

SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER
The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Lessons:¹

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the thirty-fifth Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.²

“The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim [*dgeh-HOY-uh-kim*] the son of Josiah [*dgoh-SIGH-uh*] king of Judah, saying, Go unto the house of the Rechabites [*REE-kab-ights*], and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah [*jay-az-uh-NYE-uh*] the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziah [*HAB-uh-zih-NYE-uh*], and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites [*REE-kab-ights*]; And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan [*HAY-nan*], the son of Igdaliah [*ig-duh-LYE-uh*], a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah [*may-uh-SIGH-uh*] the son of Shallum [*SHALL-um*], the keeper of the door: And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites [*REE-kab-ights*] pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab [*REE-kab*], our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab [*REE-kab*] our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar [*neb-you-kad-REZ-ur*] king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of

the army of the Chaldeans [**kal-DEE-unz**], and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.

“Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith [**SETH**] the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith [**SETH**] the LORD. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab [**REE-kab**], that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father’s commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab [**REE-kab**] have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: Therefore thus saith [**SETH**] the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

“And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites [**REE-kab-ights**], Thus saith [**SETH**] the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: Therefore thus saith [**SETH**] the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab [**REE-kab**] shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.”

Or,

Here beginneth the thirty-sixth Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.³

PROPOSED IN 1928 43 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxviii (South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxvii (CIPBC 1963).

² Jeremiah 35:1-end (KJV).

³ Jeremiah 36:1-end (KJV).

⁴ St. John 14:1-end (KJV).

⁵ St. John, 14:15-17 (KJV).

⁶ Authorship of song.

⁷ THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943); THE HYMNAL 1940 (PECUSA 1940), THE HOLY BIBLE, King James Version, Revised Standard Version.

⁸ St. John, 14:15-17 (KJV).

⁹ St. John, 14:27 (KJV).

¹⁰ Second Collect for Whitsunday, *The Collects, Epistles, and Gospels To be used throught the Year*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 182 (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

¹¹ Supply Priest, Holy Angels Anglican Mission, Picayune, MS, and Christ Anglican Catholic Pro-Cathedral Church, Metairie, LA.

They are often challenged and even threatened by that reality, because they do not understand it. The person of faith, however, remains at peace, even if attacked for holding that faith.

These people have heard and truly understand Jesus' words when He said, "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*"⁹

When Jesus gives peace, it is not a few minutes of quiet, nor an uneasy armistice. It is the unalterable, unconquerable peace of the unmatched ruler of all creation. It is that peace that allows the person of faith to be and live without fear, without trouble, without recrimination.

That is why we are different. That is why people know us as Christians. It is not xenophobic, or wrong, or closed-minded to say so. We are different, and we are different because God calls us to be and allows us to be, through the Salvation of Jesus Christ, and with the Grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty and most merciful God, grant, we beseech thee, that by the indwelling of thy Holy Spirit, we may be enlightened and strengthened for thy service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*¹⁰

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The Rev. Larry Wagoner, MSW¹¹
May 19, 2013

¹ *An Alternative Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised in 1928), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, WITH THE ADDITIONS AND DEVIATIONS*

“And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim [**dgeh-HOY-uh-kim**] the son of Josiah [**dgoh-SIGH-uh**] king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah [**dgoh-SIGH-uh**], even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Then Jeremiah called Baruch [**BAY-rook**] the son of Neriah [**neh-RYE-uh**]: and Baruch [**BAY-rook**] wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch [**BAY-rook**], saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people. And Baruch [**BAY-rook**] the son of Neriah [**neh-RYE-uh**] did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house. And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim [**dgeh-HOY-uh-kim**] the son of Josiah [**dgoh-SIGH-uh**] king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. Then read Baruch [**BAY-rook**] in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah [**dgem-uh-RYE-uh**] the son of Shaphan [**SHAY-fan**] the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house, in the ears of all the people.

“When Michaiah [**my-KYE-uh**] the son of Gemariah [**dgem-uh-RYE-uh**], the son of Shaphan [**SHAY-fan**], had

heard out of the book all the words of the LORD, Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, even Elishama [ih-LISH-uh-muh] the scribe, and Delaiah [dih-LYE-uh] the son of Shemaiah [shih-MAY-uh], and Elnathan [el-NAY-thun] the son of Achbor [AK-bore], and Gemariah [dgem-uh-RYE-uh] the son of Shaphan [SHAY-fan], and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah [han-uh-NYE-uh], and all the princes. Then Michaiiah [my-KYE-uh] declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch [BAY-rook] read the book in the ears of the people. Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi [dgih-HYOO-dye] the son of Nethaniah [neth-uh-NYE-uh], the son of Shelemiah [shell-uh-MY-uh], the son of Cushi [KYOOSH-y], unto Baruch [BAY-rook], saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch [BAY-rook] the son of Neriah [neh-RYE-uh] took the roll in his hand, and came unto them. And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch [BAY-rook] read it in their ears. Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch [BAY-rook], We will surely tell the king of all these words. And they asked Baruch [BAY-rook], saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch [BAY-rook] answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book. Then said the princes unto Baruch [BAY-rook], Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be.

“And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama [ih-LISH-uh-muh] the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. So the king sent Jehudi [dgih-HYOO-dye] to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama [ih-LISH-uh-muh] the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi [dgih-HYOO-dye] read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi [dgih-HYOO-dye] had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into

ology who could speak eruditely for hours about the structure, worship and history of the Church, who do not hold any recognizable faith in God.

It's not our clothes, though we all have some sense of modesty and appropriate dress. It's not in our national origin, nor the color of our skin, nor our native language. The answer may be found in today's Gospel reading.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”⁸

The world in general does not have within it the Holy Ghost. As Jesus told His disciples, the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, because it does not see or understand God, and does not know God. But the disciples—and we are among them—we have the Holy Spirit within us. We have that guiding beacon, that comforter, dwelling in us. That is truly what makes us different.

If the Holy Spirit lives within us, then that Spirit alters us, makes us burn to follow the will of God the Father and the Son, Who sent the Spirit. And that is what people who are not of the faith see when they observe someone who truly holds the faith of God.

They see someone who listens to a voice not of the world, but of God. They may refer to that as “having a conscience,” but it is more. It is not just doing right because they somehow feel it is right, but because God wants it that way. They see someone not focused on the things of the world, but on heavenly things. People of faith tend not to be focused on earthly rewards, but on rewards that only God can give. They see someone who is in the world, but not of the world.

Homily:

How do we as Christians distinguish ourselves from other people?

Most people would probably say that we are different because we believe in the Trinity, and the deity of Jesus Christ as part of that Trinity, and that He rose again, and in the teachings of the historic Church. That is certainly true, and it is vital.

But unless we were professing our faith to them, or they happened to observe us in church, how would anyone else know we were Christians?

The old children's song held that "*they'll know we are Christians by our Love.*"⁶ We are taught from an early age that the second great commandment is that we love our neighbors as ourselves, and we may certainly hope that the love of Jesus Christ shows in our lives and in our behavior towards others, but what else is there?

In many ways this is one of the failings of Christian Education today. We sometimes teach everything else but what makes us different.

We find it easy to teach others about the conduct of church – the liturgy, the songs, the prayers. We have these fine resources to help us, after all, the Book of Common Prayer, the Hymnal and the Bible.⁷ We can teach even a young child about the colors of the liturgical season, and about the differences between the various services of the Church.

It is, perhaps, a little more difficult to teach our church history, as convoluted as it sometimes is. But even that can be managed by a skilled instructor with a deft sense of history and telling of the stories and patterns of history. But our knowledge is not what makes us different. There are surely scholars in the-

the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. Nevertheless Elnathan [el-NAY-thun] and Delaiah [dih-LYE-uh] and Gemariah [dgem-uh-RYE-uh] had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them. But the king commanded Jerahmeel [dgeh-RAH-mih-ell] the son of Hammelech [HAM-uh-leck], and Seraiah [sih-RYE-uh] the son of Azriel [AZ-rih-ell], and Shelemiah [shell-uh-MY-uh] the son of Abdeel [ABB-dih-ell], to take Baruch [BAY-rook] the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch [BAY-rook] wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim [dgeh-HOY-uh-kim] the king of Judah hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim [dgeh-HOY-uh-kim] the king of Judah, Thus saith [SETH] the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore thus saith [SETH] the LORD of Jehoiakim [dgeh-HOY-uh-kim] king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.

"Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch [BAY-rook] the scribe, the son of Neriah [neh-RYE-uh]; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim [dgeh-HOY-uh-kim] king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words."

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the fourteenth Chapter of the Gospel According to St. John.⁴

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith [SETH] unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith [SETH] unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith [SETH] unto him, Lord, shew [SHOW] us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith [SETH] unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew [SHOW] us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He

that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith [SETH] unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Text:

From the Gospel: “*Jesus said unto his disciples, If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*”⁵ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.