

SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER¹
The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity²

Lessons:³

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the fifth Chapter of the Fifth Book of Moses, called Deuteronomy.⁴

“And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew [SHOW] you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

“I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, And shewing [SHOW-ING] mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou

wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

“Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Neither shalt thou commit adultery. Neither shalt thou steal. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the thirty-fourth Verse of the twenty-second Chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.⁵

“But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith [SETH] unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily:

The two great commandments of the New Testament are given to the Pharisees by Jesus. These commandments represent the very nature of God, which is love. His is the love that is everything. We were created because of His love. We were given a free will out of this same love. His love for us is by its very nature, complete. It is never-ending and abides in us.

The only limitations that are placed on this love are the limitations that we as humans place on Him. We humans tend to complicate things especially when they pertain to God. We are the ones that place restrictions on God. Restrictions as to whom we believe He should and should not love; for this reason or for that. The interesting thing is that we always seem to forget that God is God and we are not.

He loved us so much that when the world was in chaos, God the Word became God incarnate, that is, took on a human body for us. He loved us so much that God the Son allowed Himself to die for us. After all of this, God the Holy Spirit came to be with us and to love and guide us so much so that He is still with us.

God died to take away our sin. The biggest sins were sins against the greatest commandments. We have failed to keep them. We have been commanded to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our mind. We have failed to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

When I look at our second failing, it makes me wonder what kind of conditions that I place on myself for being loveable. If this is the best that I can do at loving my neighbor, I must not be doing such a great job of loving myself. If I cannot

or will not love my neighbor or myself, then surely I cannot love God completely. If I can love Him with all my being, then I am healed. I am healed where it matters most and that is in the ability to love others.

In today's Second Lesson, we find Jesus being challenged by the Pharisees. These were the sect of Jews that attempted to obey every prescription, every injunction in the Torah. They even had some notion of a life after death. This is a great reminder that the problems of obedience to God and of future life have been with us for a long time. This is why the Holy Spirit is still with us and still guiding us: He is guiding us to Love.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

To Him be all honor and glory, world without end.
Amen.

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The Rev'd George Parrish⁶
October 3, 2010

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 at Mass on the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, 2010.

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

⁴ Deuteronomy 5:1-21 (KJV).

⁵ St. Mark 22:34-end (KJV).

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