

**SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER**  
**Quinquagesima Sunday<sup>1</sup>**

**Lessons:<sup>2</sup>**

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the thirteenth Chapter of the First Book of Moses, called Genesis.<sup>3</sup>

“And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel [**BETH-ull**], unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel [**BETH-ull**] and Hai [**HAY-eye**]; Unto the place of the altar, which he had make there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite [**KAY-nunn-ight**] and the Perizzite [**PEARizz-ight**] dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar [**ZOH-urr**]. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre [**MAM-rih**], which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.”

*Or,*

Here beginneth the fifteenth Chapter of the First Book of Moses, called Genesis.<sup>4</sup>

“After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer [**ell-ih-EE-zurr**] of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees [**KOL-deez**], to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls

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<sup>1</sup> This sermon was originally written on the Gospel for Holy Communion on the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> *An Alternative Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised in 1928)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, WITH THE ADDITIONS AND DEVIATIONS PROPOSED IN 1928 34 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxvi (South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxiv (CIPBC 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 13:1-end (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 15:1-18 (KJV).

<sup>5</sup> *Ecclesiasticus* 1:14-end (KJV).

<sup>6</sup> St. Luke 10:25-37 (KJV).

<sup>7</sup> St. Luke 10:29b (KJV).

<sup>8</sup> Rector, St. Thomas of Canterbury Anglican Catholic Church, Roanoke, Virginia.

ing life. On top of that, as a pastor, the lure to compromise truth is often great. Many pastors will not touch a subject like this for fear they will turn some in their congregation away from their church, or the word will get out that they preach against specific sins and new people will not join their church.

I fear God much more than I fear either of those two scenarios. I hope you do also and will pray for me each day.

No one is a “hater” just because he opposes same-sex relationships! Some who oppose this activity likely do hate those who engage in it, but those who do hate people because of their sexual orientation and activity are not acting like Christians. While as Christians we must speak the truth and defend God’s Word at all costs, we must speak and defend that truth in love. True love desires the greatest and best for the person who is loved. What can be greater or what is better for any person than eternal life in heaven? As Christians, we surely know of no greater or better place.

And so when we, out of love, speak against same-sex relationships and activity, we are not being “haters,” we are being “lovers”. Those who call us haters may not agree, but God does. He knows, and ultimately He is the One that matters.

I am a Christian who, out of love for all men in Christ, desires to see all be saved and receive eternal life in heaven with Jesus. If speaking the truth in love makes me a “hater” in the thinking of some, so be it. To them I am “guilty as charged.”

But I trust God knows, and I know, I am not a hater. And neither are you. Not when our desire is for all to have the greatest and best that anyone can have: eternal life in heaven, and for their sake speak the truth in love. *Amen.*

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came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites [AMM-uh-rights] is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates....”

*Or,*

Here beginneth the fourteenth Verse of the first Chapter of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus.<sup>5</sup>

“... To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and it was created with the faithful in the womb. She hath built an everlasting foundation with men, and she shall continue with their seed. To fear the Lord is fulness of wisdom, and filleth men with her fruits. She filleth all their house with things desirable, and the garners with her increase. The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, making peace and perfect health to flourish; both which are the gifts of God: and it enlargeth their rejoicing that love him. Wisdom raineth down skill and knowledge of understanding standing, and exalteth them to honour that hold her fast. The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord, and the branches thereof are long life. The fear of the Lord driveth away sins: and where it is present, it turneth away wrath. A furious man cannot be justified; for the sway of his fury shall be his destruction. A patient man will tear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. He will hide his words for a

time, and the lips of many shall declare his wisdom. The parables of knowledge are in the treasures of wisdom: but godliness is an abomination to a sinner. If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee. For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction: and faith and meekness are his delight. Distrust not the fear of the Lord when thou art poor: and come not unto him with a double heart. Be not an hypocrite in the sight of men, and take good heed what thou speakest. Exalt not thyself, lest thou fall, and bring dishonour upon thy soul, and so God discover thy secrets, and cast thee down in the midst of the congregation, because thou camest not in truth to the fear of the Lord, but thy heart is full of deceit.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the twenty-fifth Verse of the tenth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.<sup>6</sup>

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an

to act upon his tendency, based on concupiscence, to lust and fornicate.

Then let’s say concupiscence manifests itself in another man as an overactive desire to lust after and then engage in sexual activity with other men. He, too, is a fornicator and if his partner in that activity is married to a woman, then he is also an adulterer!

God’s wrath and judgment is the same upon both men. They both have committed the sin of fornication. They both need to repent. They both need to strive by grace to “*go and sin no more.*”

The world, and sadly a growing number of Christians, are not able to understand such an elementary example of sinful behavior. Heterosexual fornication is far too accepted in society, and often within the Church. Acceptance of heterosexual fornication has opened the door to acceptance of same-sex fornication. Once the conscience is seared by one form of sin, it becomes dulled to other forms of sin.

We must beware and be on guard about this because God *will* judge us, starting with the Church according to 1 St. Peter 4:17. We will not be able to make it through that judgment if we condone or turn a blind eye to the open practice and acceptance of any activity God uncompromisingly calls sin.

My brethren, I confess to you that I am a sinner. Concupiscence manifests itself in my life in ways that, if not battled against and suppressed by grace through faith, will lead to activity that, in God’s eyes, is just as sinful as any other form of sin.

All forms of sin are a moral offence against God’s holiness. He does not “rank” sin the way we often do.

Because of this I am in great need of your daily prayers to aid me in remaining on the narrow way that leads to everlast-

In our Lord's day, Samaritans were *really* hated by most Jews. Racially, Samaritans were part Jewish and part Assyrian. Religiously, some of them worshipped Yahweh (like the woman at the well in St. John 4) and some worshipped the idols of the Assyrians. The average Judean in Jesus' day did not see the Samaritans as part of the remnant of Israel and often despised them. Our Lord's ministry activity shows He did believe the Samaritans were part of the remnant of Israel. He taught and healed people in Samaria several times. We will read of Him doing so in next Sunday's Gospel Lesson.

In this parable, as well as in the example He set in His earthly ministry, Jesus taught that all men and women are my "neighbors". No person is to be hated because of his nationality, race, or sex, alone or together. We are all God's creatures for whom Jesus came and died to save us from our sins.

Sexual orientation is different from nationality, race, or sex in that it is a choice. Yes, I know there are allegedly "scientific studies" that claim sexual orientation is genetic, but Scripture does not support this. St. Paul is very specific about this in Romans 1:24 when he writes that it is "...*through the lusts of their own hearts [they] dishonor their bodies between themselves.*" About the only "excuse" that can be used for this activity is that it is a form of concupiscence.

Concupiscence is the tendency towards sin that manifests itself in the birth nature (the Adamic nature) of all men and women. It takes different forms in different people, but to be sure we all have it in some form.

For example, let's say concupiscence manifests itself in one man as an overactive desire to lust after and engage in sexual activity with women outside of the confines of marriage. Such a man is a fornicator and possibly an adulterer. By engaging in this sinful activity, he brings himself under God's wrath and judgment unless he repents and strives by grace no longer

inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed [SHOWD] mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

### **Text:**

From the Second Lesson: "*And who is my neighbor?*"<sup>7</sup>  
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Homily:**

Recently, I found out something rather shocking about myself, something of which I was not previously aware. I found out that I am a "Hater" (H-A-T-E-R, hater).

Yes, it's true. Because I believe in traditional marriage, that is, that matrimony is a sacrament instituted and defined by God that can only take place between one man and one woman in a bond that lasts unto death and possibly beyond.

Because I believe that about marriage, I am told that I'm now a "Hater." Supposedly, I "hate" people who disagree with, and particularly those that practice ways of life that, based upon God's Holy and indefectible Word, are sinful. Depending on what you believe about marriage, who knows, you may be a "hater" too.

Before I continue on, let me state that traditional marriage is not a "political" issue. At least not essentially so. It has been *made* into a political issue, but in itself it is not political.

In itself, marriage is a moral issue, a moral issue that has been politicized.

In the very beginning God defined the participants and moral result of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. In Genesis 2:24 God's Word states: "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh.*"

Our Lord Jesus quoted that very verse from Genesis when He was questioned about marriage in St. Matthew, Chapter 19: "*Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain [two] shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

With these words, Jesus says that so-called "same-sex marriage" is a moral impossibility. When He defines marriage in verse 4 of that Chapter, He says "...*he which made them at the beginning made them male and female....*" The "*he which made them*" is, of course, God the Father.

Jesus states marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. And it is "*For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife.*" That is how Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, defines marriage.

And for those who believe same-sex relationships are okay so long as they are called "civil partnerships" and not "marriage," St. Paul provides the corrective answer to that sinful deception in Romans 1:18-32. That passage is long and so I will not read it to you here, but I urge you to read it when you get home today. I will, though, read the first verse of that passage, Romans 1:18: "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*" The Apostle goes on to define that "*unrighteousness*" as same-

sex sexual activity, which he describes using words such as "*foolish,*" "*vile*" and "*unseemly*".

God opposes same-sex relationships and sexual activity because it is same-sex fornication. Fornication is any form of sexual activity that takes place outside of the sacramental bond of marriage. Whether that activity is between members of the opposite sex or of the same sex, it is fornication.

God says all forms of fornication are sinful. In next Sunday's Epistle from Galatians 5, St. Paul lists *fornication* as a sin, and declares that those who practice it, and do not repent and confess it to receive God's forgiveness and absolution, "...*shall not inherit the kingdom of God*".

There are many, some of whom even claim to be Christians, who disagree with what God's Word says about marriage and sexual activity. To a growing number of those who do disagree, whether they are Christians or not, I am a "hater" because I believe God's Word and in believing God and His Word, I disagree with them.

*They* are not "haters" because they disagree with God's Word (and with me), but I am a "hater" because I believe what I do, which disagrees with them. That's a double standard if I ever heard one!

The fact is, and my conscience before God is clear, that I am *not* a "hater." To be sure, I believe and will defend marriage as God has defined it, and will warn all those who participate in *any* form of fornication to repent and confess it to God, if not to receive the Sacrament of Penance. This is because fornication violates the Seventh Commandment!

But I am not a "hater." Why do I know this? Because I also believe what Jesus teaches in this morning's parable of the Good Samaritan. I believe Jesus' definition of "my neighbor" in this parable.