

SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER¹
The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity²

Lessons:³

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the tenth Verse of the twenty-fourth Chapter of the Fifth Book of Moses, called Deuteronomy.⁴

“When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

“Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

“Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow’s raiment to pledge: But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

“When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for

the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the twenty-third Verse of the tenth Chapter of the Gospel According to St. Luke.⁵

“And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

“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 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?*”⁶
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*".

¹ "Any set of Psalms and Lessons appointed for the evening of any day may be read at the morning service, and any set of morning Psalms and Lessons may be read in the evening." *Concerning the Service of the Church*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER viii (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

² This sermon was originally written on the Gospel for Holy Communion on the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, 2012.

³ *Psalms and Lessons for the Christian Year* (1943), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxiii (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

⁴ Deuteronomy 24:10-end (KJV).

⁵ St. Luke 10:23-37 (KJV).

⁶ St. Luke 10:29b (KJV).

⁷ Rector, St. Thomas of Canterbury Anglican Catholic Church, Roanoke, Virginia.

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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The Rev’d Paul T. Beutell, II⁷
September 2, 2012

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.

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 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 everlasting 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