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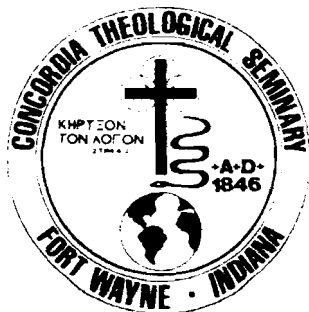
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Homiletical Studies

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

I Corinthians 1:3-9

November 29, 1981

Knowing what we do about the Christian congregation in Corinth, it is interesting to see that St. Paul begins his first letter to them on a very positive note. He thanks God for all that God has wrought in them. Despite their many weaknesses and petty factions, they had been enriched in every spiritual way. God had done no less for them than He had done in others. Therefore the Corinthians could be certain as to how they would fare on the last day when Christ would come again.

Advent is a time for solemn and sober thought about our sins. Like the first century Corinthians we have many weaknesses. Yet God comes to us in this season of new beginnings to remind us that in Christ we too have been enriched in every spiritual way. We can be sure that it will be well for us on the day He comes in glory.

Introduction: The season of Advent offers us a panoramic view of the entire Christian era. We see the past as we contemplate Christ's first coming, His birth in Bethlehem. We presently experience Christ's continual coming into our hearts and lives. We look to the future and the second coming of Christ when "He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead." But whether we look back, at the present, or to the future, we can always be certain of one thing. In Christ

We Are Rich in Every Way

- I. We have received God's love in Christ (vv4, 6).
 - A. God sent His Son into the world.
 1. He was born of the virgin (Ga 4:4a).
 2. He lived under the Law (Ga 4:4b).
 3. He redeemed those under the Law (Ga 4:5).
 - B. God sent His Son into our hearts.
 1. The truth of Christ was confirmed in us (v6).
 2. We have received adoption as sons (v9 — "called into fellowship"; Ga 4:5).
- II. We are receiving wonderful gifts.
 - A. God sends us gifts to confirm our faith in Christ (v6).
 1. He endows us with grace (v3 — Lenski: "May God and the Lord give you an abundance of His undeserved gifts.").
 2. He fills us with peace (v3).
 - B. God sends us gifts for sharing our faith in Christ (v5).
 1. He enriches us with knowledge.
 2. He empowers us to communicate this knowledge.
- III. We will receive an eternal inheritance.
 - A. God will send His Son again (vv7, 8).
 1. He will come at the last great day ("as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ").
 2. He will come to judge the living and the dead.
 - B. God will send us home to heaven.
 1. He has promised to sustain us in our faith until the end (v9 — "God is faithful"; v8 — "Who will sustain you to the end").
 2. He will declare us guiltless on the day of judgment (v8).

Conclusion: Many people long to be rich. Some enjoy the luxuries of the

present day. Many can only dream of what might be. But we who know Christ, whether we look back, or to the here and now, or to the future, can be certain that in Christ WE ARE RICH IN EVERY WAY.

Ronald W. Irsch
Rochester, Michigan

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

II Peter 3: 8-14
December 6, 1981

In this pericope Peter focuses on three important truths concerning the *Parousia* (Christ's advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age). (1) God is delaying the second coming of His Son out of His great love for mankind as He keeps open for as long as possible the door of repentance. (2) That Christ will come again is absolutely certain, and His coming will carry with it definite consequences for the physical world as well as for all mankind. (3) In view of the fact that Christ could return at any moment and being aware of God's forbearance, Christians should strive toward holy living.

Introduction: It seems that in our more and more sophisticated society people are less and less patient. We just cannot wait! We live in an age of instant oatmeal, minute-rice, microwave cooking, drive-through restaurants, super-sonic travel, etc. We cannot even wait for Christmas anymore, but allude to its coming long before Advent. Today the Apostle Peter reminds us that perhaps it is time for all of us to slow down and once again use Advent as a time to

Wait on the Lord

- I. Wait on the Lord with patience (vv8, 9).
 - A. The Lord's delay in coming again must be measured against His relation to time.
 1. With the Lord one day is like a thousand years (v8; Ps 90:4).
 2. The Lord is not slow to do what He promised as we count slowness (v9a; Gn 6:3ff).
 - B. The Lord's delay in coming again must be measured in accordance with His divine purposes.
 1. The Lord would have all men to be saved (v9b; 1 Tm 2:4).
 2. The Lord would give all men the opportunity for repentance (v9c; Gn 18:17ff).
- II. Wait on the Lord's sure promise.
 - A. The Lord's justice has promised the destruction of the present heavens and earth.
 1. This day of the Lord will come suddenly at some unexpected future time (v10a; Mt 24:43).
 2. This day of the Lord will be a day of total annihilation (vv10, 12). The heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by heat, and the earth and the works in it shall be burned up.
 - B. The Lord's grace has promised the establishment of new heavens and a new earth (v13).
 1. The new heaven and earth will be a place where righteousness lives (v13).
 2. The new heaven and earth will be a place of perfect bliss (Re 21:1-4).
- III. Wait on the Lord in peace (v14).
 - A. Because of Christ we need not fear His coming.
 1. Through Christ we are without spot or blemish (v14; Jd 24; 1 Jn 1:7-9).

2. Through Christ we have peace with the heavenly Father (Ro 5:1-2).
Hymn 66 (*TLH*), st. 2-4.
- B. Because of Christ we can serve the Lord in peace as we await His coming.
 1. In Christ we are empowered to live holy and godly lives (v11).
 2. In Christ we can hasten the day of His coming as we enable people to come to repentance (v12).

Conclusion: One day our "waiting on the Lord" will be over. When that glorious day comes we will join the heavenly chorus to sing (*TLH* 66, st. 5):

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name.

RW1

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

I Thessalonians 5:16-24

December 13, 1981

God desires His people to wrap and adorn their faith with many good works, much as we wrap the gifts around our trees with colorful paper and ribbon. But just as the wrapping paper does not make the gift, neither do our good works contribute to our justification before God. This text affords the pastor the opportunity to stir up God's people to good works while reminding them that it is their faithful God who is responsible for all the good they do or enjoy.

Textual Notes: Note the triad in vv16-18 ("rejoice, pray, give thanks"); cf. Kretzmann who ties these three together. Note also the present tenses implying continuous action; the *touto* of v18 undoubtedly includes the entire triad. Note the *en Christo* (v18) which reminds us that God's will for us is always tied intimately to our Lord Christ's person and work. Vv19-20 should be understood as referring to the normal preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments, certainly not to some "charismatic" experience of sorts (cf. Luther, *Smalcald Articles*, VIII)! Could vv21-22 refer to the sifting of true and false doctrine? Kretzmann and Lenski seem to think so; however, more is probably also included. The pastor must guard lest he give the impression to his hearers one is not a Christian if he is not "always praying," or "always giving thanks," and so on; such an impression would be a horrible mixing of Law and Gospel as C.F.W. Walther makes clear in Thesis XVII of his *Law and Gospel*. V23: Note the emphatic *Autos*. This entire section (vv23-24) gives all glory to God alone. See Lenski's rather thorough discussion of the continuing debate between the so-called "trichotomists" and "dichotomists"; perhaps Luther's understanding of v23 is the best, "... der Gott des Friedens, heilige euch durch und durch ..." ("through and through"). *Parousia* in v23 is best understood as referring to Christ's second advent (see context of entire epistle). The agent of the verb *teretheie* (aorist passive) is certainly God, emphasizing again the *sola gratia* thrust of this section. V24: Note how *pistos* is emphatic; God calls through the gospel (cf. Small Catechism, third article) and it is this call which assures us of His eternal faithfulness (cf. Php 1, 6).

Introduction: Wrapping paper and ribbon . . . certainly an important part of our Christmas gifts but not giving those gifts their value. Some Christians seem most concerned about the wrapping and ribbon in their Christian life; that is, the good works they do. Looking at our text we ask,

Is the Wrapping All That Matters?

- I. The wrapping is important; that is, good works are a necessary adornment to the Christian faith.
 - A. God commands us to do good works; this is His will for us (v18b).
 - B. What are some of these good works He commands?
 1. Always rejoice (v16).
 2. Pray constantly (v17).
 3. Give thanks in everything (v18).
 4. Do not despise God's Word (vv19-20).
 5. Avoid all false doctrine and wickedness ((vv21-22).

But we know that while God commands such good works, none of us can do them as God desires (note the present tenses in the verbs). The wrapping does not make us valuable to God.

- II. The condition of our heart is that which makes us valuable to God.
 - A. By nature our heart is broken, filthy, and unacceptable to God.
 - B. For Jesus' sake, God forgives us all our sins, making us perfect and valuable in His sight ("through and through," Luther) (v23).
 - C. We can depend on the God who first washed us from all our sins in baptism and continues to work faith in our hearts through His gospel. He will continue to keep us in this faith through the same means by which He first called us — His Word and sacraments (v24).

Conclusion: Let us give all glory to God alone for what we are and what we do. But let us also seek by His grace to wrap our faith in many good works which always glorify Him.

Steven C. Briel
Fairmont, Minnesota

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Romans 16:25-27

December 20, 1981

Christmas is a happy time, an exciting time, a time of giving and receiving gifts. Those gifts piled around the tree should, of course, remind us of the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's hidden love which He gave to our world two thousand years ago in Bethlehem. This text reminds us to give God the glory this Christmas, for He has made Christmas what it is.

Textual notes: See Lenski, pp. 926ff., for a discussion of the alleged spuriousness of this pericope. The writer of this study accepts the text as genuine and in its proper place. Note how the entire pericope directs our attention and worship entirely to God, beginning and ending with datives of which God is the object (v25 *to de dunameno* . . . v27 *to mono sopho theo*). V25: *dunameno* is a pres. ptc. emphasizing God's continuing and eternal power; this root coupled with *euangelion* recalls Paul's earlier statement, "The gospel is God's power unto salvation . . ." (1:17). *Iesou Christou* is best taken as an objective genitive; Jesus as the Christ is the message of the gospel. V26: The aorist participle passive *phanerotherntos* recalls the entire Christ event — His incarnation, passion, glorification — which has unlocked the Old Testament revelation (*graphon prophetikon* taken as a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures). *dia te graphon prophetikon* teaches the doctrine of the means of grace. The phrase *eis hupakoēn pisteos* is perhaps one last subtle jab at works-righteousness. *eis panta ta ethne* emphasizes the universality of God's grace in Christ. V27: As Lenski points out, even our praise would be unacceptable to God were it not for the

mediation of Christ (*dia Iesou Christou*). Stoeckhardt in his *Romerbrief* takes the relative *ho* to refer to Christ, making the point that Paul here ascribes equal honor and glory to the Father and the Son, "who with the Father, is God over all . . . the source and author (*die Quelle und der Urheber*) of our salvation! To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen."

Introduction: It is exciting to hear the children's happy shrieks as they rip open the gifts piled around the tree. In a similar way we Christians feel like shrieking with delight this Christmas as we cry out to each other again:

Look! God Has Opened His Gift of Love!

- I. It is a gift wrapped and hidden from natural man.
 - A. God's free love and mercy for the sake of the coming Christ were hidden for ages in the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, known and understood only by a remnant of God's Old Testament people (v25).
 - B. God's free love and mercy for Christ's sake are still hidden from all those who are without the revelation of God's Word and the key to that Word — Jesus Christ (v26), for all people are, by nature, blind and dead in their sins.
- II. In sending His Son to our world God made known His love and mercy.
 - A. God has revealed His love so that sinners might have confidence (v25, "be strengthened") in God's forgiveness of all their sins and enjoy such forgiveness of sins by faith alone (v26, "the obedience of faith").
 - B. God has unwrapped the gift of His love for all people (v26, "to all the nations").
 - C. People are brought to faith in God's Christ and given the forgiveness of their sins through the preaching of God's Word which centers in Christ (v26, "through the prophetic writings is made known").
- III. God's gift of love in Christ brings all glory to Him alone!
 - A. Many seem to be trying to steal Christmas away from God; this is man's way, to give glory to self rather than to God where it rightly belongs.
 - B. Christmas is God's day — He should receive all the glory.
 1. He is the one who gave us the gift of His love (v26, God being the agent of the passive *phanerothentos*).
 2. He is the one who works faith in our hearts (v25, *to de dunameno humas sterixai*).

Conclusion: As we open our gifts this Christmas, let us not forget to give the greatest glory to God for the gift of His love.

SCB

CHRISTMAS DAY

Hebrews 1:1-9

December 25, 1981

In a spiritual sense Christmas can be described most fully with the term "fulfilment." "Many and various" (v1 RSV) elements of prophecy, works of judgment, and special revelations were, in a sense, finally tied together in God's declarative act in speaking to man by a Son (v2). The writer to the Hebrews is in reality distinguishing between the Old and New Testaments ("of old," v1, and "these last days," v2) as he speaks about prophecy and fulfilment, the two-stage revelation of God, first through the fathers and prophets and then in His Son. A new age has been inaugurated (*eschatou*, v2) with the coming of this Son, the final age of the world.

The writer identifies seven facts about the Son (vv2,3) to underscore the full divinity and complete fulfilment which this Son reflects ("bears the very stamp of His nature," v3 RSV). He is indeed "better" (used thirteen times in Hebrews) than the old order, better than, for example, angels, who were communicators of the old covenant (2:2). The author quotes heavily from the Old Testament (vv5-9) to substantiate this truth.

The central thought of the text is that after a long period of preparation God has finally spoken in fulfilment by His Son, the Savior from sin, who is "better" than angels and is indeed true God. The goal of the sermon is that the Christmas worshiper recognize the meticulous plan of God in both promising and delivering a Son, who represents God's finest Word (see Jn 1:1) in bringing salvation, and be heartened and strengthened by such love. The problem centers on the inclination of people to make the story of Jesus' coming too superficial and to miss the depth of God's plan and fulfilment. The means to the goal is to identify God's careful planning and its stunning results in the hearts of sinners.

Introduction: A recent television commercial advertising a certain investment firm makes much of the fact that when this firm speaks, people listen, dropping whatever they are doing, in fact, in the hope of hearing a valuable tip: In a much more profound manner, Christmas is God speaking His best Word to mankind. And people are listening, perhaps more on this day than any other day of the year. What better time, then, to listen to God carefully to hear about what is

His Last and Best Word

- I. Jesus is God's last Word.
 - A. God prepared the way for Jesus in a variety of ways (v1).
 1. The fathers received God's promises of old.
 2. The prophets gave glimpses of the age to come.
 - B. God spoke often in years past to prepare the way for speaking once and for all by His Son.
 1. Jesus' coming fulfils the promises of God.
 2. Jesus' ministry completes the salvation plan of God (v3b).
- II. Jesus is God's best Word.
 - A. God identifies His Son as bearing "the very stamp of His nature" (v3 RSV).
 1. Jesus is heir of all things (v2).
 2. Jesus is co-creator of the world (v2).
 3. Jesus reflects the glory of God (v3).
 4. Jesus upholds the universe (v3).
 5. Jesus cleansed the world of sin (v3).
 6. Jesus sits at the right hand of majesty (v3).
 - B. God identifies His Son as "better" than angels.
 1. No angel is worshiped as Jesus is honored (v6).
 2. No angel rules into eternity (v8).

Conclusion: Christmas, which marks the birth of Christ, is God's profound statement to man that all the words and predictions of old are now fulfilled and completed in Jesus, who is His last and best Word.

David E. Seybold
Fredonia, Wisconsin

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Colossians 3:12-21

December 27, 1981

The connection of this text with the preceding verses of chapter three is unmistakable. Paul identifies the true focus of the Christian life (vv1-4) by underscoring what is to be avoided (vv5-11) and what is to be "put on" (v12 RSV). A description of the virtues which are to be put on makes up the substance of the text as Paul, almost in list form, deals with the qualities of the transformed Christian life. The aorist tense (one-time action) of the verb "put on" (*endusas* v12) is significant. Christian virtues are not put on and taken off like a coat but are to be the "permanent acquisition" (Lenski) of the genuine believer. These virtues such as patience, forbearance, forgiveness, love (*agape* v14), and peace stand in sharp contrast to the demands of the Judaizers, who were certainly not far from Paul's thoughts as he prepared this letter. This group, which insisted on strict adherence to the Jewish ceremonial law on the part of Christians, had been troubling the Colossians (2:16,17). In addition, some form of Gnostic philosophy sought their attention with demands for asceticism, worship of heavenly creatures (v18) and a higher knowledge. Against this backdrop Paul, firmly but gently, encourages the cultivation of the true Christian virtues mentioned earlier, which will have a positive effect on all manner of personal relationships (vv16, 18-21).

The central thought of the text is that the transformed Christian life is built on the indwelling presence of Christ (vv15, 16), who empowers in the hearts of His people personal virtues which lead to positive personal relationships. The goal of the sermon is that God's people would understand the nature of a genuine Christian life-style and the beneficial impact of this style of living upon themselves and others. The problem is that this Christian life is too often, contrary to Paul's directive, put on and taken off like a garment, and the joyous possibilities of this life are blunted or even missed entirely. The means to the goal is the realization that the Christian's participation with Christ in His resurrection through faith (v1) taps the unlimited potential for true Christian living and conduct by the power of the Christ within him.

Introduction: The delights of Christmas have probably faded very little, since the special day has only recently passed and all the trimmings of the holiday are still in place. Most would be overjoyed if these happy moments surrounding Christmas could last throughout the year, but experience has taught us that the joy will begin to fade very soon. But this does not have to happen. The virtues of a genuine Christian style of living have great staying power and can bring enduring happiness to every phase of our life. It is, in fact, a joy to report that, concerning the happiness of Christmas,

It Doesn't Have to End

- I. Because we have, in Christ, put on virtues that endure.
 - A. The Christian life is a changed life, a permanent acquisition, meant to be put on but not taken off (v12).
 1. Its changed nature depends on participation in Christ's death and life (vv1-3).
 2. Its permanence stems from the indwelling Christ (vv15, 16).
 - B. The Christian life is a joyful life, because its virtues are built on that which brings lasting happiness.
 1. Love brings harmony (v14).
 2. Forgiveness settles complaints (v13).
 3. Peace promotes unity (v15).

- II. Because we have, in Christ, put on relationships that edify.
- A. The Christian life encourages mutual admonition and instruction as God's people learn to help one another in the business of living for Christ (v16).
 - 1. We worship together (v16).
 - 2. We give thanks in this relationship with one another (v17).
 - B. The Christian life reminds families of the responsibilities that promote growth.
 - 1. Wives understand their relationship to their husbands (v18).
 - 2. Husbands understand how to love both their wives and children (vv19, 21).
 - 3. Children learn the pleasing value of obedience (v21).

Conclusion: There is ample reason why the joy of Christmas should endure throughout the year if God's people remember that the business of Christian living involves God-directed and lasting virtues and relationships. In putting on Christ through faith, we have fullness of happiness which never has to end.

DES

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

January 3, 1982

Whenever a pericope talks about the eternal plan God had to save the world, the preacher knows he is going to be talking about the mysterious doctrine of election. This beautiful teaching begs to be proclaimed in every age to people who celebrate with confidence their involvement with God's eternal plan through faith in Jesus Christ. It might be beneficial to dig into the dogmatics book and review in a systematic way this precious doctrine. Then the proclamation of the positive truths of this text should happen.

Introduction: The celebration of Christmas has been going on for a long time. We usually think that the celebration started with the announcement of the angels to the shepherds, who then made haste with joy to see the great thing that had happened. But then we are reminded that people in the Old Testament looked forward with joy to the coming of the Messiah, too. Christians today celebrate the birth of God's Son. Even though the calendar has changed to a new year, Christmas is still on our minds. The text for today lends itself to a continuing celebration of Christmas and adds an eternal dimension to our celebration as it talks about

The Eternal Christmas Plan

1. Christmas began before the world was made.
 - A. God loved us then already, v4.
 1. He did not fall in love with us. He loved us because He is love (1 Jn 4:8), in spite of our sins which separated us from Him (Eph 2:4-5).
 2. His love had a purpose and design which set the pattern for all that would happen in the world, v4.
 - B. He planned to make us His sons. He chose us, v5.
 1. This would happen in Christ who would effect the forgiveness of our sins by His sacrificial death on the cross, v5.
 2. In His grace God would also attach us to Christ by faith so that we would enjoy and have for our very own the forgiveness of our sins, v8.
 3. This is how His plan would work out in time to make us holy and blameless before Him.

- II. Christmas happened at Bethlehem.
 - A. We went in spirit to Bethlehem last week and there adored again the newborn Savior.
 - 1. It was not a new celebration but a special celebration of God's faithfulness to His plan and promises.
 - 2. Our wisdom and understanding grew through the means of grace.
 - B. We cannot limit the celebration of Christmas to one week.
 - 1. The celebration is a lifestyle.
 - 2. We celebrate all year long.
- III. Christmas is taking place today in the life of the New Testament Church.
 - A. The eternal plan is being worked out among us.
 - 1. We have been brought to faith in the Lord Jesus, v15.
 - 2. We love each other, v15.
 - 3. We know and believe we have been chosen.
 - B. The eternal plan moves us to specific prayers for God's people.
 - 1. We thank God for believers in Christ, v17.
 - 2. We pray that God's people may grow in knowledge and faith, v17.
 - 3. We pray that the church may be filled with the hope of the glorious inheritance prepared for God's people, v18.
 - 4. Christmas points us forward to the celebration that will take place in eternal life.

Conclusion: Christmas involves an eternal plan. It started before the world was made, it was worked out in time when Christ was born, and the plan continues to unfold in the life of the church today. God had you in mind from the beginning of the world and has worked out that plan so that you might have eternal life.

Lowell F. Thomas
Fort Wayne, Indiana

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Acts 10:34-38

January 10, 1982

Introduction: Almost every day someone, somehow, tries to create in us a preference for someone or something. Because of the choices we have in cars, peanut butter, and paper towels, advertisers set out to show why we should prefer one to another. We have even come to label people according to their preferences.

It is no wonder that man tries to figure out the preferences of God. Who is His favorite among men? Because of His covenant with Abraham, many people of old as well as many today assumed that God preferred the Jews to anyone else. The events surrounding what we call the Epiphany discount this idea. The angels said that the Savior was born for all men. The star led non-Jewish men to the house where Jesus was. The ministry of Jesus touched the lives of Jews and Gentiles. The sermon text for today, part of an account involving a Gentile named Cornelius, also teaches us about

God's Manifested Preference

- I. God does not prefer one man to another.
 - A. One race or nation is not His favorite.
 - 1. Peter learned this in a vision recorded earlier (vv. 9ff). The sheet let down from heaven contained clean and unclean animals to eat.
 - 2. One would think that the idea of racial or national superiority in God's sight would disappear, but it still lingers.

-
- B. Nor does God prefer people according to their conduct.
 1. Cornelius was a religious man, but needed more; so he sought out the synagogue.
 2. The synagogue had conduct and codes galore, but needed more; so Peter was sent there.
 3. Today, people live with the idea that until they keep the rules, God will not love them. Finally, people equate despair with trying, and hold despair to be a virtue accepted by God. There are many people walking around who have given up on God and religion because they could not meet the requirements.
 - C. The Epiphany perspective is that all men are in the same boat, as far as God is concerned.
 1. The sons of Israel had a promised Savior.
 2. The Gentiles needed Him too. God's love in Jesus Christ included all men.
- II. God's preference is for all men to fear Him and do what is right.
- A. Do you fear God? Do you know how? It does not mean being frightened of Him.
 1. He is God — none other.
 2. He is a just God.
 3. He wants you to believe in Him.
 4. He wants you to obey Him.
 5. He wants you to pay attention to His Word.
 6. To stand before Him in reverent awe is the fear He wants. To fear God is to meet Him and see Him for what He is — God!
 - B. Do you do what is right (I Th 4:3)?
 1. The sinner does right when he repents — the mark of this condition is daily sorrow and repentance. Is this what you are doing?
 2. The sorry sinner does right when he believes and accepts God's pardon in Jesus Christ, and renews his faith daily through Word and sacrament. Do you?
 3. The believer does right when by faith he runs the way of God's commands, follows Jesus' footsteps. Do you?
 4. To fear God and live aright, to live under God's preference, is not a simple matter.
- III. God works out His preference through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.
- A. He does it through the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ.
 1. John proclaimed it; he tied the Old and New Testaments together.
 2. Jesus fulfilled it. With His baptism He started His ministry — having the full measure of the Holy Spirit, healing and rescuing those under the power of the devil. Peter explains what else Jesus accomplished in the words following the text — vs39ff.
 3. This is how God worked out His preference that all be saved. God did it, not man!
 - B. Jesus, who is the Good News, is Lord of all! (v36).
 1. The impact of this fact is felt when you realize He is *yours* — no matter who you are — Jew, Gentile, black, white, mixed, native, foreigner, healthy, sick, well-behaved, ill-behaved, employed, unemployed, unemployable, student, preacher, professor, layman, man, woman, child! Did I forget someone? God did not.
 2. The preference of God sets the mood, mission, and disposition of our church.
 - a. We are not a little light on a little hill for those dwelling upon it.
 - b. Rather, we are a divine searchlight for all those in the valley of

death, v36.

- c. We are the ones who repeat to the world the words of the voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him" (Mk 1:11).

You have heard Him because that is God's Epiphany preference!

LFT