

Sermon Scriptures and Notes

August 16, 2017

CTK Charlottesville Service, 7:00pm

Robbie Pruitt

Sermon Title: “The Enemy’s Work—Supremacy of Self, and the Supremacy of Jesus Christ”

Scriptures: Genesis 1:26-28 and 31, Galatians 3:24-29, ESV, and John 17:20-26

Genesis 1:26-28 and 31:

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth...”

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

Galatians 3:24-29, ESV

“So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:24-29, ESV).

The Gospel: John 17:20-26, ESV

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me.²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

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Friends, we are gathered here this evening to worship, to pray, and to celebrate communion together in response to the love of Christ, and to the work of the enemy that occurred in Charlottesville Virginia this past weekend, and in response to the enemy’s work in the world, and in our current cultural climate. And make no mistake here, this is the work of the enemy. Jesus made this clear in John 10:10 when he said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”

Jesus, our Good Shepherd King, comes to gather His flock. He comes that we all, ALL of us, red and yellow black and white, might have life in Him. As Jesus said in the second part of John 10:10, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” So, we seek the Lord of Life this evening. We renounce the work of the enemy, and we come together as one to worship our God and King, who alone is worthy and who alone is supreme.

Opening Prayer:

Our Bishop John Guernsey of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, called us to prayer regarding these horrific events in Charlottesville, VA, on Saturday, August the 12th. Bishop Guernsey has called us to pray and to intercede for our communities that are in deep conflict, reminding us of Psalm 145, and the hope we have, as we pray: "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them."

Please join me in praying for the community of Charlottesville, for all communities in our nation that face conflict, and for our world, that the Lord may deliver us from self-supremacy, from bigotry and violence, and bring healing and salvation to all people in our nation.

Let us pray: "O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer).

A Prayer for Social Justice: "Almighty God, who created us in your image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with injustice or oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, p. 260).

Tonight's **Sermon Title is:** "The Enemy's Work—Supremacy of Self, and the Supremacy of Jesus Christ".

I hope it goes without saying, hate, bigotry, and racism are incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Any time we make ourselves supreme, or put ourselves above God and His Word, or above our neighbor, we are subverting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This self-supremacy is idolatry, making ourselves God, and is an affront to our Lord, who has created all people in His own image.

Genesis 1 is clear, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good..." (Genesis 1:26-28 and 31). God has made all people, from every tribe, tongue and nation, from one person, Adam, and He made them in His own image.

But we know this, do we not? Is this not why we are all here this evening? This is just preaching to the choir, right? But we did get to this moment in our history somehow.

Let me tell you a story about my Christian roots. I am from a little Southern Baptist Church in South Carolina. I am the grandson of a Baptist preacher, who planted one of the first integrated churches in the racist South of the 1960's. You

would think the church would have had a handle on all people being created in the image of God, but in this point in our nation's history, it did not.

My grandfather, an associate pastor of First Baptist Church, in Columbia, SC, and church planter, got himself in a whole lot of trouble from the churches elders and pastoral team for using the churches baptismal pool to baptize African American families from his mission church.

When confronted and questioned, a pastor said, "Howard, we heard you baptized a black person here last Sunday night, is that true?" My grandfather said, "No. That is not true." The man said, "Praise God, I did not think you would do that here." At which time my grandfather replied, "We baptized three families of black people here on Sunday night!" My grandfather took a stand and stood up to the racism, which is counter to the gospel of Christ and the Biblical truth that ALL people are created in the image of God, and the truth, "for God so loved the world."

As Christians, we want to be emphatic about what we believe, and we want to respond to what is going on in our world, and to the news of the day, both Christianly and Biblically. We do not want to be silent, as some have accused, "To be silent is to be complicit." We must be clear on what we believe as Christians and speak and act accordingly.

The Anglican Multiethnic Network released a statement, which was rightly re-posted by our own archbishop, Foley Beach, which sums up what we believe as Anglicans in reference to what has occurred this week. More importantly, this statement accurately reflects what the scriptures say regarding the recent events.

The Anglican Multiethnic Network's statement reads:

"We want to make it abundantly clear that as Anglicans we believe that all people are created in God's image and, as image bearers, all are worthy of equal dignity and respect. God does not value one ethnicity above another. His Son shed his blood for us all. We find our meaning and value in his death, resurrection, and ascension for us, which both humbles and exalts people of all ethnicities. Christ is the source of our reconciliation with God and each other. White supremacy, therefore, is an affront to the gospel because it speaks against the Anglican (and

wider Christian) doctrines of creation, salvation, and ecclesiology (the one people of God called from all the ethnicities of the earth). Racism and white supremacy have no place in Anglicanism.” (The Anglican Multiethnic Network).

And I would add, “Racism and white supremacy have no place in Christianity.” There is only one who is supreme and that is our Lord and King, Jesus Christ!

Scripture is clear, that Christ alone is supreme. As Colossians 1:15-20 says, “He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together... And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (Colossians 1:15-20, ESV).

Esau McCaulley makes the point that Christ is supreme, “Therefore, the Church is for the gospel and against all false gospels, including the false gospel of [self-supremacy] or white supremacy.” (Esau McCaulley).

In his article, “Letter from Berlin: The Lessons of History and the Heresy of Racial Superiority”, Albert Mohler says it this way:

“We must see claims of racial superiority—and mainly that means claims of white superiority—as heresy.”

Mohler continues, asserting, “That [heresy] is not a word we use casually. Heresy leads to a denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the eclipse of the living God as revealed in the Bible. A claim of white superiority is not merely wrong, and not merely deadly. It is a denial of the glory of God in creating humanity—every single human being—in his own image. It is a rejection of God’s glory in creating a humanity of different skin pigmentation. It is a misconstrual of God’s judgment and glory in creating different ethnicities.”

“Most urgently, it is a rejection of the gospel of Christ—the great good news of God’s saving purpose in the atonement accomplished by Christ. A claim of racial superiority denies our common humanity, our common sinfulness, our common salvation through faith in Christ, and God’s purpose to create a common new humanity in Christ.”

Mohler concludes, “[We] cannot preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and hold to any notion of racial superiority. It is impossible.” (Albert Mohler).

As Christians, we understand these truths, do we not? If this is, indeed, just preaching to the choir, then where do we go from here? How do we respond to our current cultural climate? What can we do?

Esau McCaulley, in his article, “Say it with Your Chest: Proclaiming the Supremacy of Christ in the Face of White Supremacy”, says the following:

“The hate that afflicts the hearts of people inside and outside of the Church is a burden too heavy for them to bear. We need to tell racists the truth, so that they can be free too. As glorious as the gift of ethnicity is, it is not enough. Whiteness is not salvific; it is not the grand unifier and hope of the world. Someone else claimed that job when he loosed the bonds of death and proclaimed his supremacy over all things. When the Word became flesh in the Messiah, Jesus, that was no equivocating word. God spoke from his chest (his heart) about his love for all his creation (John 1:14, 18).” (Esau McCaulley).

Application: So, what are some ways we can make a difference and get involved in Alexandria, as members of our community and/or as members of Christ the King Anglican Church? How can we make an impact on our city and our world?

In his article, “Race, the Gospel, and the Moment”, Tim Keller challenges us with three brief points, which we would do well to consider:

“First, Christians should look at the energized and emboldened white nationalism movement, and at its fascist slogans, and condemn it.” We must speak out!

“Second, this is a time to present the Bible’s strong and clear teachings about the sin of racism and of the idolatry of blood and country.” We must maintain a Biblical Worldview!

And thirdly, and lastly, Keller says, “It is absolutely crucial to speak up about the biblical teaching on racism—not just now, but routinely. We need to make those in our circles impervious to this toxic teaching.” (Tim Keller). We must stand up against falsehood, heresy, and speak truth in love!

I also have a few more suggestions for us. If you see something or hear something that is counter to Biblical truth, prayerfully say something and do something in response. Part of our mission statement here at Christ the King is to “make Christ known by what we say and what we do.” We should be prayerfully responding with the love of Christ, by what we say and what we do, even to, especially to, our enemies, who also need the good news of Jesus Christ.

We can also engage with people in our community who are from different races, or cultures than us. A good way to do this is through our One Alexandria ministry, visiting different churches in our city and coming to know and to love our neighbors. We can also volunteer or mentor with our ministry partners, Casa Chirilagua or the Carpenter’s Shelter.

These are just a few ideas. You may also be thinking of something specific that you can do right now. Maybe it is a conversation you need to have. Maybe there is a neighbor you need to get to know. Maybe there is reconciliation that you need to seek out. Whatever God is calling you to do this evening, I pray that you will respond prayerfully with God’s love and Grace. Amen!

Let’s close with a concluding benediction, from Ephesians 2 and Colossians 3, and let us close in prayer with a prayer for peace from the Book of Common Prayer.

Closing Benediction: Ephesians 2:13-16: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making

peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.” (Ephesians 2:13-16, ESV).

“Now [let us] put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from our mouths. Let us not lie to one another, seeing that we have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Let us put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven us, so we also must forgive. And above all these let us put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, to which indeed we were called in one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in our hearts to God. And whatever we do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:8-17, ESV).

Closing Prayer: A Prayer for Peace: “Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth, that in tranquillity your dominion may increase until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 258).

A Prayer for the Nation: “Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 258).

Proper 14: The Sunday closest to August 10

“Grant to us, Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who cannot exist without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 232).

Resources:

The Anglican Multiethnic Network. Accessed August 14, 2017,
<https://anglicanmultiethnic.org/2017/08/14/the-charlottesville-statement/>

The Book of Common Prayer. Church Publishing Incorporated. New York. 1979.

Keller, Tim. “Race, the Gospel, and the Moment”. Accessed August 15, 2017.

McCaulley, Esau. “Say it with Your Chest: Proclaiming the Supremacy of Christ in the Face of White Supremacy”. Accessed August 14, 2017.
<http://livingchurch.org/covenant/2017/08/14/say-it-with-your-chest-proclaiming-the-supremacy-of-christ-in-the-face-of-white-supremacy/>

Mohler, Albert. Letter from Berlin: The Lessons of History and the Heresy of Racial Superiority. Accessed August 15, 2017.
<http://www.albertmohler.com/2017/08/13/letter-berlin-lessons-history-heresy-racial-superiority/>

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“The Enemy’s Work—Supremacy of Self, and the Supremacy of Jesus Christ”