

**SERMON FOR MORNING PRAYER**  
**The Third Sunday after Trinity<sup>1</sup>**

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

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the first Chapter of the First Book of Samuel, otherwise called the First Book of the Kings.<sup>3</sup>

“Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim [**ray-muh-THAY-ihm ZOE-fimm**], of mount Ephraim [**EE-frih-ihm**], and his name was Elkanah [**el-KAY-nuh**], the son of Jeroham [**dgih-ROE-hamm**], the son of Elihu [**ih-LYE-hyoo**], the son of Tohu [**TOE-hyoo**], the son of Zuph [**ZUFF**], an Ephrathite [**EFF-ruh-thight**]: And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah [**pih-NINN-uh**]: and Peninnah [**pih-NINN-uh**] had children, but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni [**HOFF-nye**] and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

“And when the time was that Elkanah [**el-KAY-nuh**] offered, he gave to Peninnah [**pih-NINN-uh**] his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah [**el-KAY-nuh**] her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

“So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not for-

get thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.<sup>4</sup> And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial [**BEE-lih-ull**]: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

“And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah [**RAY-muh**]: and Elkanah [**el-KAY-nuh**] knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD. And the man Elkanah [**el-KAY-nuh**], and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah [**el-KAY-nuh**] her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

“And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah<sup>5</sup> [**EE-fuh**] of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul

your very mouth, and so also feed on Him in your hearts by grace and with thanksgiving.

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The Rev'd Robert Hart<sup>12</sup>  
August 7, 2011

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<sup>1</sup> This sermon was originally written on the Epistle for Mass on the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, 2011.

<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 39 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxiii (South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxi (CIPBC 1963).

<sup>3</sup> I Samuel 1:1-end (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> That is, he shall be vowed as a Nazirite, as was, e.g., Samson.

<sup>5</sup> Approximately a bushel.

<sup>6</sup> Job 19:1-end (KJV).

<sup>7</sup> *I.e.*, “my kidneys”, which the ancient Hebrews believed were the seats of the emotions.

<sup>8</sup> Romans 6:1-end (KJV).

<sup>9</sup> I John 3:1-3 (KJV).

<sup>10</sup> St. Mark 8:1-9.

<sup>11</sup> Article XXV “Of the Sacraments”, *The Articles of Religion*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 607-608 (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

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liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.”

*Or,*

Here beginneth the nineteenth eighth Chapter of the Book of Job.<sup>6</sup>

“Then Job answered and said, How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me. And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself. If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach: Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree. He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle. He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I intreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children’s sake of mine own body. Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me. All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. Have pity upon me, have

pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins<sup>7</sup> be consumed within me. But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the sixth Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Romans.<sup>8</sup>

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts the-

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, 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.

Today’s Second Lesson is 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 two 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 (“sacraments of the Gospel”).<sup>11</sup> We can speak of the Law of commandments but St. Paul tells us that, as holy and good as is the Law, 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 you must feed on the Lord Jesus Christ who meets your greatest need in this 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. This is grace. This is power: to come forward toward the altar to receive the Blessed Sacrament, feed on Him by taking Him into

Why are we called to a life of prayer and to the sacramental life within the Church? Because it is in such a sacramental life of prayer, and of hearing the word of the Lord in scripture, that we may be constantly cleansed and renewed in His resurrection life, and where we are aided by keeping the Lord Himself in focus. In baptism we died with Him, and were raised with Him, and therefore, we are in Christ. Your whole identity is established in baptism; no longer part of the dead race called Adam, but of the living Christ, having passed through His death into His life; given grace and power unto holiness. For that is your calling. The Epistles of St. Paul teach us that the calling of every Christian is the call to become a saint, a holy person. This is the calling of a life marked above all by the virtue of charity, by the holy character of God Himself. Even with the struggles of this world, and the inevitable occasions of failure and sin, the grace given to you empowers you to have this mark of knowing God even now, as we await the fullness of our salvation. The real question is, will you let Him change you? And will I let Him change me?

In the eighth Chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark,<sup>10</sup> 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 can 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 that 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.

reof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

### **Homily:**

The Second Lesson for today is all about baptism and what it is, what it means, and what it has done for us. Modern society has a secular version of documents that were part of old church records, two important certificates. We have death certificates and birth certificates; and when we think of baptism, we should think in that order. After all, what is a birth certificate but a secular version of the baptism certificates and the entries from Parish records? In the sacrament of baptism, Saint Paul tells us that our death certificates came first. We are dead with Christ, buried with him in baptism and then raised to new

life. This is how we are born again of water and the Spirit, as the Lord taught Nicodemus. In the sixth chapter of Romans you will find your death certificate, and then your birth certificate right after it.

The call we read about today is based on the fact that we are dead to sin, because we entered into Christ's own death. In the mystery of salvation, Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, to reconcile us to God. And St. Paul makes it clear that we somehow, in a spiritual reality beyond our full comprehension, have entered into His death. So, in baptism we are also born to new life, risen from the dead with Christ, empowered by His resurrection to enter even now into "newness of life," having even now a power from that new life in Christ that will be given to us fully on the day when He comes again in glory, and we rise to immortality never to die again. In the sacrament of baptism we are borrowing from our future, but borrowing without debt from a limitless inheritance that is ours in Christ. It is the opposite of owing interest; the more we borrow from this resurrection life in Christ, the more wealth we lay up and keep forever.

About this very same hope, St. John wrote:

*"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."*<sup>9</sup>

In a different way, St. John tells us the same thing as does St. Paul: we have this hope and so purify ourselves. But how? *"Even as He [that is, the Lord] is pure."* The holiness to which St. Paul calls us, and the purity that is motivated by hope, as St. John tells us, is Christ's own holiness and Christ's own purity. We are dead with Him, and then are raised with Him,

called to live by the hope placed in us already as people of the Resurrection.

This is much more than a Law of commandments. We have the commandments, yes, and we know they have come from God. And they teach us how to live a righteous life. What the sacrament of baptism has done for us is to give us that other thing that the Law cannot give us, namely grace. The word "grace" is often mistaken simply for "mercy." Grace is unmerited, yes, because the true meaning of "grace" is "gift", from the New Testament Greek word χάρις (*charis*), that word from which we get "charisma" or "charismatic", or "charism." Charism means gift. "Our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life" are charisma; they are all gifts. And, our new life in Christ is charisma, that is, a gift. The New Testament ties two things together consistently, and those two things that go hand in hand are *charisma* and *dunamis*. That is, grace and power; words that often tell us of the working of the Holy Spirit within the believer just as the Holy Spirit worked with our Lord Himself when He performed his miracles.

This grace that is more than a Law, is more because added to the moral requirement of the Law is the power and grace of the Holy Spirit working within you to live a life worthy of your calling. Not a perfectly sinless life like our Lord lived, no, because although aided with this grace and power, we are yet in our mortal weakness. But nonetheless this is a life in which we are called to be holy, and given grace and power to become holy; more than a law that tells you to live a holy life, you are lifted to a higher place in which you can *"walk in newness of life."* You cannot attain perfection in this life but you can still walk in the Spirit and experience His working within you, *transforming* you after the pattern of Christ's own holiness, just as we look to be transformed after the pattern of His resurrection fully and completely when He comes again to raise the dead and establish everlasting life.