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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 Irrium 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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ARCHIVES

Homiletics

The Nassau Pericopes

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ROM. 5:1-5

The Text and the Day.—The Propers for the day set forth justification as God's gift to us. Introit: "Say unto my soul, I am thy Salvation." Epistle: "Put on the new man, which after God is *created* in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. 4:24. Gospel: "Thy sins *be forgiven thee.*" This objective justification is the basis of our faith, from which flows our sanctification, stressed in the Epistle for the day.

Notes on the Meaning.—V. 1 b: "We have peace with God" is not the peace of heart or conscience which we have by faith. Nor can we accept the reading *echoomen* instead of *echomen*, which is then interpreted as meaning keeping peace with God by avoiding sin and leading a God-pleasing life. The peace here meant is God's objective peace toward us. We are objects of God's favor. He is at peace with us through Christ. V. 2: "We have access by faith" is even stronger in the Greek text and can be translated, "We *have had*, and still have, access by faith," expressing the thought that access by faith was there even before we knew about it. V. 2 b: "Rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." The glory of God is the glory of heaven with God, of which the believer will be partaker. Rom. 8:17. V. 5 b: "The love of God" is not the love which we have toward God, but the love which God has toward us, of which the Holy Ghost assures us.

Preaching Pitfalls.—The blessing and comfort of this text would be lost if we were to apply it as though it taught subjective rather than objective justification. Self-evidently we will stress the appropriating of God's peace toward us by faith. But the fact that God's perfect peace is ours now, that He loves us now, that His perfect glory in heaven awaits us now—this heart of our glorious Gospel must be stressed. Our faith does not make peace. It merely clings to this peace, love, glory, of which God assures us.

Preaching Emphases. — What a blessed doctrine this doctrine of objective justification! It alone explains conclusively why God's only-begotten Son came into the world to save man. God wanted to make and did make peace with man, so far as He is concerned. Man could only be afraid of God till God justified him fully through Christ. — The doctrine of objective justification alone gives us an unshakable foundation for our faith. It alone offers us the incontestable assurance that every sin is forgiven now. — The doctrine of objective justification gives us a glimpse of the glory of God, which awaits us in heaven. This helps us rejoice not only in, but also because of, our tribulations. By them we learn patience, endurance, steadfastness. What is more, we experience by an actual testing of our faith that this hope in the glory of God that awaits us overcomes all obstacles. Thus our hope too grows brighter through trials. And all of this is ours because we have tasted of God's wonderful love through the working of the Holy Spirit, whom God sends to assure us of His love, as shown in our objective justification.

Problem and Goal. — No matter how long a person is a Christian, he can never have objective justification set forth too often or too clearly. In his thinking processes, which reflect his sinful heart, and because Satan wishes to rob him of the comfort of objective justification, he is constantly bedeviled by the many ways in which his righteousness tries to crowd out the righteousness of God prepared for us in Christ. May this text help us to point out that salvation is complete, that we *are* justified, so that the hearer will eagerly grasp in faith this wonderful peace God offers and go on his way with the song of salvation in his heart; ready joyfully to face every trial of life with an eye on the glory that awaits him.

Outline:

THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION

- I. Peace with God.
 - A. We have it through Christ.
 - B. We appropriate it by faith.
- II. Rejoicing in hope.
 - A. It is based on God's love toward us.
 - B. It looks to the glory of God which awaits us.
 - C. It is ours even in tribulation.

F. E. SCHUMANN

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

LUKE 9:28-36

The Text and the Day. — Various days of the church year have served as the Festival of Transfiguration. According to the Lutheran calendar, it was originally appointed for the last (sixth) Sunday of the Epiphany cycle, the account of Matthew (17:1-9) serving as Gospel of the day. Its proximity to the season of Lent is in keeping with the context found in the accounts of the Synoptists. By introducing this glorious festival into the nonfestive portion of the church year, the Nassau pericopic system brightens up, so to speak, this season and in the present year (1948) calls attention to the transfigured Christ in the month of the Reformation. Luther's work pointed not only to the cross-bearing and crucified Christ, but also to the transfigured and exalted Christ. — The Introit and particularly the Gradual for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany are to be preferred to those for the 20th Sunday after Trinity.

Notes on Meaning. — V. 28: "eight days"; Matthew and Mark speak of six. Luke included the day before and the day after the six. "After these sayings," in which Christ spoke of His and our cross-bearing and death. These sayings alarmed His disciples, and a significant purpose of Jesus' transfiguration was to show His disciples and us the glorious end and aim of His death. "Peter and John and James," at one time business partners, selected on various occasions to witness manifestations of the great power and glory of Christ (cf. Mark 5 and 14). "To pray" — Luke, the physician, was fond of pointing to the praying Christ. He was impressed with the healing powers of prayer, particularly in the life and work of his Savior.

V. 29: *to eidos heteron*, "a different external appearance," a real change, not a hallucination. The Transfiguration was not a mere dream. *Leukos*, bright, dazzling white, co-ordinate with *exastraptoon*, sending forth lightning, radiating. Matthew: "His face did shine as the sun." Mark: "White as snow." Light shone not upon Him from without, but out of Him, from within. What a contrast to Is. 53:2. — Christ, thus interrupted while praying His prayer, answered while He was yet speaking.

V. 30: Moses represented the Law, Elijah the Prophets.

Met with the Messiah who had come, not with a Messiah of the future.

V. 31: Appeared visibly and actually and spoke audibly "of His decease," *exodos*, not *thanatos*. Peter so deeply impressed by this event and by this expression that he later (2 Pet. 1:15-18) referred back to the Transfiguration and used the very word *exodos* to describe his own death. *Emelle*, "which He should," i. e., was at the point of doing by divine appointment. "At Jerusalem" (prophecy) in the so-called "holy city," in the great center of religion, the just and holy Christ is to be condemned to death.

V. 32: "Heavy with sleep," recorded by Luke only. As in Gethsemane, the three disciples fell asleep while Jesus prayed. — *Diagreeogoresantes*, "being fully awake." "Saw His glory," actually saw and thus became eyewitnesses of His majesty. 2 Pet. 1:16.

V. 33: "Master": "Rabbi." Only by Luke. Peter may have made his proposal to keep Christ away from Jerusalem, the scene of His death. In that case the situation facing Christ was similar to that facing Paul, Acts 21:11-14. The usual interpretation given is, of course, that Peter was so happy and ecstatic that he wanted to be through with the sordid conditions of life. In this world all joys are transitory; we have no heaven on earth.

V. 34: Luke: "they feared"; Matthew (17:6) "they fell on their face and were sore afraid." Typical reaction of the sinner in the presence of the holy God.

V. 35: "my beloved Son"; Greek text: "elect, chosen Son," *eklelegmenos*. "Hear Him," Him only, reverently; His Word (Gospel) leads to salvation and glory.

V. 36: Told no man "in those days," but spoke, even wrote (Synoptists, Peter), of it later. Moses and Elias departed that Christ might increase, they decrease. The cloud, too, disappeared, and the majestic Christ stood before them alone — left behind that He might suffer and die.

Preaching Pitfalls. — It is dangerous to rationalize about the reality of the Transfiguration; like the Resurrection of our Savior, the Transfiguration should be accepted in the Christian faith with which we accept the trustworthy Word of God. Since Moses and Elijah appeared to discuss with our

Savior His great work of atonement on the Cross, the ecstasy of the disciples should not be stressed at the expense of the greater message of the text. Suffering and glory here stand aside of each other, and the importance of neither in the life and work of our Savior is to be underestimated; also the Transfiguration story "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Preaching Emphases. — Christ's popularity among men was beginning to wane, and His suffering and death were drawing close to the time the Transfiguration took place. He found it difficult to discuss with His disciples and followers His inevitable suffering and death; with Moses and Elijah He was able to discuss what was before Him. Peter, John, and James showed the same shortsightedness and the same lethargy we would have shown had we been present at the Transfiguration. Our sinful nature prompts us to belittle the big issues of life and salvation and to exalt the incidental side issues.

Problem and Goal. — We all, including us preachers, must learn first to "hear Him" who has given us His Word. If we do this, then will a wonderful transfiguration take place also in our lives. From Christ's Transfiguration we can learn, too, the efficacy of prayer. The alarmed and sin-sick world of today needs the transfigured Christ badly; only this Christ can heal our hearts and minds, render incorrupt our mortal bodies, and house us forever in the eternal mansions above, where joys do not cease and where we behold God as He is.

Outline:

THE GLORIOUS TRANSFIGURATION OF A MAN
OF SORROWS

- I. Jesus, a Man of Sorrows.
 - A. Despite all He had already said and done, many still did not regard Jesus as their Messiah (v. 18 ff.).
 - B. Because of their false conceptions of the Messianic office, Jesus had to point the people to what the Prophets had foretold, namely, that He, the Messiah, must suffer and die. The followers of the Messiah, too, must live a life of self-denial in order to follow the Messiah (v. 22 ff.).
 - C. Even Jesus' disciples showed little understanding

of all this (v. 33; vv. 44-45; 9:46) and slept while He prayed (v. 32; Mark 14:40).

- D. Jesus' popularity was beginning to wane, the hatred of His enemies was becoming more intense, and persecution became more and more difficult to bear (8:37; 9:53).

II. Jesus, our transfigured Lord.

- A. As on other occasions (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43), the Father strengthened His Son in time of need.
- B. While on other occasions angels conveyed to Jesus the strength from the Father, on this occasion Moses, the Lawgiver, and Elijah, the Prophet, strengthened Him.
- C. They discussed with Jesus His suffering and death, which Jesus had not been able to discuss with His disciples.
- D. For this momentous occasion Jesus was wonderfully transfigured, while Moses and Elijah appeared in glory.
- E. The Transfiguration is a symbol of what will happen to God's children as a result of Christ's painful but glorious work of atonement.
- F. In closing His account, the Holy Spirit informs us that we are to hear the transfigured Christ. Through His Word, the Gospel, do we receive the strength we need and the salvation we long for.
- G. Let us follow the examples of Jesus' disciples and preach this Gospel of the transfigured Christ to all the world.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JOHN 9:1-11

The Text and the Day. — God is able (Introit and Gradual) to hear the cry of His Church (Collect). And He does hear, granting deliverance (the Gospel) and protection (the Epistle), so that His disciples may serve Him the better. Our text gives us an example of this in the healing of one born blind.

Notes on the Meaning. — V. 2: "Who did sin" (Aorist: lit., "Who committed the sin which caused him to be born blind?") The disciples were evidently influenced by the common belief of their day "that each sickness or sorrow was traceable to some particular sin," *Expos. Greek Test.*, Vol. I, p. 782; cp. Ex. 20:5; Job 22:5-11; Acts 28:4. — V. 3. Cf. Eccl. 9:1-2; Luke 13:1-5; John 11:4; and Rom. 8:28. — V. 4: "We must work" (Greek, *heemas*) emphasizes the fact that we ought to emulate the example of Christ, doing our duty as opportunity presents itself. — V. 5: lit., "When" or "Whenever," not as in the A. V., "as long as." — V. 7: "Siloam." From this pool, "water was taken on the day of the great Hosannah, the last of the Feast of Tabernacles, whose pouring out symbolized the sending of the Spirit," *Pop. Comm.*, N. T., Vol. I, p. 462. Hence, perhaps, a deliberate Messianic reference to Himself as the Sent One. — V. 8, lit., "Is not this he who is always sitting and begging?" The blind would usually solicit alms by some such terms as these: "Gain merit by me"; or "O tenderhearted, by me gain merit to thine own benefit." But on the Sabbath they would, of course, neither ask nor receive alms, though their presence in the wonted place would perhaps secure wider notice. The blind were regarded as especially entitled to charity. Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 178, "Life and Times of Jesus." — V. 9 a: lit., "Some were saying." — V. 9 b: Greek, "*Ego*," emphatic, since the subject is already in the verb. Hence, lit., "I Myself am He." — V. 11: "*Aneblepsa*," lit., "I recovered sight," used loosely here, since he had been blind from birth.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Don't make this a story for the story's sake. Don't neglect the context. Draw on the whole story, but only in order to teach the lesson of the text.

Preaching Emphases. — This text urges us not to waste precious time, by speculating unnecessarily and perhaps unjustly concerning the causes of affliction; or by permitting ourselves to be handicapped by man-made traditions (v. 16); but rather to use all our energies and skills and opportunities to free our fellow men from the blindness of sin and unbelief.

Problem and Goal. — Our problem is to get our people to use to a fuller extent all their skills and time in order to give sight and light to them that "sit in darkness." In order to achieve this goal we must: (1) Make them conscious of

what a sin it is not so to employ their energies; and (2) pardon them through Christ. In so doing we put God's Law in their inward parts and "write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:31).

Outline:

JESUS GIVES SIGHT AND LIGHT

I. He gives sight.

- A. Our text tells the story of one born blind who was given sight. He was a well-known and blind beggar whose claim to congenital blindness (v. 9) was verified by his parents (v. 20) and also substantiated by an investigation conducted under the auspices of the local court (vv. 13, 16, 18, 24) and by his own bold courage in the face of danger (vv. 20-34; see Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 183 ff.).
- B. In a sense we are all born blind (v. 41; John 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:14), and only the mercy and power of Him who healed the physically blind can cure our spiritual blindness. And He *has* given us sight (v. 39).
- C. As Jesus used the lowly elements of clay and spittle to perform the glorious work of giving sight to the blind, even so He uses our humble dust and the earthly elements of water, wine, and bread (the Sacraments) to effect spiritual sight.

II. He gives light.

- A. With respect to affliction, He corrects our false views as to the specific cause thereof and teaches us to look for God's purpose therein (v. 3; Luke 13:1-5; Rom. 8:28).
- B. With respect to Himself, He teaches us to recognize in Him the Messiah and the Light of the world (vv. 5, 17, 33, 35-38).
- C. With respect to our purpose in life, He shows us that it must be like His, to use all our allotted time and skills for the purpose of giving sight and light to our fellow men (v. 4, in Greek, and v. 5).

Conclusion: May His Mercy in giving us sight and light move us to share these gifts with those who have them not. Amen.

THEODORE F. NICKEL

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

COL. 3:12-15

The Text and the Day.—The theme of the day is that our state of forgiveness under God has consequences in our behavior. The Introit adores God for this forgiveness; the Collect addresses God as our total Refuge; the Epistle asserts that God, who has given faith, will now make love abound; the Gospel is the parable of the unmerciful servant. This text aligns itself well with its description of the practical results of the state of the regenerate life.

Notes on Meaning.—The text describes concrete results, in the congregation and in the individual Christian's heart, of the regenerate state. That state was summed up in the preceding verse as Christ's being all in all. This condition, v. 12, making the Christian man God's own, leads him to put on, as a holy person beloved of God, a number of concrete characteristics as definitely as a person puts on fresh clothing: compassion that is genuinely from the heart, sweetness of disposition, humbleness and meekness toward other people, patient, v. 13, and forgiving toward others, and practicing that quality right in the everyday quarrels of life; just as Christ forgave us—in exactly the same way.—V. 14. The top garment, which gives meaning to all the rest and is more beautiful than all the others, is love; put that on, too. "Bond of perfectness"—that attitude of the heart which most perfectly binds men together.—V. 15: The peace of God in the better manuscripts is "the peace of Christ," i. e., the peace which Christ produces, effects through the atonement and His Spirit. It is to have ruling force in the heart, fill it out; for that is the end and purpose of the whole plan and calling of God through Christ. That peace is not only in the individual heart, but it is a peace which holds Christians together in one body. This peace of heart expresses itself in a growing exercise and mood of thankfulness to God for this peace and oneness.

Preaching Pitfalls.—The two most common problems of Epistle preaching occur here: that the doctrine of the atonement is not explicit since it has been covered previously, here in chap. I; and that a profusion of weighty and meaty concepts clamors for treatment. Here the preacher's great purpose

must be to find a central and unified thought and give it the propulsion of the whole counsel of God.

Problem and Goal.—The text is rich enough to provide a series of sermons. The goal which St. Paul has in mind at this point is the improvement of the Christian's life in the direction to which his renewal of the Spirit through Christ should lead him. The problems have been sketched in the preceding, vv. 5-9. The insertion of v. 11 reveals that St. Paul is thinking of those problems which mar the unity of the Christian fellowship in the congregation, and in this text is exhorting to those virtues which are at once the symptom and the reinforcement of the life of love in the congregation.

Outline:

CHRIST PRODUCES IDEAL CHURCH MEMBERS

- I. Their practices toward each other.
Vv. 12 and 13, treated with the contrasts of worldly vices in vv. 8 and 9.
- II. The source of these practices, in the individual heart.
 - A. Charity toward men;
 - B. The peace of Christ; a gift toward men from God.
- III. The design that Christ has had to this end.
The Atonement and the gift of the Spirit in regeneration have as their end a life in one body, the body of the congregation. RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

FESTIVAL OF REFORMATION

Acts 17:30-31

The Text and the Day.—The Propers for the day refer to the Church Militant, which is exhorted to defend the truth delivered to it by the fathers and to hand it down to the generations following. The Introit offers quotations from the Reformation Psalm (46), expressing the certain confidence of the Church that she will prevail against all who assail her, because God is her Refuge and Strength. The text is applicable to the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century and, as does the Epistle of the day (Rev. 14:7), points to the final Judgment of the world.

Notes on Meaning.—The text is the concluding appeal which Paul, standing on Mars' Hill, addressed to the people of Athens. Vv. 22-31 is an excerpt of the Apostle's sermon to the Athenians, in which he exposes the folly of their idolatry. Then, in v. 30, he skillfully endeavors to win their hearts by proclaiming the long-suffering patience of God, who mercifully overlooked their ignorance, "who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," chap. 14:16. But now that a new light is risen upon the world, it is time to put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, Rom. 13:12. Now it is imperative that all men repent. Repentance in the wider sense, as in Luke 24:47.

V. 31. Standing on the Areopagus, where the most solemn court procedures were held, the reference to the Day of Judgment must have been impressive. "The hour of His Judgment is come," Rev. 14:7. The Reformation by Luther was a prelude to the great Day of the Lord. The Antichrist has been revealed before all the world as "the wicked one," and he will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming, 2 Thess. 2:8. Now there is no longer any excuse either for Romanists or for sleeping Lutherans. All men may know that the Pope is the Antichrist since Luther has unmasked him.

Preaching Emphases.—The text is a stirring appeal to evaluate the two great blessings of the Reformation, the formal principle: the Scriptures only, and the material principle: by grace, through faith, without the deeds of the Law. It is a warning against all modern forms of idolatry, such as cold formalism, Pharisaic self-trust, and the convenient thought that we have the truth in books. It urges daily repentance, as set forth in the first of Luther's 95 Theses.

Problem and Goal.—To arouse hearers to searching self-examination and to constant watchfulness and waiting for the Lord's return to Judgment; to lead them to praise the unmerited mercies of God.

Outline:

PAUL'S SERMON ON MARS' HILL

- I. The times of this ignorance God winked at.
 - A. The Athenians worshiped many idols, including "The Unknown God," v. 23. The Lord manifested Himself in creation, that people should seek Him,

- v. 27. Therefore there is no excuse for ignorance of the true God, Rom. 1:20. Yet in His mercy He overlooks such ignorance.
- B. There exists today a profound lack of knowledge of Bible truth, pervading all sections of human society, although Luther with a loud voice proclaimed the everlasting Gospel and restored the Bible. God has winked at this ignorance.
- II. But now He commands all men everywhere to repent.
- A. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you" (v. 23), the true and living God.
- B. The Reformation brought the last flaring up of Gospel light before endless darkness shall settle on the earth. Lutheran Hour; mission expansion movements in many denominations.
- C. Heed the call to repentance. The Antichrist has been revealed. The future Judge is still your merciful Savior, who "offers faith unto all men," v. 31 (marginal reading). Then publish the tidings of the open Bible and the open heaven.

L. J. ROEHM

