



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“TWO SEAS”

John Galbreath
Bible Study Series

Text: Psalm 8
Date: December 26, 1948

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church on December 26, 1948.

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (Psalm 8).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

The hymns that morning were "The Spacious Firmament," "My God How Endless," and "Dear Lord and Father."

A note in the bulletin said: Next Sabbath -- Congregational meeting for reception of annual reports and election of trustees and elders. Consideration will be given to the formation of a Board of Deacons. Consider the work that had been done by the Westminster Deacons since that first discussion in late 1948.

The bulletin also included this prayer from *The Golden Book of Prayer*"

God, be patient with me, and make those who love me patient. Forgive, and help them to forgive, my weak resolve, my stubborn pride. Father, I know how I hurt Thee, and them, when I am unreasonable and demanding when I lose my temper over trivial things. Help me to be patient and forgiving with them as Thou are and they are with me. When I am in the wrong give me grace to admit it wholly neither offering excuses nor trying to shift the blame. Make me more honest in my thinking, more charitable in my opinions. Father, in Thy mercy Thou has given me the love of family and friends; in Thy mercy help me to be worthy of it, for Thy dear Son's sake. Amen.

I. Introduction

A. Influence of geography on people

1. Japan's stoicism, defense against the disaster of typhoon and earthquake.
2. Mountain people are individualistic, as against the tribal nature of those of the lowlands.

B. Palestine's geography and influence on her people.

1. We who have no long history as a people cannot fully appreciate it.
2. 2000 years of a nation's life in an area less than the size of western Pennsylvania
3. Each hill had its significance in the nation's history -- had its tale, told by the father in the family gathering

C. Palestine -- of volcanic origin

1. Splitting down the center is a chasm
2. To go from Jerusalem to Jordan, 15 miles, one went from 2800 feet above sea level to 1200 feet below sea level
3. Temperate climate of the mountains -- tropical climate of the Jordan Valley

II. Galilee

A. Fifteen miles from Nazareth -- Sea of Galilee

B. A "Sea" of 8 x 13 miles

C. Famed throughout Roman Empire for its beauty -- and cured fish

1. Of deep blue, with Mt. Hermon, snowing-capped in the distance
2. Many sails indicated extensive fishing in Jesus' day
3. Boat building nearby -- forests
4. The shores were fertile, rich in fruit and grapes

D. Jesus found disciples there

1. Did not seek the scholar or dreamer, but the fishermen -- the independent worker

E. Preaching influenced by the lake

1. Preached from a boat off shore
2. "Fishers of men"
3. Tribute money from fish's mouth

F. Mother and brothers knew they might find him there

G. He went to Galilee for rest from the pressing crowds

H. Revealed his Deity

1. Stilled the sea
2. Walked on the water

I. Joined disciples after resurrection

1. Draught of fishes
2. Sent disciples back to service of the Kingdom

J. Galilee -- a symbol of Christ's own life -- always emptying itself -- always full

III. Dead Sea

A. Jordan

1. Not peaceful -- but with cataracts, thrashes its serpentine course down to the Dead Sea

B. Geology

1. 1200 feet below the sea -- 10 x 50 miles

C. Supports no life

1. Fish from Jordan die
2. Only cities of note -- Sodom and Gomorrah

D. One of the world's most desolate spots

IV. Conclusion

Galilee -- always giving of itself, a rich source of life and beauty. Salt Sea, always taking to itself, never giving up -- killing all it touches.

"Whosoever would save his life shall lose it. Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Study Questions -- Part I

Bible Reading: Psalm 8

Verses 1 through 4 say:

¹O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

² From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

- It refers to the heavens, the moon and the stars and asks how God can be mindful of individuals. Are there things that make you wonder at God's attention to you?

Verses 5 through 9 say:

⁵ You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

⁷ all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

⁹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- What responsibility do you feel because God has put "everything under your feet"?

Study Questions -- Part II

Sermon :

- I.A. What influence do you think the geography of our area has had on the people who settled here? What influence do you think it has today?
- II. When you hear the name "Galilee" what pictures does it bring to your mind?
- II.D. Do you think there is a significance to the fact that an area known for its beauty is where Jesus found his disciples? If so, why do you think that was?
- II.D.1. Why do you think the disciples came "from the people" rather than from the elite?
- II.E. If Jesus had preached in our area, what kinds of influence might that have had on his message?
- III.A. Do you think there is a reason that one of the few places on earth described as "dead" was so near to the center of Jesus' life?
- IV. Why do you think these comments were chosen as a summary?
- IV. What, in our world, do you believe kills all it touches?

In Section I.E. Dr. Galbreath originally had the order as

Fishers of men

Tribute money from fish's mouth

Preached from a boat

but reordered it as you see it. Why do you think he did that?

In the envelope with this sermon is a pamphlet called *To Give is to Live...* There is also a clipping reprinted from McCall's indicating that the original copyright is from 1928. The following is a combination of the two versions of the piece.

The text, by Bruce Barton, reads:

There are two seas in Palestine; one is fresh and fish are in it. Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it, and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its healing water. Along its shores children play, as children played when He was there. He loved it. He could look across its silver surface when He spoke His parables. And on a rolling plain not far away He fed five thousand people. .

The River Jordan makes this sea with sparkling water from the hills. So it laughs in the sunshine, and men build their houses near it, and birds their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

The River Jordan flows on south into another sea. Here is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs above its waters and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink.

What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas? Not the River Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie; not the country round about.

This is the difference. The sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure. The other sea is shrewder, hoarding income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps. The Sea of Galilee gives and lives.

The other sea gives nothing. It is named the Dead.

There are two seas in Palestine.

There are two kinds of people in the world.