

SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER
Quinquagesima Sunday¹

Lessons:²

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the thirteenth Chapter of the First Book of Moses, called Genesis.³

“And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel [**BETH-ull**], unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel [**BETH-ull**] and Hai [**HAY-eye**]; Unto the place of the altar, which he had make there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite [**KAY-nunn-ight**] and the Perizzite [**PEA-rezz-ight**] dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar [**ZOE-urr**]. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan [**KAY-nunn**], and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre [**MAM-rea**], which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.”

Or,

Here beginneth the fifteenth Chapter of the First Book of Moses, called Genesis.⁴

“After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer [**el-ih-EE-zurr**] of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees [**KOLL-deez**], to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came

“There isn’t anything that cannot be fixed.” This is especially true when things are done with the compassion of Christ.

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The Rev’d George Parrish⁹
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¹ This sermon was originally written on the Gospel at Mass on the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, 2010.

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

³ Genesis 13:1-end (KJV).

⁴ Genesis 15:1-18 (KJV).

⁵ *I.e.*, Egypt.

⁶ From Joseph to Moses.

⁷ *Ecclesiasticus* 1:14-end (KJV).

⁸ St. Luke 10:25-37 (KJV).

⁹ Priest, The Diocese of New Orleans, The Anglican Catholic Church.

deeds. The Law and its role as Tutor did nothing to heal the consequence of sin.

A Samaritan was an outsider and was not under the obligation of the Mosaic Law. They were despised foreigners in the Holy Land. But this Samaritan was the only one that passed this poor broken victim and had any compassion at all for him. The Samaritan bound and cleansed this man's wounds. He put the man on his own animal because he was unable to walk the distance and then paid for his stay at an Inn. He paid the price for his respite. He was Christ-like in paying the wages for the other fellow's straying.

Our Samaritan not only pays once, but also advises the owner of the establishment that if more were owed, he would pay more on his next journey.

After His telling of the parable, Jesus asked our lawyer friend which one was the true neighbor. This time the lawyer understood. It was not the ones that stood strictly on the law, but the one that gave compassion. With this new understanding, Christ commanded him to go out into the world and to show the same compassion to all.

It is always better to err on the side of compassion than to crumble by sticking to the letter of the law. Our Church laws are given to us like the Law was given to the Israelites. They are meant to be tutors and guides.

It is the compassion of Christ Jesus that saved us. By continuing to have faith in Him who has compassion for us and by walking in that faith with His compassion that we are continually saved from sin.

When I have questioned the rules, especially when I have the opportunity to be compassionate, I hear a voice ringing in my ears. I am certain that it is the voice of God saying,

down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs,⁵ and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;⁶ And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites [**AMM-uh-rights**] is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates....”

Or,

Here beginneth the fourteenth Verse of the first Chapter of the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus.⁷

“... To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and it was created with the faithful in the womb. She hath built an everlasting foundation with men, and she shall continue with their seed. To fear the Lord is fulness of wisdom, and filleth men with her fruits. She filleth all their house with things desirable, and the garners with her increase. The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, making peace and perfect health to flourish; both which are the gifts of God: and it enlargeth their rejoicing that love him. Wisdom raineth down skill and knowledge of understanding standing, and exalteth them to honour that hold her fast. The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord, and the branches thereof are long life. The fear of the Lord driveth away sins: and where it is present, it turneth away wrath. A furious man cannot be justified; for the sway of his fury shall be his destruction. A patient man will tear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. He will hide his words for a

time, and the lips of many shall declare his wisdom. The parables of knowledge are in the treasures of wisdom: but godliness is an abomination to a sinner. If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee. For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction: and faith and meekness are his delight. Distrust not the fear of the Lord when thou art poor: and come not unto him with a double heart. Be not an hypocrite in the sight of men, and take good heed what thou speakest. Exalt not thyself, lest thou fall, and bring dishonour upon thy soul, and so God discover thy secrets, and cast thee down in the midst of the congregation, because thou camest not in truth to the fear of the Lord, but thy heart is full of deceit.”

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.⁸

“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.

Homily:

In today’s Second Lesson, Christ tells His followers that many powerful men have wanted to see and hear things that those followers had seen and heard. These powerful men did not have the faith that the disciples did. One of Jesus’ hearers had so great a knowledge of the Jewish Law that he is referred to as a lawyer. This lawyer asked Our Lord how he could obtain eternal life. Jesus asked him what he thought the Law had said. The lawyer gave something very similar to the Summary of the Law. He simplified all the teachings and Law into a mere two statements. Jesus advised the man that his summary was correct.

To make certain that he understood, the lawyer asked Jesus to be more exact. Jesus responded with a parable. It is one that we all know well, the parable of the Good Samaritan.

In this story, we are told about a man that came down from Jerusalem, which was the place of peace, and on toward Jericho. Jericho was known for its sin. This man fell among thieves. The man was good in nature but his human nature failed him. It was while he was with the thieves that he was beaten and his garments were stolen. While on beaten and naked on the side of the road, two of the best kinds of Jews passed him but did nothing to help him. Titles and position mean nothing to God if they are not accompanied by good