45—25:30. “The first deals with both faithfulness and wisdom, the second with wisdom alone, and the third, our text, with faithfulness alone.” These parables are a part of our Lord’s discourse on His Parousia and His admonitions to be ready for His coming at the end of all things. Our text is in keeping with the standard Gospel lesson for the day, Luke 16:1-9, which stresses faithfulness in the stewardship of money and property in view of eternity.

Notes on Meaning. — Vv. 14-28. The “man” of our parable is the Lord Jesus Christ, about to withdraw His visible presence from His disciples. The “servants” are the bondslaves of His household, all of His followers, “bought with a price.” The “talents” entrusted to them are various gifts: spiritual, mental, and material, also the opportunities to use them. 1 Cor. 12:8 ff. These talents are distributed “to every man according to his several ability,” one getting more talents and the others fewer. The Lord does not ask more than can be accomplished. He requires only faithfulness according to endowments and capacity. Without losing any time, the first two bond servants “traded” with the five and two talents respectively, that is, they worked with them in a thorough manner. By diligence and faithfulness both gained as many talents as they had received. But the third bond servant took his one talent, walked off, and hid his money in a hole in the ground instead of putting his talent to work.

Vv. 19-23. — A “long time” will elapse before the Lord’s visible return, but the time of grace will finally draw to a close. Matt. 25:31; 2 Pet. 3:8-10. Then will come the day when the Lord “reckoneth with them,” when all accounts will be settled. The first bond servant joyfully produced the talents received and the equal number gained. The second did likewise. The goodness and self-forgetting faithfulness of both servants are acknowledged by the Lord. While there was a difference in the number of talents entrusted to them, there was no difference in the eagerness to serve and the faithfulness displayed. Both received from the Lord a magnificent reward of grace.

Vv. 24-30. But the third servant was neither good nor faithful. He "received" the talent, but did not serve with it. He saw in his Master only a "hard" man, one intent only upon his own profit. The Lord calls him a "wicked" servant, one that is opposed to faithfulness. The ensuing penalty: We retain our talents if we use them; failing in this, we lose them. The wasted opportunities to serve are given to others. 1 Sam. 15:28; Acts 1:20. The unprofitable servant is consigned to the place of "weeping" that surpasseth all places of blood, sweat, and tears. The awful scene of "gnashing of teeth" is a sign of despair that comes to the damned in hell. Rev. 14:11.

Preaching Pitfalls. — "Why are only three bond servants mentioned? For the purpose of the parable, that is enough to show diversity." Why the inequality: Five, two, one? This shows the Lord's wisdom and love. There is a variety of work to be done by a variety of Christians, with a variety of endowments, in the midst of a variety of opportunities.

Preaching Emphases. — The text is a stirring appeal to all Christians to be and remain faithful stewards, to dedicate their persons, their Christian knowledge, the faculties of mind and body, their advantages in position, influence, and education, their possessions in money and goods, to the service of their Lord Jesus Christ. To each Christian has been given a place to fill, and the needed ability to fill that place.

Problem and Goal. — To achieve the heights of self-forgetting faithfulness, sinful man needs the right kind of motive power and sustaining strength, namely, the constraining love of Christ. Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:15. And then also the ever-glorious prospect of the "joy of the Lord," into which all faithful stewards will enter as they receive the reward of grace. Ps. 16:11; John 17:24.

Outline:

REASONS FOR ENDURING FAITHFULNESS

- I. *The number of talents that have been entrusted to us.*
 - A. The Master has acquired a great following of bond servants, whom He has bought with a price.
 - B. To them He entrusts an array of endowments and opportunities for grateful and loving service.

II. *The eventual accounting that will be required of us.*

- A. The "long time" of possession and service will come to a close.
- B. The day of reckoning together is self-evident.

III. *The gracious reward that will be in store for us.*

- A. Magnificent will be the reward of grace to the faithful.
- B. Terrible, however, will be the weeping and gnashing of the slothful.
- C. Lord, grant us grace and strength to be faithful unto death.

H. C. HARTING

