

SERMON FOR MORNING PRAYER
The Sixth Sunday after Trinity¹

Lessons:²

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the first Chapter of the Second Book of Samuel.³

“Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites [**AMM-uh-leck-ights**], and David had abode two days in Ziklag [**ZICK-lagg**]; It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa [**gill-BOW-uh**], behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite [**AMM-uh-leck-ight**]. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord. Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him: And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the

people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

“And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite [**AMM-uh-leck-ight**]. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD’s anointed? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD’s anointed.

“And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher [**JAY-sure**].) The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon [**ASS-kuh-lonn**]; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa [**gill-BOW-uh**], let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

Or,

(South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxii (CIPBC 1963).

³ II Samuel 1:1-end (KJV).

⁴ *Wisdom* 3:1-9 (KJV).

⁵ St. Mark 7:24—8:10 (KJV).

⁶ “[S]acraments of the Gospel”, Article XXV, *The Articles of Religion*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 607 (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

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Today's scriptures are about our salvation. What does our Catechism tell us? It tells us that two of the sacraments are "generally necessary for salvation." Five sacraments appear in the Old Testament (as I can quite easily demonstrate), but the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion of our Lord's Supper are sacraments that impart life eternal and that have been established by Christ Himself when He walked this earth.⁶ We can speak of the Law of commandments, but St. Paul tells us that, as holy and good as the Law is, we need grace in order to live the life that is given in Christ.

You were given the new birth from death into life by Baptism, having become a new creation in Christ Jesus. And now you must feed on the Lord Jesus Christ who meets your greatest need in this our wilderness of sin and death, and by feeding on Him in faith live forever. In every way you have been given every gift you need to rise above sin and death, to be saved from sin and death, to enter into life, and to have life enter into you. You are *in Christ*, and you receive Him as the food and drink of eternal life. That is grace. That is power.

As you hear His word feed on Him by believing. When you come forward this day toward the altar to receive the Blessed Sacrament, feed on Him by taking Him into your very mouth; and so also feed on Him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.

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The Rev'd Robert Hart⁷
July 22, 2012

¹ This sermon was originally written on the Gospel for Holy Communion on the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, 2013.

² *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 40 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxiv

Here beginneth the third Chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon.⁴

"But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are at peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign forever. They that shall put their trust in him shall understand the truth: and such be faithful in love shall abide with him: for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he hath care for his elect."

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the twenty-fourth Verse of the seventh Chapter of the Gospel According to St. Mark.⁵

"And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon [**SYE-dunn**], and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician [**SYE-roh-feh-KNEE-shen**] by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her

house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

“And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon [SYE-dunn], he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis [dih-KAHP-oh-liss]. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha [EFF-uh-thuh], that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

“In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith [SETH] unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

“And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha [dall-muh-NYU-thuh].”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily:

In the Second Lesson for today, we see that the people in the wilderness could not feed themselves. In the miracle of the loaves and fishes, in which the Lord once again fulfills the prophecy from Deuteronomy of the prophet like unto Moses, we are taught that He meets our greatest need. The truth is, we all need the food of eternal life, because we cannot keep ourselves alive. The bread they ate that day was miraculous, like the manna in the wilderness that fed the children of Israel for forty years.

How could we read of the food He gave them in the wilderness, the desert wilderness in fact, and not think of the food of eternal life that He gives us? Indeed, when St. John recalls the miracle, He lets us know that the Lord used this miracle to teach that He Himself is the Bread of Life, and that to live forever we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Such talk was a scandal to many of the people, and they never walked with Him again.

It may seem as if they turned from Him because the idea sounded crazy—and yet, they had to know that He spoke of a spiritual reality. He was telling them that their truest and deepest need is for Him, the One Who is God revealed in our own nature. He took our limited human nature into His unlimited Person, our finite nature into His infinite Being, our time into His eternity, our weakness into His strength, and our death into His life. Indeed, we must feed on Him in order to live. Christ Himself, as the Lord God Almighty—one with the Father and the Holy Spirit—tells us “*I AM* the provision that meets your greatest need. You must feed on Me and live forever.” So we have this Blessed Sacrament, the wonderful mystery of the food and drink of eternal life. We feed on Him in this sacrament; and we feed on Him by His Word.