

SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER
The Fourth Sunday after Trinity¹
(Year II)

Lessons:²

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the twenty-second Chapter of the Second of the Kings, commonly called the Fourth Book of the Kings.³

“Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Jedidah [*dgih-DYE-duh*], the daughter of Adaiah [*uh-DYE-uh*] of Boscath [*BAHS-kath*]. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

“And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan [*SHAY-fan*] the son of Azaliah [*az-uh-LYE-uh*], the son of Meshullam [*mih-SHUHL-um*], the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, Go up to Hilkiyah [*hill-KYE-uh*] the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

“And Hilkiyah [*hill-KYE-uh*] the high priest said unto Shaphan [*SHAY-fan*] the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah [*hill-KYE-uh*] gave the book to Shaphan [*SHAY-fan*], and he read it. And Shaphan [*SHAY-fan*] the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. And Shaphan [*SHAY-fan*] the scribe shewed

[SHOWD] the king, saying, Hilkiyah [*hill-KYE-uh*] the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan [SHAY-fan] read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiyah [*hill-KYE-uh*] the priest, and Ahikam [*uh-HIGH-kam*] the son of Shaphan [SHAY-fan], and Achbor [AK-bawr] the son of Michaiah [*mye-KYE-uh*], and Shaphan [SHAY-fan] the scribe, and Asahiah [*ass-uh-HIGH-uh*] a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. So Hilkiyah [*hill-KYE-uh*] the priest, and Ahikam [*uh-HIGH-kam*], and Achbor [AK-bawr], and Shaphan [SHAY-fan], and Asahiah [*ass-uh-HIGH-uh*], went unto Huldah [HOOL-duh] the prophetess, the wife of Shallum [SHALL-umm] the son of Tikvah [TICK-vuh], the son of Harhas [HARR-hass], keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

“And she said unto them, Thus saith [SETH] the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith [SETH] the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith [SETH] the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith [SETH] the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy

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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May 19, 2013

¹ This sermon was originally written on the Gospel for Holy Communion on Whitsunday, 2013.

² *The Table of Lessons*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxiii (Anglican Church of Canada 1962).

³ II Ings 22:1-end (KJV).

⁴ St. John 14:15-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).

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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.

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.

fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

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

“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.

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 theology 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