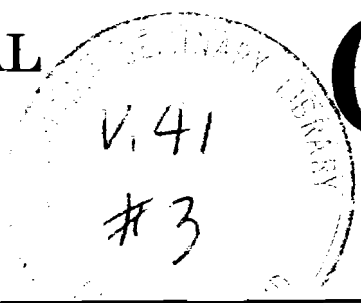


CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 41 Number 3



JULY 1977

RECEIVED

JUL 27 1977

God's People in Fellowship at the Communion Table	Lowell C. Green	1
An Invitation to Ishmael	C. George Fry	13
Man Made in the Image of God and Its Relationship to the First Promise	David P. Scaer	20
Theses on Woman Suffrage in the Church	Douglas Judisch	36
Theological Observer		46
Homiletical Studies		58
Book Reviews		81
Books Received		105

Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Homiletical Studies

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 9:18-25

The time of Christ's passion is rapidly approaching, and Jesus is training His twelve against the day of His departure. V. 19: In response to His question, people generally felt that Christ was either John the Baptist (the view of Herod. Mt 14:2); or Elijah (Jn 1:21; Mal 4:5); or Jeremiah (2 Macc 2:4-8). People find in Jesus only the precursor of the Messiah, not the Messiah Himself. Today many people laud Jesus only as a great teacher or a great moral example but are unwilling to acknowledge that He is the Son of God. V. 20: Peter responds to the second question. He says that Christ, the Son of Man, is both Son of God and the Christ. He is God's Son, of the same nature and essence as God. The true God is the living God as opposed to the idols of the Gentiles. V. 21: "Tell no man," lest the populace in their spiritual blindness try to make Him an earthly King (Jn 6:14-15). V. 22: "Son of man" – alone of His kind who should represent the world before God to undo the sin of the first Adam, Ro 5:17-19. "The Son of man must" – because of the divine plan. This "must" mastered Christ's life. "Elders, chief priests, scribes," this group constituted the Jewish council. Jesus asserts with equal assurance both His death and His victorious resurrection. V.23: "Deny Himself" – a person needs to deny selfish gratification, particularly the notion that he can be his own saviour. "The cross" – this is the cross of persecution for Christ's sake. V.24: "Save his life" means to live only to satisfy selfish desires. "Lose his life" means to live a life of selfless service to Christ and His Kingdom as the fruit of a living faith. One has to lose his life to find it. How enigmatic. How true.

You Have to Lose Your Life to Save It

I. True in the experience of Christ.

A. He is the Christ of God.

1. Popular notions were wrong.
2. He is the Christ of God.
 - a. The promised Messiah for whom Israel waited, Gen 3:15; Is 7:14; 9:6; Gen 12:3.
 - b. God Himself sent Christ into the world, Jn 3:16.

B. He attained a great victory through suffering.

1. He died for the sins of the world. Phil 2:5-8; Jn 10:11.
2. His resurrection proclaimed His victory over sin and death. 1 Cor 15:55-57.

Christ lost His life to save it. Today we worship Him as our Savior and Lord.

II. We, too, must lose our life to save it.

A. The man who wants to save his life will lose it.

1. He lives to secure only things of this life, Lk 16:19 ff.
2. He relies on his own works for salvation, Lk 18:18 ff.
3. Hence, he loses his life, Lk 9:25.

B. The one who loses his life will save it.

1. He denies himself as savior and looks only to Christ, Mk 16:16; Ac 16:31.
2. He takes up his cross, being willing to suffer for Christ, Mt 5:11-12.
3. He brings forth the fruit of faith by following Christ.
 - a. Crucifying his flesh, Ro 6:6; Gal 6:14.
 - b. Bringing forth fruits of righteousness, Ps 1; Eph 2:10; Mt 5:13-16.

One has to lose his life to find it. How true. How challenging.

HJE

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 9:51-62

Verse 51: This was not Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem, but one which would settle His fate as far as the Jews were concerned. "Received up": This points to the ascension, with the passion and resurrection intervening. V. 52: The Samaritans were a racially mixed people who accepted only the Pentateuch. There was little love lost between Jews and Samaritans, Jn. 4:9. The Samaritans refused Jesus lodging. V.54: "As Elias did": Cf. 1 Kgs 1:10. This is a doubtful reading. James and John, sons of thunder, had to learn the full lesson of humility. Christ was bent not on destroying, but on saving souls. The Christian church does not use force in bringing the Gospel to people. V. 56: "The Son of man is come": This is a doubtful reading. V.57: Here are three would-be disciples. They evidence inconsiderate impulse, conflicting duties, and the divided mind. True discipleship implies denial of self and all earthly ties for the sake of the Kingdom. The first man did not count the cost of discipleship. V. 58: "The foxes": If that is the Savior's lot, the disciple can expect no more. V. 59: Jesus asks the scribe to become His disciple. "Let the dead bury the dead": Let those whose occupation it is, bury the dead. The need of preaching the gospel must take precedence over family duties. V.61: This man wants to take care of something he is personally interested in before following Christ. "Bid farewell": Better translated, "Let me first set in order my affairs at home." V.62: "No man having put his hand to the plow": He who would plow straight furrows must not look back. Following Jesus requires a firm intention and a steady eye. A person must devote his entire life to discipleship.

Introduction: Life demands dedication, the student to his studies, the businessman to his business, the housewife to her important work of child-rearing. Discipleship, too, demands dedication.

Discipleship Demands Dedication

I. Exemplified by Jesus.

A. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem.

1. The Samaritans refused him lodging.
2. James and John want them destroyed.

B. Jesus rebukes the disciples.

1. Jesus loved even His enemies.
 - a. Instances: He wept over Jerusalem; He called Judas His friend; 1 Pt. 2:23.
 - b. He loved the whole world of sinners.
 - a) All have sinned, Ro 3:12.
 - b) All deserve eternal death, Ro 5:17.
2. He showed His dedication to His work by going to Jerusalem to die.
 - a. He took our guilt, Is 53:6
 - b. He suffered our punishment, Is 53:4-5.

From the purpose of saving the world Jesus did not falter. Never has anyone lived so dedicated a life.

II. Christ looks for dedication in us.

A. Don't be rash.

1. The first man evidently had not counted the cost.
2. Jesus reminded him of the cost, v 58.
 - a. Foxes and birds fared better than Jesus.
 - b. Christ has not promised Christians a bed of roses, Mt 10:22; Mk 8:34.

It takes dedication to be a Christian.

B. Don't let important things keep you from the most important.

1. To bury a father is important.
2. Preaching the Kingdom is more important.

Be dedicated. Some people always have something to do before being a disciple, Ps. 95:7. Christians sometimes major in minors.

C. Don't let worldly things keep you from following Christ.

1. This man wanted to say goodbye to his family and to set his family affairs in order.
2. The temptation faces some to let their family keep them from following Christ, Mt. 19:5; Mt. 10:37.
3. Some let personal interest keep them from dedicated discipleship, 2 Tim. 4:10.
4. Jesus says: "Don't look back because you can't plow a straight furrow that way," Mt 6:24; 1 Jn 2:15.

The measure of a man is that to which he is dedicated. Put Christ first in your life, Mt 22:37; Mt 6:33.

HJE

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 10:1-9, 16

"After this" (v 1) refers to the incidents in the preceding chapter. "The Lord appointed seventy others," in addition to the twelve disciples who had already been sent on a similar mission (Mt. 9:1-6). "I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves" (v 3), a picture of the risks Christian preachers take, for they are seemingly weak and defenseless. Yet they are not to worry about their livelihood but to work with a joyous abandon (v 4a), nor are they to dally in aimless conversation with individuals they meet (v 4b). "Peace be to this house!" is more than a common salutation (v 5). It is an offer of divine peace, as is evident from v.6 which describes the peace spoken of as resting upon a son of peace. "And remain in the same house" (v 7) indicates that one house and family were to be selected as the center of the work. The missionaries were also to eat whatever was set before them without fussing about clean or unclean foods (vs 7-8). To attest to the fact that they had been sent by the Lord with an offer of divine peace they also healed the sick (v 9). God saw that this miraculous power was needed in those early days of the church. They themselves hardly believed in their possession of such power even after Christ had announced the gift to them (v 17). The reception accorded their message reflects the attitude of the hearers toward Christ Himself (v 16).

Our problem is that we sometimes wish and perhaps even expect God's kingdom to come near us through something more spectacular than human beings and the words they speak. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would see pastors and their message as an altogether adequate way of bringing God's kingdom to men. Introductory thought: Since we associate God's kingdom (God's grace, presence, and rule in our hearts) with something superhuman—God Himself, and divine goodness and strength, we tend to think that God's kingdom ought to come near us in ways that transcend the ordinary. But Jesus reaffirms the down-to-earthness of God's kingdom by pointing to

God's Way of Bringing His Kingdom Near

- I. Through men He sends in answer to prayer.
- II. Through words He gives these men to speak.

I.

- A. It is the Lord who sends laborers into the harvest (vs 1,2b; Jn 3:15, Eph 4:11).
1. He wants us to pray for pastors, and He promises to answer such prayers.
2. He works through individual Christians to recruit men for the pastoral office, and He works through Christian congregations to call men into that office.

B. The Lord is able to send the right kind of laborers.

1. Men who know that God will provide for their daily needs (v 4a).
2. Men who are not unappreciative of what Christians give to support them (v 7; 1 Cor 10:27).
3. Men who have a sense of urgency because the time is short (v 4b).

Is there a shortage of pastors? Pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send them. That is God's way of bringing His kingdom near. The primary task of the men God sends is to speak the word He has given them.

II.

A. These words point to a unique peace (v 5b).

1. With God through His Messiah (Lk 2:14; Jn 14:27).
2. Flowing from the forgiveness of sins (Jn 20:21).

B. These words offer peace.

1. All who receive the Word of God in faith have peace with God (sons of peace, v 6a), for to hear with a believing heart the Word of God spoken by the pastor is to hear Christ Himself (v 16a).
2. All who reject God's words in unbelief lack peace with God, for they thereby reject Christ (v 16b).
 - a. The rejection of God's offer of peace brings dire consequences (context, vs 12,14-15).
 - b. Men can spurn the kingdom, and many do.

The word spoken by men seems so ordinary, so common. But if that word has its basis in God's written Word, Holy Scripture, it is God's effective way of bringing His kingdom near. God continues to bring His kingdom near through men and the words they speak—which shows how near God wants to be to us and how real He wants His kingdom to be.

GA

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 10:25-37

"Lawyer" (v 25) refers to a scribe or expert in the Law of Moses. "He stood up," probably to attract Christ's attention. His reason for testing Jesus was possibly to convict Him of some unorthodox statement that would injure His reputation as a teacher. Jesus cleverly turned the tables on His cross-examiner (v 26) by showing that the lawyer already knew the answer to his question. The answer was drawn from Dt 6:5 and Lv 19:18, correct as far as the words went (v 28). But no one can do what the Law requires toward God and man. Yet inability to keep the Law for eternal life does not mean there is to be no effort to keep it. Implicit in Jesus' words (v 28) is the idea that love is not merely to be theorized about but practiced. Now the lawyer, probably embarrassed and perplexed, tried to show he had acted in good faith by putting another question, "And who is my neighbor" (v 29)? Where am I to draw the line? The parable which followed was not to answer the man's question but to show him that it was the wrong question. The right question is not, "Whom am I to regard as neighbor?" but, "To whom can I be one?" The right answer to that question is, "to anyone in need of my help."

The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho (v 30) was seventeen miles of dangerous, rocky road. Two pillars of the Jewish church, a priest and a Levite (one of the minor clergy), come along but do not help. They might have thought the man was dead, and they knew their duties in the temple prevented them from defiling themselves by touching a corpse (Nu 19:11). Or they might have been afraid that the robbers were still hiding nearby and would attack them (vs 31-32). The hero of the tale is the Samaritan, a half-breed heretic who took one look at the man and was moved to pity (v 33), extravagant in his solicitude and love (vs 34-35). When Jesus asks the final question (v 36), the lawyer gives the only possible answer, but even then cannot bring himself

to name the hated Samaritan. The lawyer had asked, "How can I love my neighbor if I don't know who he is?" The point of the parable is that one's neighbor may well be the man we least expect. Love knows no bounds of race, space, or character.

The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would actually love their fellow men in deed as well as in word. The problem is that the hearers do not always make love a practical matter. The means to the goal is the love Jesus showed very practically to redeem and renew us. Introductory thought: The Samaritan loved in a practical way, but how practical is it for us? Can we "go and do" what he did? Is it not beyond us? Not if we remember the love Jesus showed us by keeping the Law and dying for us. He has put His love (*agapē*) in us so that we can "go and do likewise." For us who are in Christ,

Love is a Practical Matter

I. Extended to all who need help.

II. Ready to do anything that needs to be done.

I.

A. With no restrictions based on race.

1. The lawyer excluded hated Samaritans from those to be helped.
2. Many today exclude other races from the neighbor concept—Jews and Arabs in Middle East, discrimination against minorities in the U.S. How much racial prejudice is there among us?
3. Love does not ask, "Are they like us?" but goes out to all regardless of ethnic background.

B. With no restrictions based on acquaintance.

1. People in Christ's day tended to limit their love to friends and acquaintances.
2. It is hard even today to think of people in other countries as neighbors.
3. Yet people we do not know may have just as great a claim on our love as friends and acquaintances. (The Samaritan did not know the injured man personally.)

C. With no restrictions based on character.

1. The lawyer and others like him are ready to love good people, but not publicans and sinners.
2. Likewise today we are ready to love people who are upright, thankful for what we do for them, and who will love us in return.
3. But love must be extended also to the reprobates and outcasts of society.

Love is a practical matter. It cannot be narrowly restricted. How very practical love is can be seen in Jesus, who loved you and me and every sinner enough to redeem and renew us. Now we can extend love to all.

II.

A. Without excuses.

1. We do not know why the priest and the Levite were so callous, but they no doubt could have offered excuses.
 - a. They might have been late for the temple service.
 - b. They might have feared defilement.
 - c. They might have feared being attacked by the robbers.
2. We can usually rationalize our way out of helping someone.
 - a. No time.
 - b. No money.
 - c. "It won't do any good anyway."

B. With specific aid.

1. The Samaritan gave the kind of help that was needed.
2. We can give concrete help.
 - a. Help someone find a job.
 - b. Give food and clothing.

- c. Give money to bring medicine and the Gospel Word.
- d. Speak words of comfort and encouragement.
- C. With generosity.
 - 1. The Samaritan did not skimp in the help he gave.
 - 2. Love is extravagant in the giving of time, the sharing of self, the bestowing of gifts (widow's mite, Mk 12:41-44).

Conclusion: Jesus offered no excuses to escape the cross, but generously came through with the specific help we needed to be His own. That is why we can now stand ready to do whatever needs to be done to help our neighbor. That is why love can be for us such a practical matter.

GA

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 10:38-42

"Now as they went on their way" (v 38): Jesus was on His way to the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem in the December that preceded His crucifixion. The village He now entered was Bethany, where Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus lived. Martha is clearly the mistress of the house (v 38) and is probably the older sister. Her sister Mary sat right in front of the feet of Jesus and listened to His talk (v 39). Martha was distracted or cumbered (v 40), drawn round with anxiety and therefore distracted in mind and in looks. She burst in upon Jesus and reproached Him for monopolizing Mary to her (Martha's) own inconvenience. She felt Jesus was the key to Mary's giving her a hand. Jesus' response (v 41) indicates that Martha was not only inwardly anxious but outwardly agitated. But Martha need not have been so troubled, for Jesus was satisfied with only a little in the way of physical nourishment. What He was more interested in, and what both sisters needed most, was spiritual sustenance. Therefore, the best dish on the table was spiritual food, the Word of Jesus. That good portion Mary had chosen (v 42) and it would not be taken from her. Jesus pointedly took Mary's side.

The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would give the Word of Christ priority in their lives. The problem is one of misplaced emphases. Introductory thought: Both Martha and Mary believed in Jesus, loved Him, and wished to serve Him. Yet Jesus reproved Martha for her poor choice and commended Mary for her good choice. We are in danger of making poor choices in our Christian life. Our text reminds us that the best choice we can possibly make is to sit at Jesus' feet.

Our Good Portion is at Jesus' Feet

- I. That is a matter of deliberate choice.
- II. That choice is truly rewarding.

I.

- A. Martha chose to serve, which was not wrong in itself.
 - 1. It was good that she was hospitable and wanted dinner to go well.
 - 2. Likewise it is good when Christians today choose to serve at tables, in offices, on committees raising funds, and equipping the building.
 - 3. But if, at the same time, the Word is neglected the emphasis has been misplaced.
 - a. The result is often a ruffled temper and anxiety (v 40).
 - b. We need to be reproved for being so troubled about peripheral things as to scold and expect the Lord to take sides in a family misunderstanding.

One can deliberately choose not to sit at Jesus' feet.

- B. Mary chose to hear the Word.

- 1. She too wanted to serve Jesus, but to do so would have meant not hearing Him.

2. Choosing the good portion is a matter of setting up priorities.
 - a. Nearly everything in life involves a choice.
 - b. A human being by nature can never make the right choice in spiritual matters because he is spiritually blind and an enemy of God. We did not choose Jesus; He chose us (Jn 15:16).
 - c. Jesus chose us as His own in Holy Baptism and we were born again. Now as Christians we have important choices to make, and we are able to make them.
3. We can deliberately choose to listen to the Word of Jesus in church, to invite Jesus into our home, and to establish a family altar.

II.

- A. Rewarding because through His Word we know Jesus.
 1. We learn of His love for us.
 2. We are given salvation in Him.
- B. Rewarding because that portion will not be taken away from us.
 1. We may be deprived of earthly treasures and pleasures.
 2. But we will never lose Jesus and eternal life.
- C. Rewarding because we receive strength to serve.
 1. Listening to the Word will not make us less useless.
 2. Through the Word we are enabled to serve the Lord better in all that we do.

There are many temptations to make the choice Martha did. But why open ourselves to distraction? The good portion is at Jesus' feet.

GA

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 11:1-13

In direct response to the request by the disciples that He teach them to pray, Jesus gives them the Lord's Prayer. The small divergencies between the form of the Lord's Prayer here and that in Matthew are an indication that the essential point is not an exact repetition of the words. In the pericope which includes the Lord's Prayer and the parable of the "Friend at Midnight" the emphasis is placed upon relationship. God is identified as "father." The disciple does not come to someone out of whom gifts have to be unwillingly extracted, but to a father who delights to supply his children's needs.

Since the whole family slept in one room, it was a great imposition to disturb the householder, because it involved disturbing and rousing the whole family. Not only did the midnight visitor disturb, he knocked on with "shameless persistence" until the householder acquiesced in the requests of the determined borrower. To the petitions of disciples Jesus gives the definite promise that their prayers will be heard and draws attention to the best gift of all, the Holy Spirit.

We recall that, whenever preaching upon a parable, the preacher must take hold of the point of comparison and let his treatment of the parable be governed by it. "If you being evil know how to give good gifts, how much more so will the Heavenly Father supply all His children's needs."

The Father's Promised Willingness to Hear Prayer

- I. We give to those who ask us.
 - A. Those who presume upon the right of friendship.
 - B. Those who presume upon the right of kinship.
 - C. Even though evil we give good gifts (needs are met for whatever reasons or motives).
- II. More so will our Heavenly Father give to those who ask Him.
 - A. For He has revealed Himself to us as Father. By faith in the redemptive act of Christ we are adopted into God's family as His children.

- B. For Christ directs us to pray.
 - 1. To the Father.
 - 2. Persistently (with "shameful persistence").
 - 3. Confidently.
- C. Christ directs us to the promise.
 - 1. The promise of good things. We are led to rely upon the Father for all needs of body and soul (the petitions).
 - 2. The Holy Spirit as the great gift of the Father.

NHM

THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 12:13-21

In the incident which forms the introduction to the "Parable of the Rich Fool," Jesus warns against "every form of covetousness," the greedy desire to have more. For Jesus, knowing what is at the root of the brother's unreasonable request, takes opportunity of warning all against this prevalent and subtle sin. Jesus makes the point that life depends for its value upon the use we make of our possessions and for its prolongation upon the will of God. The parable illustrates both of these points.

We note first the repeated use of the pronoun "my"—"my fruits," "my barn," "my goods," "my soul." This man never sees beyond himself. Furthermore he never sees beyond this world. All his plans are made on the basis of life in this world. Jesus calls this man "senseless," "without reason," "without reflection or intelligence." He is without reason, because this night his soul is to be demanded of him. To whom will his possessions belong then? He has said, "my fruits," "my goods." Now he is to be dispossessed at once. Life does not consist in having possessions, but in having a right relationship with God.

In What Does Your Life Consist?

- I. Does it consist in the abundance of your possessions?
 - A. God calls such a person with such a life foolish.
 - 1. For such a man never sees beyond himself.
 - a. He fails to thank God.
 - b. He fails to accomplish anything good with his possessions.
 - 2. For he never looks beyond this world.
 - a. He neglects the truth that death might come at anytime.
 - b. He will be immediately dispossessed.
 - c. He is oblivious to the fact that after death his possessions can render him no service.
 - B. Jesus warns us to beware of covetousness.
 - 1. This is a subtle and prevalent sin.
 - 2. We often try to find meaning in life, security, contentment, happiness in the abundance of things.
 - 3. To do so makes us senseless.
- II. Or does it consist in being rich toward God?
 - A. Christ became poor in order to make us rich.
 - B. We are rich toward God when we can see beyond ourselves.
 - 1. Recognizing God's claim on us.
 - 2. Using our possessions in accordance with His will.
 - C. We are rich toward God when we look beyond the world.
 - 1. Perceiving the transient characteristic of life.
 - 2. Perceiving the limitations of earthly goods.
 - 3. Rejoicing in the assurance of our eternal destiny.

NHM

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 12:32-40

The little flock about whom Jesus speaks certainly refers to the disciples. The little flock of believers has no reason to fear, for God in His good pleasure has decided to give it the kingdom. Because by God's grace they have been drawn into the kingdom, the lives of the disciples are to be marked by certain factors: (1) a loose attachment to worldly goods so that they are ready to part with them (fear of poverty must never interfere with benevolence; almsgiving is not merely giving what we can spare); (2) a commitment to almsgiving (this kind of concern is good not merely for the receiver, but also for the giver, that his heart be freed from covetousness); (3) an otherworldliness (by doing good disciples are laying up for themselves treasures in heaven; their hearts will be directed heavenward where their treasure is).

As introduction to the parable we note in verse thirty-five the emphatic position of the second person pronouns which indicate that "whatever others may do, this is to be your attitude." The word translated "watch" has attached to it the dimension of alertness. The lives of the disciples are to be characterized by such alertness since they do not know in what kind of hour, whether a near one or a remote one, the Lord is to return. How necessary it is that His servants be ready to greet Him when He returns (v 38) at a time when He will be least expected (v 40).

Be Ready for the Son of Man**I. The Son of man is coming.****A. At the least expected time.**

1. Like a thief in the night (cf. I Thess. 5:2).
2. At a time known only by the Father.

B. He comes to be a blessing.

1. Those who are ready are called blessed.
2. The Father's will is to give to them the kingdom.
 - a. The great "fear not" of Christmas and Easter recurs here.
 - b. Now is salvation closer than when we first believed.

II. Be ready for His coming.**A. Be like servants waiting for their master to come home.****B. Be full of faith, your lamps burning brightly. True joys are to be found in Christ.****C. This treasure is not subject to decay or corruption.**

NHM

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 12:49-53

The text deals with the most difficult kind of hostility, suffered by many in their own households. In this day when liquor, drugs, illicit sex have become such a temptation even for weak Christians, quarreling, divisions, and even divorce are bound to become more and more prevalent. In many instances there are innocent parties in such homes. Refusal to recognize this fact is heartlessly to condemn all Christians just because all are sinners.

We must keep in mind that the Spirit is able to and constantly does enable millions of sinners who are Christian husbands and wives or Christian parents and children to live together in peace and harmony. So also in divided homes one person may, as far as that is possible, be seeking to live at peace, and yet constantly be suffering because of the contentiousness or evil life of another.

These faithful Christians in our congregations need the help and understanding of their fellow Christians. They especially need the comfort and assurance of God's love, who daily forgives their sins and does not hold them accountable for the divisions that exist in their households.

A real help is the fact that even the sinless Christ suffered at the hands of

his own people, who finally brought Him to death. But His death was not martyrdom. The baptism with which he would be baptized was the suffering of hell for the salvation of all who believe in Him. This saving Christ is concerned about divisions. He tells us that they will be suffered by many of His children—more often than not because they are His children. The warning that we can give those who cause such suffering is that the day will come when Christ will burn up the chaff and take His wheat into the garner. The help we can give all of our members is that God promises to help all who look to Him in faith to be able to pray together and stay together. Many members, without such counsel, will keep their problems to themselves, only to see them growing out of bounds. Help them to seek help. Christ has restored peace in thousands of homes where at least one Christian came to Him for help. Should not the whole congregation be on their side?

Take the Problems in Your Home to Christ

- I. He knows their cause.
 - A. He does not condemn the "innocent."
 - B. He has strong words of warning for the guilty.
- II. He has promised a solution for all who turn to Him.
 - A. He earned peace through His own suffering at the hands of sinners.
 - B. He promises this peace to all who look to Him in faith.
 - C. He looks to the church to give His peace to those who suffer division in their homes.
 - D. He is the source of the peace enjoyed in countless Christian homes, for which we give Him praise.

MJS

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 13:22-30

Here is a clear prophecy that the saving word of Jesus, which He so clearly proclaimed during His earthly ministry (text), will be preached to the ends of the earth. And many will go in with the Lord to sit at the table in the kingdom of God. But the day will come when the door will be shut and people outside will be pounding on the door as others once pounded on the door of Noah's ark. But the door will remain shut. Those outside will be people with whom we ate and drank, people of our neighborhood, our city, our country, and every other country on earth.

What can we do about it? Christ says: Strive to enter the narrow door yourselves (He is that door). Keep on urging others to do so with whatever means God gives you to spread His Word. Be sure to speak clearly about the wonderful banquet that God has prepared for us and what folly it is to turn down His invitation.

Heed Christ's Invitation to Sit at His Table

- I. What a privilege this will be.
 - A. Think of the meal Christ has prepared.
 - B. Think of the guests who will be there.
- II. What folly, then, to turn down the invitation.
 - A. Those who do so will realize too late what a mistake they have made.
 - B. But it will also be too late to do anything about it (the door will remain shut).
- III. What an opportunity God gives you right now to say, "I am coming, Lord."
 - A. He Himself has prepared the meal.
 - B. He Himself opens the door for you.
 - C. He Himself makes you the worthy guest.

MJS

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 14:1, 7-14.

V.1: Meals on the Sabbath were often luxurious and costly. Only cold dishes were permitted. "They watched Him": explains the reason for the invitation. Jesus had just bitterly denounced the Pharisees, cf. Lk 11:39-52. In this pericope Jesus talks about seeking the lowest places at these feasts and about who ought to be the guests. V.7: "Chief rooms": The first places, places of respect and honor. How the Lord—the very essence of whose teaching is self-surrender and self-sacrifice—must have been disturbed by the self-seeking pride of the Pharisees. V.11: This is a rule in Christ's Kingdom. He who takes pride in his own work and merit shall be abased by being excluded from the Kingdom. He who humbles himself, acknowledging his own unworthiness and trusting alone in Christ, will be exalted by God's grace, Lk. 18:14; Mt 23:12. V.12: This remark occurred some time later in the feast. Those attending the feast were from the upper ranks of Jewish society. "Not thy friends": Jesus did not mean to forbid our entertaining of those we love. He meant simply that in view of the life to come, you can do better, Neh 8:10. "Lest they also bid thee": This is manifestly a selfish motive. This section of the pericope is a lesson in selfless service. The law required service to the poor, Dt 14:28, 29; 16:11; 26:11-13. V. 14: Where there is no love, faith is missing. Hence, no recompense on the last day. The recompense is one of grace. God gives rewards to those who seek no rewards.

Introduction: Our competitive life encourages self-seeking: Grades in school, scrambling for a promotion, building a better mousetrap. But self-seeking can be self-destructive.

Guard Against Self-Seeking

I. Seek the lowest place.

A. The Pharisees in their pride were concerned about their position.

1. They scrambled for the place of honor at the table.
2. In their pride they exalted themselves before God.
3. Therefore they were abased, by the world and by God.

B. True humility seeks the lowest place.

1. Jesus is our great exemplar, Phil 2:7.
 - a. He took upon Himself the form of a servant.
 - b. Therefore God also highly exalted Him, Phil 2:9.
2. We have so much to humble us.
 - a. We daily sin, Ps 51.
 - b. Therefore in repentance and faith we come to God as beggars, Lk 18:13; 15:18.
3. God exalts us.
 - a. He gives us the righteousness Christ won, Ro 4:5.
 - b. He gives us everlasting life, Jn 10:27-28.

What we are we are by grace. That should keep us humble, Phil 2:3.

II. Be concerned about the poor.

A. The self-seeker caters to his friends.

1. He shows them favors.
2. He hopes for favors in return.

B. The humble person.

1. Loves his friends for their sake, Mt 5:44.
2. Is concerned also about the poor, Mt 5:42; 7:12.
3. He shall be recompensed, Lk 6:38.

Lord, help us to seek, not self, but the righteousness of Christ; help us not to use people, but to serve them.

HJE

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 14:28-33

V.25: The great multitudes were made up of friends and enemies. In the shadow of His own Cross, Jesus demanded total self-renunciation as the cost of discipleship, a real taking up of the cross. All rival masters or interests must be put away so that the love of the great Master may be supreme: love to one's relatives, life itself, and temporary possessions. A follower of Christ must bear the cross of Christ. V.26: "And hate not": No love of relatives must come into competition with the love of God. Everything must be sacrificed to the cause of discipleship, Mt 10:34-36. By acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah and Redeemer, His disciples would excite the bitterest enmity in the minds of their own family. They would be obliged to act as if they hated them. They would have to act as if they hated their own life, for they would be removed from all comforts and enjoyments. But a person must choose between love for family and love to Him who loves us and gave Himself for us. V. 27 "His own cross": The cross of ridicule and martyrdom for the sake of Christ. Vv. 28-30: A builder goes over his plans carefully, he purchases his materials. The exact cost of the project is computed before he begins to build. The imagery was not unfamiliar to Jesus' hearers. Many tried to imitate the pomp of the Herodian palaces, only to find that they did not have the resources to complete the structures. In the end, the builders became a laughing stock. Vv. 31-32: A ruler, planning to take the offensive, first determines whether he has sufficient military strength to carry out his plan. If the matter seems doubtful, he will prefer to enter into negotiations with the enemy to find conditions of peace. The simile talks about the warfare every Christian must wage against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Introduction: Everything costs. It costs to become a professional person, to maintain good health, to keep a home happy. Whoever thought it costs to be a Christian! Jesus says it does.

Count the Cost of Discipleship

I. Don't be a rash disciple.

- A. The foolish tower-builder began to build without knowing whether he could complete the project.
- B. The king will not go to war with insufficient troops, lest he is forced to sue for peace.
- C. Don't enlist as a disciple without counting the cost.
 1. Some followed Jesus only for the loaves and fishes.
 2. Some now follow Jesus for selfish reasons.
 - a. For business or social advantages, Mt 13:22.
 - b. But in time of temptation they fall away, Mt 24:12.
 - c. Jesus asks: "Will you also go away?" Jn 6:67-68.

Christ wants steadfast disciples, 1 Cor 16:13; Mt 24:13.

II. Consider the demands of discipleship.

A. Hate your family.

1. Family is a gift of God, a place where love should reign, Eph 5-6.
2. If a choice must be made, choose Christ.
 - a. Acceptance of Christ at times produces hostility in the family, Mt. 10:34-35.
 - b. The call to discipleship demands a higher loyalty than that to family, Mt 10:37.
3. Choose Christ over family because Christ gives you a better family, Rom. 8:17; Eph 1:5.

Therefore, cling to Christ, even over family, Eph 5:11.

B. Forsake all you have, v 33.

1. Our possessions are gifts of God for our good, Jas 1:17.

2. Possessions can prove a stumbling block to discipleship, 2 Tim 2:4; 1 Tim 6:10; Mt 19:21; Mt 9:24.
3. Choose Christ over riches, Mt 6:24, because God gives you abiding riches.
 - a. The forgiveness of sins, 1 Jn 1:7.
 - b. The assurance of the abiding love of God, Rom 8; Ps 73:23-25.
 - c. The hope of heaven, 2 Tim 4:8.

Therefore, forsake all and follow the disciples, Lk 5:11; and St. Paul, Phil 3:7.

C. Hate your life.

1. Life is a gift which we seek to preserve and enjoy.
2. Hate the sin that arises in your life, Jas 1:14; 1 Jn 2:15.
3. The time may come when you must decide between your life and Christ.
 - a. Christ predicts that persecutions will come, Mt 10:22.
 - b. There is a danger to choosing life instead of Christ, Mt 10:33; Mt 25:46.
 - c. Christ encourages us to take up the cross, Heb 12:1-3; Lk 6:22-23; Mt 5:10-12; Ac 4:20.
4. Choose Christ over life because Christ gives you real life.
 - a. He gives you life in fellowship with God now, 1 Jn 1:3; Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 4:6; Jn 15:5.
 - b. He gives life eternal, Jn 11:25; Rev. 2:10; Mt 24:13.

Garibaldi said: "He who loves liberty more than life, let him follow me." Jesus says: "He who loves me more than family, possessions, and life itself, let him follow me." God, help us always to choose Christ over family, possessions, and life itself.

HJE

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 15:1-10

V.1: Luke 15 is the golden center of the Gospel, revealing the love of the Savior for the lost. "Publicans and sinners": Taxgatherers and sinners about whom no one cared, much less the Pharisees, who regarded them as hopelessly lost. Christ's words, full of stern rebuke, but also of hope, found the lost. The publicans and sinners came to hear Him, not simply to witness His miracles. V.2: The Pharisees, who took pride in their holiness, and scribes, learned doctors of the Law, were indignant. They cried: "He not only receives sinners; He eats with them." V.3: The three parables are Christ's defense of His action. All have the same point of comparison: The joy in heaven over the repentant sinner. V.4: "Wilderness": Wide, uncultivated plains which fringe portions of Palestine. Vv. 5-6: The diligent search, the tender care, and the subsequent joy represent Christ's activities with publicans and sinners. Luther: "We can neither help nor counsel ourselves to come to the quietness and peace of conscience, into escape from the devil, death, and hell, unless Christ Himself gets us and calls us to Him through His Word. And even if we come to Him and are in faith, we are not able to keep ourselves therein" (St. L., vol. 11, p. 1268). "He calls His friends": He looks for sympathy of feeling from His friends. Christ did not find that among the scribes and Pharisees. V.7: What He looks for in vain on earth, Christ finds in heaven. The ninety-nine just persons who had no repentance are the Pharisees who mistakenly imagine that they need not repent, Mt 9:12-13. Luther says that the ninety-nine are the little flock of Christendom. Others refer the ninety-nine to the angels. V.8: A poor woman is presented to whom the loss of a single coin is a serious loss. God misses each lost soul and seeks its restoration. The worth of a single soul exceeds that of the whole world, Mt 16:26; Mk 8:37; Ja 5:20. Vv. 9-10: God Himself with His angels rejoice over the sinner found and saved.

Introduction: "This man receives sinners and eats with them." These words, meant to be a stinging jibe, were really a compliment. We rejoice and take comfort in the fact that Jesus is a friend of sinners.

This Man Receives Sinners and Eats With Them

I. He seeks the lost.

A. In the parables.

1. Sheep get lost; in that condition they are the prey of wild animals.
2. A woman loses a coin, something precious to her.

B. In real life.

1. Publicans and sinners were lost.
 - a. They lived in sin, and everyone knew it.
 - b. They faced eternal death, the wages of sin.
2. The Pharisees.
 - a. Their sin was pride, evidenced in their smugness and disdain for sinners and for Jesus, Lk. 18:10ff.
 - b. They were in the same lost condition as the publicans, Mt 23.

We face the twin dangers of going astray either by toying with sin or by sinful pride. We need to live in daily repentance over both.

II. Jesus seeks the lost.

A. He came to seek and save that which was lost.

1. The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine and seeks the one; the woman looks for the lost coin.
2. Jesus came into the world to save.
 - a. He could have left the world of sinners to their doom, Mt 25:41.
 - b. But He loved so much, Jn 3:14-17.
 - a) He came to fulfill God's Law for us.
 - b) He came to pay the world's debt of sin, Gal 4:4-5; Mt 20:28; Eph 5:25-27.

B. Through His Word He seeks the lost.

1. Through the Law.
 - a. He reveals sin, Rom 3:10-13.
 - b. Man's inability to save himself, Gal 3:24.
2. Through the Gospel.
 - a. He invites, Mt 11:28.
 - b. The Holy Spirit converts, 2 Cor 4:6.
 - c. He gives us His righteousness, Ro 1:16-17.
 - d. He makes us sons and heirs, 1 Jn 3:1-2; 1 Pet 1:3-5.

How good that Jesus has found us. Let no one think that he is beyond the reach of Christ's love.

C. He continues to seek the lost through us, Jn 10:16.

1. Two-thirds of the world is still in darkness.
2. At times fellow church members become delinquent.
3. We are to seek the lost.
 - a. We have the command, Mt 28:18-20.
 - b. We have the means: the Law and the Gospel.
 - c. We have the promise of the Spirit, Jn 16:8.

Let us learn of Jesus to be the friends of sinners, both the manifest sinners and the Pharisees.

III. He rejoices over the saved sinners.

A. There is joy when a lost sheep is found or when a coin is found.

B. The Pharisees did not rejoice.

1. They held publicans and sinners in disdain.
2. Church members may be tempted to deal that way with a fallen but penitent member, cf. Lk 15:25-32.

C. There is joy in heaven.

1. Because the whole purpose of God's mission of love is fulfilled, Jn 17:24.
2. Because every person is precious to God.
 - a. He is saved from death, Mt 16:26.
 - b. He is saved for life, Mt 25:34; Jn 10:10.

Let us join the angels praising God both for our own salvation and for the progress of the Gospel in the world.

HJE

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 16:1-13

Any difficulties encountered in interpreting this parable stem from the mistaken attempt by the interpreter to make every detail in the parable mean something definite. Putting aside all details of the parable as mere setting, we center on the *tertium* provided by Jesus Himself. He indicates that "if Christians were as sagacious and persevering in using wealth to promote their welfare in the next world as worldly men are in using it to promote their interest here, the Kingdom of God would be more flourishing than it is" (Plummer). It should be noted that the steward provides for his future by means of goods which are not his own, but merely entrusted to his care. The wealth with which a Christian operates is similarly not his own but that which he holds in trust from God. Verse 13 forms a conclusion to Jesus' comment on the parable and places it into the proper context for a fitting application to the people of God. It is morally impossible to have two masters and to give undivided service. Mammon signifies that in which one trusts, a "diety" devotion to whom is "covetousness which is idolatry" (1 Cor. 3:5) and renders true worship and service to God impossible.

God or Mammon?

- I. What happens when Mammon takes over?
 - A. Mammon becomes enthroned as diety.
 1. The word "mammon" signifies that in which we trust.
 2. It makes trust in God impossible.
 - B. Mammon becomes the master, demanding to be served.
 1. It enlists our time, energy, and skills.
 2. It monopolizes them all.
 3. Serving Mammon is really serving self.
 - C. Mammon becomes the source of hope.
 1. It offers promise of temporal and eternal happiness.
 2. It makes promises it cannot keep.
 3. We are left without hope, without God in the world.
- II. Let God be God in our lives.
 - A. God is the source of all that we are and have.
 1. It is He who made us and not we ourselves.
 2. It is He who saved and redeemed us when we foolishly turned our backs on Him.
 3. He alone is worthy of trust.
 - B. God is the One whom we are to serve.
 1. What we have is a trust from Him.
 2. We are to be faithful stewards.
 3. We too shall be called to give an account.
 - C. God has given certain hope.
 1. He has promised blessing for time and eternity.
 2. His promises are true.
 3. Our eternal destiny is assured.

NHM

THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Luke 16:19-31

Whether you consider this account a parable or an illustrative story, the narrative spells out the Pharisee's selfish use of his riches, a selfishness that left Lazarus at his door without bestowing on him anything from his abundance. Here is indeed a study in contrasts. Every phrase in the text adds something to the luxury in which Dives lived. His habitual attire is comparable in quality to the robes of the High Priests. In terms of diet, he fares sumptuously every day. In contrast, Lazarus is cast down carelessly by his bearers and left at the gate, ulcerated, eagerly expecting but not receiving what he desires. Dives is a picture of indolent self-indulgence, Lazarus a picture of lonely, suffering need.

After death the situation is reversed. It is self-evident that riches or lack of them is not the determining factor in determining the eternal destinies of these two men. Rather the sin of Dives is that in a case of obvious need he does nothing. He fails to respond to the situation of Lazarus. He thinks it perfectly natural and inevitable that Lazarus should lie in pain and hunger while he wallows in luxury. The plea of ignorance is met by a response similar to that given to those who plead ignorance in the account of our Saviour's separation of the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31-46). Dives had and his brothers still have Moses and the prophets. Rejecting these, they would also be unresponsive to one who came from the dead. In the Greek there is an interesting and significant interplay in the use of the pronouns touching on "from the dead." The preacher may want to investigate further.

A Startling Contrast That Summons to Repentance

- I. The contrast between Dives and Lazarus.
 - A. During their lifetimes.
 1. Dives is a picture of self-indulgence.
 2. Lazarus is a picture of pain, hunger, and misery.
 - B. After their deaths.
 1. Dives is in torment, begging for a drop of water.
 2. Lazarus is in the bliss and contentment of Abraham's bosom.
 - C. In terms of the faith.
 1. Lazarus is saved by grace. The covenant made was of promise.
 2. Dives has no true faith.
 - a. He fails to respond to the word.
 - b. Faith without works is dead; Dives fails to respond to obvious need.
 - c. Dives is condemned for what he fails to do.
 - d. He does not hear Moses and the prophets.
- II. A summons to repent.
 - A. Repentance means "change." (Note the difference between "persuaded" and "repent," vs 30-31).
 - B. Through the Word we stand condemned.
 1. We have failed to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind.
 2. We have each failed to love his neighbor as himself.
 3. We have failed to "do what is right, love mercy, and live humbly with our God" (Mic 6:8).
 - C. Through the Word we also have the testimony of the One who arose from the dead.
 1. Brought new life.
 2. Empowered us to love one another and to use our gifts in a God-pleasing way.
 3. Identifies the basis of judgment.
 - a. Whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, etc. (1 Jn 3:17ff).

- b. Ignorance is no excuse (cf. Matt 25:31-46).
- c. True faith shows itself in one's works in response to God's will and the brother's needs.

NHM

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 17:1-10

In vs. 1-2 there may be an allusion to the rich man spoken of in the immediately preceding parable who by his selfishness and worldliness dishonored God's name and offended believers whose faith was still weak and wavering. Better that such an offender's life be cut short, even by a horrible death, than that he entrap others so that they too end up in hell. Christians are in danger of offending by treating others self-righteously and judging them harshly (v 3). The Christian is to rebuke a sinning brother, to speak directly to him about his sin, and to forgive him as often as he indicates that he has repented. Any self-congratulation the apostles may have engaged in had now received a severe blow, and they felt their own weakness deeply. They also felt that a stronger faith would enable them to judge others more gently. They turned to the right source for an increase of faith (v 5). The Lord reminds them (v 6) that the amount of faith is not so important as the exercise of the faith they already have. Even a small faith enables the Christian to carry out his duty toward fellow Christians. Faith is instrumental, for through faith the power of Christ becomes effective in the believer's life. Good works flow from faith. But these good works should not make Christians proud and lead them to expect recognition from others and from God. Faith is a gift of God, and so are the good deeds that spring from it. When Christians succeed in forgiving and in not giving offense, that is only by the grace of God. Why should they expect God to thank them? He does not owe us anything. Besides, our good works are still imperfect, and in doing them we are only doing our duty as God's servants (vs 7-10).

The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would recognize that when they do good they are only doing their duty. The problem is that the hearers often expect both God and men to praise them for the good they do. Introductory thought: The word "duty" has a dull, moralistic sound. We feel more comfortable with words like grace and love. Nor is "duty" a popular word. It refers to obligation, and many think they have no obligation to anyone. What Jesus says about duty in our text will help us in

Getting the Right Perspective on Duty

I. We are unworthy servants.

A. Have we not sometimes caused offense?

1. By living selfishly, without regard for the needs of those around us.
2. By living immoderately (in the use of alcoholic beverages, money, language).

Little ones (weak Christians) may thereby have been led astray—a serious matter (v 2). To cause offense is to be an unworthy servant.

B. Have we not sometimes refused to deal lovingly with a sinning brother?

1. Failing to rebuke him personally for a sin we see him committing.
2. Failing to forgive him as often as he repents.

When we see our tendency at times to deal harshly and self-righteously with the sinning brother, we must confess our unworthiness. To know that we have not always done our duty is to have the right perspective on duty. But how, the disciples wondered, sensing their unworthiness, can anyone do his duty toward a fellow believer? They sensed that the fulfillment of duty was related to faith. Indeed,

II. Faith makes the doing of our duty possible for us.

A. We need only to exercise the faith we have.

1. What matters is not the amount of faith, or even faith itself as though we were now obligated to get faith in order to do our duty. Rather, faith is instrumental.
2. Faith joins us to Christ so that through faith we receive Christ's power. Thus even a little faith can do great things (v 6).
3. Wherever there is faith in Christ, there will be loving dealing of Christians with one another.

B. We should not expect praise for doing our duty.

1. Jesus gives faith and increases it (v 5).
2. He does not owe us a thing; it is by His grace alone that we have faith and are able to do our duty.

Concluding thought: The right perspective on duty is to realize that we are unworthy servants. We have left undone what we should have done, and even when we have done our duty, seemingly very well, perfection has escaped us. But the right perspective on duty is also this, that we know that with God all things are possible. Through the faith He gives us He enables us to do our duty and by His grace accepts the good that we do.

GA

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 17:11-19

On His first journey through Samaria Jesus had done no miracles (Jn 4:1ff.). Yet word of His healings had spread also to Samaria and thus the lepers had heard of Him. Standing at a distance, as required by the Mosaic Law, they called to Jesus for help (v 13). Jesus responded by telling them to go and show themselves to the priests whose responsibility it was to examine persons suspected of having leprosy and to determine whether they were so afflicted or were healthy (Lv 13:34). The command was a test of the lepers' trust in Jesus, for they were to act as if they were well. They went without questioning Jesus and on the way were healed. No doubt all of them rejoiced over what had happened, but only one felt thankful enough to return to Jesus (v 15). He felt a greater responsibility than that of showing himself immediately to the priests. He praised God in a loud voice, fell down at Jesus' feet, and expressed his heartfelt thanks (v 16). The fact that the man was a Samaritan indicates that the other nine must have been Jews. Here again was an indication that the chosen people, by and large, failed to grasp the real meaning of Christ's miracles and did not believe in Him as the Messiah. Jesus' question (v 17) reveals His disappointment with the behavior of the nine. His comment about the foreigner alone returning to give thanks implies the unbelief and with it the thanklessness of Israel. The faith of the Samaritan had grown, for he not only believed in the power of Jesus to heal but saw Jesus as one through whom God was working (v 19).

The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would express their faith by thanking God. Introductory thought: Have you ever helped someone who showed no appreciation? You were doubtless disappointed. Jesus had a similar experience. Ten men were miraculously healed, but only one returned to give thanks. Jesus' question reveals His disappointment:

Where are the Nine?

- I. This question points to the common failure to give thanks.
- II. This question reminds us there is reason to give thanks.

I.

- A. The nine who did not return to give thanks had faith enough for prayer but not for praise.

1. They looked to Jesus for help (v 13).
 2. They obeyed Jesus' word without question (v 14).
 3. They were glad to be healed but felt little gratitude to the healer.
 - B. Today many ask God for help but fail to thank Him for help received.
 1. Even those who have had little to do with God may turn to God for help in a calamity, only to forget Him when the danger has passed.
 2. We often find ourselves doing more asking than thanking. Even when things are going well we often forget to give thanks.
- Where are the nine? Then, and now, this question points to the common failure to give thanks. There is much more petition than praise.

II.

- A. Jesus healed all ten from an incurable disease (v 14).
 1. The Samaritan understood better than the others the meaning of the healing.
 2. He looked beyond the healing to the healer (vs 15-16).
 3. He grasped the greatness of Jesus (v 19).
- B. Although Jesus has not healed us from leprosy, He has done something infinitely greater.
 1. As the Christ of God He died for us to deliver us from sin, Satan, and hell, and then rose from the dead to prove He had done it.
 2. He creates and sustains faith in us by Word and Sacraments.
 3. Are we so familiar with what Jesus has done that we take it for granted?

Concluding thought: Where are the nine? This question reminds us that there is reason to give thanks. Jesus helped all ten of the lepers. He has helped all of us through His death and resurrection. What we are as redeemed people we owe solely to His power and mercy. O give thanks unto the Lord!

GA

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 18:1-8a

The point of this parable lies in the contrast between the callous judge and the loving God. If even this judge could be moved to act by the widow's persistence, how much more will God answer His people's prayers for vindication. The scene is a court of law, with the plaintiff a poor widow whose opponent has refused to settle a lawful debt. She keeps coming before the judge asking for justice against her oppressor. But the judge is swayed neither by religious principle nor by public opinion. At first he does nothing. Why should he bother with a widow who has no money or influence? But the next day she is back again bothering him, and this goes on day after day. Her pestering becomes so tiresome to the judge that, though he cares neither about God nor man, he relents and gives her justice just to be rid of her. God, however, is not a dour, ungracious deity who has to be badgered into compliance. He is a loving God. If persistence brought results even with the godless judge, how much more will God, whose only motive is love, hear and answer the insistent cries of His children.

The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would persist in prayer. Introductory thought: Jesus never defined prayer. He gave His disciples a pattern prayer, and in the parables He told them to expect great things from God in prayer. In the text He talks about prayer by arguing from contraries and points out that persistence brings results. He is telling us:

Never Give up Praying

- I. Because we can never wear God out.
- II. Because God has promised to vindicate His own.

I.

- A. God is not at all like the judge in the parable.
 - 1. The judge was callous and cynical and gave in to the widow only because her unrelenting pressure got on his nerves (vs 2,4-5).
 - 2. God is just and holy and responds to the pleas of His dear children because He loves them.
 - 3. We do not have to browbeat God into submission.
- B. God likes His children to be persistent in prayer.
 - 1. He is radically different from the godless judge in that He loves to listen to the continual prayers of His own (Mt. 7:7; 15:21-28).
 - 2. What a pity, then, to use God only on a "standby" basis, like the oxygen mask over an airplane seat. What a mistake to give up praying when no answer seems forthcoming.
 - 3. Prayer needs to be a way of life living in constant awareness of God's presence and live, keeping in touch with God not only on a special occasion but in the midst of daily routine, keeping the channel of communication open always. We can never wear God out with our prayers.

II.

- A. God will attend to our cause without delay (vs 7b-8a).
 - 1. To us the answer may seem to be delayed.
 - 2. But God has His own time and way.
 - B. He will make it come out right for us.
 - 1. He knows our needs better than we ourselves.
 - 2. In his wisdom and love He will give us what is best and direct matters for our good (Ro 8:28). Since God gave His own Son for us, He will surely give us all other good things (Ro 8:32).
 - C. Prayer is "the great two-handed engine at our doors" (Milton)—Durer's picture of two tense hands, palms together, lifted in prayer. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of" (Tennyson). God will vindicate his own.
- Concluding thought: Persistence pays off. Keep knocking. Never give up.

GA

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 18:9-14

In the text we hear a pharisee saying, "I have done what Moses commanded. In fact, I did more than Moses commanded. So I am safe. Right?" But Jesus says: "No. You are all wrong. In my sight—and do not forget that I will be the judge on the last day—you are not justified. That means I must send you to hell."

The law has a very important place in our lives. The Lord tells us and all of His children in His Holy Law not to be extortioners, not to be unjust, nor adulterers. He tells us in His Holy Law to be liberal in giving. He urges us in His Law to come to His "temple." But He makes it very clear that He expects and is pleased with these works only when they are performed by those whom He has already chosen and loved and brought to salvation. They are then proofs of His saving power in their lives.

The pharisee said: "My works are my own. See how much better I am than others." But his unbelief, his refusal to accept Jesus as the Savior, caused God to look at all of his deeds as filthy in His sight. How different it was with the publican. Publicans were outcasts—the people whom the Jews had to excommunicate because they turned their backs on their own people, and thus on God Himself. There is no proof that the publicans as a class lived in open sin and shame, that they were adulterers, slanderers, rebellious people. Their great sin—which is the greatest sin—is that they were unbelievers. They had un-

doubtedly been circumcised as infants, had gone to the temple and the synagogue as children. But they sold their heritage for a lucrative position with the Romans, proving that they had left the Lord.

Then Jesus came preaching repentance and salvation, as John the Baptist had done before Him. Jesus showed that He cared about publicans and sinners. He was their way back to the waiting arms of the Heavenly Father. And many of them repented. They said with the publican in Jesus' story: God be merciful to me, a sinner. That was all they did. And even this they did only through the power of the Holy Spirit, who led them to contrition and faith in Jesus. He led them back to their merciful Father and sent them to their homes justified. Did they then, having been justified, love Him and serve Him? Of course they did. But their works came as fruits of faith, as with Paul and Moses and believers of all times.

**What is Important for us Who are Saved is That
Works are Put into Their Proper Place**

- I. The pharisee and all work-righteous people with him think they can be saved by their works.
 - A. They feel they are able of themselves to please God.
 - B. But God condemns all of their works.
 1. They are a denial of His saving work.
 2. They are therefore filthy rags in His sight.
- II. The publicans and all who trust in Christ plead only for mercy.
 - A. They recognize their unworthiness before God.
 - B. They see their hope and salvation in Christ alone.
 - C. They recognize that whatever good they do is itself a gift of God, a fruit of faith.
- III. It is important that we learn our lesson well.
 - A. Do not look for any part of your salvation in your works.
 - B. Look for all of your salvation in your merciful God.
 1. He saved you in Christ.
 2. He has brought you to faith in Him through His Word.
 - C. Then keep on studying His Holy Word.
 1. His law will remind you of works that are pleasing to Him.
 2. His gospel will give you strength to do these works in love to God and to people everywhere.

MJS

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 19:1-10

Are students the only ones who, planning to write a sermon on this text, would liken their hearers to Zacchaeus? Having described Zacchaeus' sin they want to apply it to their hearers by saying, "We also need to hear the Lord calling to us." The unfortunate thing about it is that many hearers would find nothing wrong with such preaching. They would admit, "We have sinned. We need to turn to Christ as Zacchaeus did." But they seem to ignore the fact that after Zacchaeus' conversion he was not at all the same as he was before. After salvation had come to his house, his attitude toward others was completely different. He was now anxious to keep the law. He showed love for the poor. He sought to right the wrongs of the past. He showed love and gratitude to God. We have the right to expect the same of our hearers, regardless of how short or how long a time they have been with Christ. They are not unbelievers. So they will not live as unbelievers. But they still will sin daily and need daily to come to the Lord for forgiveness and strength to live the Christian life.

Christ sought and found Zacchaeus. He also did that for us. But for us that may have been long ago. Now some will need to be helped to show some of the

first love that Zacchaeus showed. They are not all as happy as Zacchaeus was when Christ came to his home. They are not all the good stewards that he showed himself to be. They are not all as full of love as they might be. Thank God, that is not true of all. Some pastors forget that at least some of their members have shown evidences of Christ's enabling power in their lives for a long, long time. Some have not lost their first love. It has grown with their faith, as a fruit of it, because Christ is daily a guest and host in their house. If the faith of some has not grown, they need more of the gospel that Jesus brought to Zacchaeus.

This text also deals with wealth. Some would say Zacchaeus was wealthy because as chief of the publicans he was also the worst thief in the organization. But if he had been, he could not have restored four-fold. He was rich because he had a very lucrative position in a very well-to-do area of the "Holy Land." His fault lay in the fact that his job automatically excluded him from the family of God. But that certainly is not the case with all who are rich. Some people have the idea that wealth always suggests unfairness in dealing with others. "Down with all administrators. Down with all executives." Some may secretly hope they might get a few more of the rich to give half of their wealth to the poor, thinking of themselves as the recipients.

Christ was on his way to Jerusalem to die. Jesus, on His last journey through Jericho, facing death in Jerusalem, still took time to save a sinner from hell.

Our Greatest Opportunities to Save People May Seemingly Come by Chance

- I. The place may seem so.
 - A. Jericho certainly gave little promise of success.
 - B. Who, years ago, would have chosen some of our very promising mission fields?
- II. The time may seem so.
 - A. With so great a task before Him, Christ still gave precious moments to one lost soul.
 - B. We, too, will be challenged to respond to the moment God gives.
- III. The response itself may seem so.
 - A. Zacchaeus just seemed to be ready for Christ when He came.
 - B. We, too, will often come upon people who just seem to be waiting for us.
- IV. Yet, behind all of what may seem to be chance our gracious Lord is saving sinners, preparing them for the day of judgment.
 - A. They may not be waiting for us.
 - B. Are we seeking them out?

MJS

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 23:35-43

The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. It is a kingdom of grace, God's unmerited love, which required His death for all sinners, that in Him they might be the children of God, with grace to serve Him in His kingdom. That is why He as king would not come down from the cross. To save others, He could not "save" Himself. To make them free, He had to be nailed to the cross. To give them life, He had to die.

The life He gave earned a release from eternal death for all who trust in Him. People would still have to go through physical death. For the malefactor on the cross it was even a death of torture. He had said to His disciples a year and a half before, "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul." This was the comfort He was able to give to the repentant malefactor: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The malefactor would

still die and that in pain, but for him death would then be a glorious relief from all pain and suffering. It would still be the punishment for him. Christ would soon die the death for sin; for Him it would be punishment—the wrath of God heaped upon him for the sins of the world. But through death He would go into paradise to be with the Father and the malefactor would follow soon after.

What is important for us is that Christ died for all, to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, extending His kingdom through the preaching of the message of the cross, a message prophesied already in the Garden of Eden, which He was now fulfilling. To bring all of this clearly into focus for the last Sunday in the church year, keep in mind that Christ often called Himself the Son of Man with reference to Daniel 7:13-14, which shows Him as the Son of Man judging the world. This Son of Man came to earth to seek and to save that which was lost. Only then would He also become the judge. See Romans 8:31ff where Paul points out that no one can accuse us because Christ died for us and in Him we are justified.

**Look to Christ's Cross if You Fear
the Day of Judgement**

- I. On the cross Christ earned the right to be king and judge of all.
 - A. He refused to use His power as king to free Himself.
 - B. His power lay in His death with which He conquered Satan.
- II. On the cross He prepared the way for sinners fearlessly to stand before Him as the judge.
 - A. Unbelievers want freedom from pain and punishment, freedom to live in their sins, but they will die in their sins.
 - B. Believers can rejoice in freedom from sin and death, freedom to serve the Lord.
- III. On the cross He received the acclaim of the repentant thief.
 - A. That is an acclaim which we are able to give Him now.
 - B. That is an acclaim which we want all others to give Him with us.
 - C. That is an acclaim which we will all be able to give Him perfectly in glory.

MJS