

THE LORD'S SERMONS

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Sermon 17

Fifth Sunday in Lent

The Jews Try to Stone Jesus

John 8, 59: "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

February 17, 1872

Here you have another proof of how little the majority of the Jewish people understood Me, My mission, My origin and My teaching.

When you read this whole chapter from beginning to end you must admit that I poured out streams of light over My listeners in the temple. However, it was in vain. Most of them took My words literally; the Pharisees and scribes, offended by the truth of My words in connection with the adulteress, stole away and the others, with their limited understanding, did not comprehend what I said.

This misinterpretation of My words still exists today, perhaps even to a greater extent. For whereas at that time people took the Scriptures and also My words literally, your present-day scholars and scientists want to prove to you from visible nature that there is no God or Creator and, consequently, none of the words spoken through the Prophets or Jesus is of divine origin. At that time the Jews wanted to stone Me not just because I told them the truth to their face, but because I presumed to speak of My divine origin, the possibility of which they could not imagine.

The Jews of that time stuck strictly to their laws in a literal sense but they made the precepts of Moses as easy for them-selves as possible. So they could not be expected to appreciate My teaching which separated the spirit from the dead letter, for with the observance of My teaching they would have been compelled to restrict themselves and their passions. They were - what many thousands are still today - just temple-goers and sticklers for ceremonies. To this effect the people had also been educated by the priests, so that the latter would not lose their influence and would still be able to exploit the people in whatever way it suited them.

Take your history book and read it carefully and you will find that after a church with its priests had been established it was not long before the teachings of My disciples were used for the purpose of securing power and recognition for the clergy, which had also been the main object of the priests in Jerusalem during My time. The education of young men for this caste was also arranged in such a way that they were not to learn or understand anything that was not of benefit for the aims of the priesthood. The results of this attitude were religious wars, persecution and the separation into two main camps - the Catholics and the Protestants. These two churches - endeavouring to find their salvation in literal interpretation - again split up into several sects with My teaching, about the interpretation of which they were fighting. Yet My teaching as a whole was the basis for all of them.

Now that the process of purification has commenced, they are still fighting about the same things but with peaceful means. Again the sects and castes are fighting one another. Some men demand a purification of the many ceremonial rites which are almost covering up the whole religious edifice. They want to revert to the initial simple cult where every ceremony introduced had a spiritual basis which also the laity could understand. So far these men, as a result of their education, are still on the wrong track. They, too, do not fully comprehend what I once said, that My Word was spirit and truth and that he who wanted to worship Me had to do this in spirit and in truth.

Several of My disciples had advised the congregations, which had originally formed, against the introduction of ceremonial rites. For ceremony kills the spirit and is easily misunderstood, considered more important than it actually is and rather leads away from Me than closer to Me.

The longing that has now taken hold of many minds and aims at a religious cult more in line with the present time and the education of today's Christians is the transition to the ultimate, spiritual supreme cult for which a way is being paved through My direct communications conveyed to you for over thirty years.

For many My teaching does not comply with their worldly views, and they would like to kill it just as once the Jews wanted to stone Me. But My teaching goes its own way right through all obstacles, and it will become available to mankind when through heavy blows of fate, through afflictions and sufferings the right time will have come, when all deceptive hopes for worldly power and greatness will have become evident as will-o'-the-wisps leading the people that follow them into the swamp instead of dry ground. Only then will the clear insight of My Word assert itself and compel even those to believe who formerly, supported by their rationalism, did not believe in the existence of God, but - at least for this earth - regarded themselves as God, that is, the rationalist with his delusions. My teaching will confound them all and make them realize that what they endeavoured to make others believe, namely, that there did not exist a God, was a false inference of their intellectual rubbish. As I once evaded My murderers in the temple because

My time had not yet come, My teaching, as you are receiving it, is still evading its critics. And even if here and there one or the other wants to condemn it to death, as the Jews did with Me, and squirts his venom over it, he prejudices only himself; for time will teach him, too, and prove that what I want will happen and not what he with his limited insight wishes.

Many a stone is still going to be thrown at My teaching in the form of harsh words meant to squash the gentle precept of love under their weight. But do not fear for its victory! For as at that time My Self was destined to pass even harder tests until My glorification had been accomplished and the end of My mission reached, thus now My teaching will be stoned, condemned, mocked, crucified and then - apparently dead - put in a grave from which, however, - as I once did, conquering death - it will rise triumphantly.

This you must realize: The more ground My teaching will be gaining the more obstacles will be building up against it; for it attacks many in their material and even more in their spiritual comfort, in their habitual way of living and thinking. It has to be like this, so that until My next coming to the earth everything may repeat itself that once visibly constituted the essence of My three years of ministry. There I sowed the seed of My teaching among thistles and thorns and not much of the soil that received it was fertile. It still grew rankly in some spots. Now, too, My Word that wants to make men free falls on stony ground, heeded only by few, mostly trampled under-foot and threatened with destruction by the foxes that scent it as harmful to them. But it is still going to ripen and grow into the celestial flower that I once brought to your small earth Myself and which I handed to you like a rose that delights the senses with its fragrance, but may easily hurt a careless hand with its thorns.

The rose is the loveliest flower on your earth for it combines fragrance with the most beautiful colour, one expressing love, the other wisdom. As the rose in its charming raiment combines beauty with fragrance, thus also My Word, the word of love combined with good deeds, makes every admirer sense the charm of My Divine Being.

The thorns are the worldly passions which have first to be removed through struggles and suffering. Thus the rose actually wishes to say: "I cannot exist without thorns!" These have to be overcome. As the rose sucks electricity through its thorns using it for its own beautification, so everyone who wants to follow My teaching and live according to it, has to exploit the worldly difficulties in such a way that from them, like from the thorns of the rose, the spiritual and sublime may grow.

Therefore, you, too, should tend My words! Do not just read them to pass the time, for a time could come that might spoil this pleasure for you if you have not ennobled yourselves by your thoughts and actions. Comply with My words, so that armed with the conviction of good deeds you need not, like the majority, hungrily stick to the letter, but may drink at the living fountain of eternal love, bliss and beatitude. Then, also in your troubles never forgetting

Me, My Word and My divine love as your 'Father', you can raise high the standard of faith and trust and not meet Me - as maybe many do - with stones of resentment, but with worship and gratitude when I shall come to hand the palm of victory to those who have persevered. Amen.

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Rudolf Julius
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