

as the scriptures foretold. After His resurrection He was seen by many witnesses. To be saved from sin and death you must repent of your sins and believe this Gospel. Some churches have a new message. We preach the old one, the one that came from the Living God.

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August 14, 2011

¹ This sermon was originally written on the Gospel for Mass on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity, 2011.

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

³ II Samuel 7:1-end (KJV).

⁴ II Samuel 12:1-23 (KJV).

⁵ *Wisdom* 4:7-14 (KJV).

⁶ St. Matthew 7:1-end (KJV).

⁷ St. Matthew 7:15 (KJV).

⁸ Proverbs 27:20.

⁹ Romans 8:12-13 (KJV).

¹⁰ St. John 4:13-14 (KJV).

¹¹ St. Matthew 5:29-30 (KJV).

¹² Galatians 1:6-10 (KJV).

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SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER The Sixth Sunday after Trinity¹

Lessons:²

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the seventh Chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of the Kings.³

“And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies; That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.

“And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith [SETH] the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith [SETH] the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepecote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

“Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. For thy word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And

“It is not the duty of the clergy to blunt the sharpness, to soften the hammer, or to quench the fire. Woe to the preacher who protects the people from the word that kills, because he protects them also from being made alive- truly and forever alive. Woe to the preacher who acts as a buffer, deflecting the force of the scriptures to soften the blow, because in protecting from the stroke, he prevents the healing. If his labors in the pulpit amount to a lifetime of standing between the people and the word of God, reducing its effect, taming it and making it polite, presentable and harmless, he will have nothing to show for it in the end but wood, hay and stubble instead of gold, silver and precious stones.

“It far easier to preach if a man (informed by the Tradition of the Church) will ride the Scriptures like a wave, letting them make their own point, and arrive at their own destination. If the passages that have been read speak of life and death, then elaborate on life and death. If they speak of repentance then preach that men should repent. When they encourage faith, proclaim faith. When they warn of Hell and the judgment to come, then blow the trumpet as a faithful watchman on the walls. When they comfort, speak as a pastor who feeds the sheep. Let the meaning of the Scriptures be expounded to their full effect, proclaiming from them the truth that affects the eternal destiny of the souls in your care.”

The reality is this: The message is the same as always. Repent and believe the Gospel. And the Gospel is the same Gospel that was preached by the Apostles and that has been taught and “believed always, everywhere and by all.” Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day

make little or no effort to guide them to the water that Christ alone gives; that alone satisfies thirst.

Yes, these are the things the false prophets will not tell you. They preach a different gospel, not heeding the warning of St. Paul:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”¹²

That alarming statistic, that forty percent of American children are born out of wedlock, reveals the failure of the clergy above every other group in modern society. I have come to see that a clergyman may be a false prophet without ever teaching error overtly. All he needs to do, to present another gospel, is to so court your favor that he becomes one who pleases men, and cannot, therefore, be a servant of Christ. In an Anglican context, such a man may enter a pulpit with the intention of watering down the power and the wholesome effect of the Scriptures that are read, and of the Biblical truth that sounds clearly as a trumpet throughout the whole liturgy of Holy Communion. He need merely make it go down, as the song from Mary Poppins says, with “a spoonful of sugar.”

I have advised men who study for Holy Orders as follows:

now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.”

Or,

Here beginneth the twelfth Chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of the Kings.⁴

“And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

“And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith [SETH] the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith [SETH] the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

“And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I

looking so very holy and good, but inwardly, he warns us, they are ravening wolves. They court your favor. They do not preach that we should repent and forsake our sins; they aid you only in deadly self-deception, just as enablers help addicts destroy themselves. And, they add to the deceptions and errors of modern society by presenting an image of God who has made no Commandments, and who approves of sin, and so needs to forgive nothing.

In 2009, I read a startling statistic in The Washington Times: A full 40 percent of all children born in this country are born out of wedlock, up from 25 percent four years before that, six years ago. Have we really come to a time when people are so unconcerned about their children that they make no effort to provide stable homes and family life? Yes, we have. And, why not? Children are treated as throw-away objects while they are vulnerable and helpless, still growing in the womb, having no protection of law. This is a sin of our whole country.

And marriage is treated as an experiment, and something that may be redefined by the stroke of legislators’ pens and the whims of their votes, as if marriage were man-made rather than ordained of God and as if human nature can and should be altered. Indeed, for forty years extreme feminists (both male and female feminists, since many men hold that ideology too) have told us that God made some big mistakes in creating human nature the way He did, and it is their crusade to change it, or destroy it trying to change it.

Therefore, innocent children are offered in sacrifice to their god of convenience and egalitarianism, and marriage is offered in sacrifice with the innocents. People in our time increasingly display not only ignorance of the moral Laws of God, but increasingly they display their inability to comprehend morality at all. Sadly, churches are simply going along to get along, and often fail to teach their people what they need to know in order to live. They let them drink the seawater, and

given to you in the waters of baptism. And, in sharp contradiction to modern heresy taught by that other denomination (the one that embarrasses even the atheists), Baptism is not a license to sin, but the sacrament whereby you have died to sin and come alive with the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

As Our Lord told the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar,

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”¹⁰

To drink of the Spirit of life in Christ is to find satisfaction that the seawater of sin cannot give. To walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh is to know God “whose service is perfect freedom.” To let go the weight of sin, to cut yourself loose from the burden, is the great joy of freedom. It may hurt. Repentance may hurt so badly at first that our Lord compares it to plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand.

He is not unaware of the pain it may involve to repent of some sins. He is not unaware of the pain some may feel even as they let go of bitterness and decide to forgive. He is not unaware of the agonies of “cold turkey,” whether from real addiction, or from lusts of the eyes and of the flesh, or even “cold turkey” from a wrong romance outside of marriage. The Lord knows that some repentance hurts at first but afterward it brings peace. Besides which, these sober words must be heard and taken to heart: “for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell.”¹¹

These are things that the false prophets will not say to you. The Lord warns of them, coming in sheep’s clothing,

bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

Or,

Here beginneth the seventh Verse of the fourth Chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon.⁵

“... But though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: For his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hastened he to take him away from among the wicked.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the seventh Chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.⁶

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell

not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Text:

From the Second Lesson: “*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*”⁷ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Homily:

One of the finest images ever presented in a sermon that I was privileged to hear was the simple image of drinking seawater. If survivors from a sinking ship are together in a lifeboat, no matter how thirsty they may be, the worst thing they can do is to drink seawater. The salt in each drink adds to thirst, rather than quenching it. Eventually they go mad before dying of dehydration. Each drink adding to the thirst, rather than quenching it, is a good image of addiction but at the end of the day it is a picture not only of addictions, but of all sins of the flesh. Each time the flesh is indulged it craves more: “Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.”⁸ Do not drink seawater, and do not try to satisfy lust.

“*Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*”⁹ says St. Paul to the Romans. That portion of the Epistle to the Church in Rome began with the reality of your new life