

Sermon at All Saints Cathedral Kampala on Sunday 3 Dec 2017

Church of Uganda Season: Advent
Cathedral Theme for 2017: The Family
Scheduled Sermon Topic: Jesus in the Old Testament

Scheduled Readings for the Day: Isaiah 53: 1-9 and Matthew 2 : 1-11
Special Considerations: Holy Communion Service

The Sermon by Patrick J Mangheni

The Subject: The Bible, in the Old Testament, reveals Jesus as co-Creator; co-Actor in human affairs; and the coming Redeemer of a humanity mired in sinfulness.

The Main Truth: The Bible is the complete Word of God to complete the believer and so establish coherent families that glorify God.

1. Introduction (4 min)

First: Greetings from family, Brethren of Kamaanya Three Martyrs CoU and Bunamwaya Glorious Church of Christ– I am glad to be back to place where I first made the first public confession of Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and started a new life in Christ in this place on 21 August 1975. You can rightly say I am a missionary from this church --- happy today to give back (in this sharing) some the blessings I have received from that the decision to die to sin and be alive in Christ.

Second: Your over-arching 2017 theme of **family** – is timely because families across this country are under stress and distress caused by sin (= disobeying the Word of God). Besieged families cannot be effective nurseries for strong Christian lives and will not support an effective witnessing church in a nation (Uganda) that needs Spirit filled servant-leaders and God-fearing citizens, after God's own heart.

Third: The two readings chosen for this Sunday dovetail nicely with subject of our sharing this morning – the Old Testament (OT) reading is a prophesy about the Messiah as a Suffering Servant (who takes our punishment) while the New Testament (NT) readings is a fulfillment of a prophesy (for example in Micah 5:2) about the circumstances of the Messiah's intervention in human history. We see that God's Word in the Bible completes (our understanding of prophesy and much else in OT) through fulfillment of prophesy – for accounts of Jesus' Advent (at Christmas) herald the fulfillment of arrival of the Suffering Servant. So we *have in the Bible the complete Word of God (revealed in Jesus Christ) that completes the believer in their walk with God* (that walk will very often involve establishing and supporting family units that glorify God). Thank you for making Godly families a key component of your ministry.

2. Jesus: The Source [of Things Seen and Unseen] (8 min)

From beginning to end, the Bible is one grand story about God, His character and His great purposes for people. The OT in the Bible reveals Jesus active in: Creation, as embodiment of Character of God etc (pre-incarnate appearing to the patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Isaiah, to change the course of human history

Jesus the Creator: He is the *Creator* (Genesis 1:26) of the universe and all life – Genesis lists [Earth, Heaven, Light, Man, Woman' placed in Garden, Tree of Life, Curse cast on Man] and this completed in Revelation [New H, New E, G is light of city, G has Garden City for His people, Tree of Life, Curse removed]. We have *identity in Christ* (esp when we embrace Him as Savior and Lord!). *In a world being ripped apart by identity and culture wars (and crises), we recognize a common Maker, Creator, Heritage, Source of Oneness!*

Jesus and Holiness: He is a God of *holiness and grace* – in encounter with Abraham (when he met "Melchizedek king of Salem" Gen 14:17-20 and Hebrews 7); with Moses, with Israel at Sinai; with Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15) and in Psalms and other poetry books. In a fallen world OT holds before a holiness that

challenges us to live differently' gives us hope – **the capture of Man by sin is not irreversible!** *Have you been captured by the ways and norms of the world? There is one revealed in OT who is holy and gracious! Will you embrace Him this morning by choosing to live differently – walking daily with Jesus as friend; helper; savior (like these OT people found)?*

Jesus and Goodness, Purposefulness: Genesis reports that God's Creation was Good: Reflects God's perfectly good character. Man → unique, special, set apart from all other things created. [Psalm 139:14] → we are created for meaning and purpose for relationships, and worship etc – and family inclusive! A key strand in the Bible that relates particularly to Jesus is that God's purposes are always *redemptive* (Gen 3:15; Daniel 3:25; Romans 3:24; Revelation). *Is your life focused on goodness of character? Is your life purposeful or are you driven along by the "Brownian motion" of a sinful culture (immorality, lust, greed, corruption, selfishness)?*

Truth to take away: *The Bible reveals Jesus so people may know God and His purposes and so glorify Him in the way they live their lives.*

Are you here today to know God and His purposes for your life? [On afternoon of 21 Aug 1975 when I came for fellowship here I was looking for a neat systematic proof ... clean answers ...(but I found something better: a soul commitment to Jesus by a repentant sinner!) "because He lives I can face tomorrow!" and "soar like an eagle" (Isaiah 40: 28-31)]. The Bible and Church cease to feed our soul when we pursue only knowledge or answers instead of God Himself and seek glorify Him. Our lives are transformed when we encounter the Living, **Creator** God in His Word and submit ourselves to Him. *How will you focus on the Person of Jesus of Nazareth (and make the pursuit of Him) central to your life so that He can reveal Himself to you in the way He did to people in OT and in NT? What are the **Sources of Falsehoods** are competing for your life? In OT false sources included – Serpent; idols; foreign gods; bribery (see Gehazi the servant of Elisha in 2 Kings 5: 20-27) etc*

Principle: *The Old Testament reveals Jesus Christ as co-creator of things seen and unseen so that we can embrace Him as Lord of our lives and Lord over all our situations.*

Applications: The Jesus of the OT is the source of our very existence, of all holiness; all goodness; all purposefulness in life. Have you and your family considered the Jesus of the OT in the Bible? Does He inhabit only your: Fiction list? History list? Entertainment / Adventure list? *There is no path to abiding saving faith in Jesus that avoids the encounter with Jesus who is Lord overall. There is no response (for us and our families) except to: **seek out and surrender to Jesus and worship and enjoy His presence!***

3. Jesus: The Sustainer [of Authentic Living] (8 min)

The OT not only places Jesus at the beginning of creation BUT *also at the start and continuation of journeys of many men and women who glorified in dire circumstances.* These journeys speak to the Messiah, Immanuel who would take on our humanity and yet live a sinless life. These people were not perfect – at times they failed (very badly on occasions) - but they recognized the one true God of the Scriptures (*as Creator, Holy, Supreme Source of all we need for this life and beyond*) and repented, remaining faithful to God's call on their lives. God sustained them in their remarkable journeys. *What or who sustains you in our current journey of life?*

The Persons mentioned here are generally recognized as **types of or fore-shadows of Christ who was to come as Messiah.** *How did these glorify God in tough times? Answer:* In their their selfless choices and through perseverance and faithfulness they **were sustained by Pre-Incarnate Christ.** They include Melchizedek (a Priest of Most High God -Christians are priesthood ordained by Jesus!)); Noah (*on who understood the deadly times he lived in; heeded God's warning; built an Ark (symbol of our salvation in Christ!)* and saved his family and much of Christ (*the true Messiah saves all who believe and all nature now in bondage to sin*); Abraham (*an icon that defines faith – see Hebrews 11*) Job (*an innocent victim who lost everything in this life but refused to denied God! Job 19:25-27 – Jesus was innocent*); Joseph and Daniel (*young persons who chose to remain pure and faithful to God and became great leaders!* - where are the upcoming leaders in this Church, in Uganda free from compromise, corruption, opportunism to provide Godly leadership for a Uganda mired in sin and selfishness?). **The list is long:** Moses (pre-figure of Jesus leading us from slavery to sin into the land of promise); Miriam (a mobilizer); Joshua (a teachable leader full of courage and faithfulness to God) Caleb (a courageous selfless leader); Gideon; Ruth (faithfulness to family); Samuel; David; Nehemiah; Ezra; etc – all these exhibited in their generation and times character of the Jesus we meet in the NT – faithfulness; perseverance, hope; love; courage; worship of the true God etc. They were able to do this because the Spirit of

the Lord was in and with them (*in those days for a season / special purpose – now the Spirit in-dwells believers permanently!*)

In our times, country there is a famine of Godly Values – Courage; Faithfulness, Honesty; Patience; Loving-kindness; etc – it is if Galatians 5:22-23 was never written! Our appetites (*for wealth, fame, immorality, power, violence, thieving, etc, that are crippling families, churches and much else besides*) come in “Giga sizes”. We have tripped from Galatians into “Lord of the Flies” a novel by William Golding – *no spiritual adults around in Church, in family; in positions of responsibility.* .

Our Church season Advent: *Are you tired of your current unsustainable life style? Will you this advent season try Jesus? You start by opening your heart to Jesus, confessing Him as Lord and Savior.* The sustainer of the heroes of OT will become your sustainer – as you serve Him. Have you welcomed Jesus Christ into your life? Your family? Your business? **What are the indicators that Jesus is “on board” in these areas of your life?** (see Galatians 5:22-23) Do those around you see a life that rejoices in Jesus? In power of His salvation?

Application: Where do you need the power of Jesus to help you see spiritual truth and cleanse your life? What will you do this Christmas to facilitate / welcome / exalt Jesus in your family? Work place ? Biz?

Principle: *The Old Testament proclaims Jesus Christ as Immanuel, the Sustainer of authentic Christian living.*

Applications: Accepting the sacrifice of Jesus for your sin opens your life for the work of the Holy Spirit of God (at work within all believers sustaining and renewing them: *Is the curse of sin receding or resurgent or cyclic in your life?* Are you abiding in Jesus, the True Vine John 15:1-5, (connected) **OR** are you on a “pay for your sins as you go” scheme? If you commit to Jesus as your Savior you and your family **embark on sustainable journeys faith that will see your lives healed, restored, renewed and transformed** into the person and family God always intended you to be / to have. Are you plugged into Jesus the Sustainer; the true source (“Umeme for the Spirit!”)? If not What sustains you? **What are on?** Is it authentic? - [Think of people on drugs or cheats in sport or cheats in academia]. **What sustains you?** Your Job? Your Connections? Your Family / Clan? Your Faith – in → Money? Talent? Good health? Good luck? Education? Access to those who matter?

4. Jesus: The Saviour [of the World] (8 min)

Sin: *The Struggle vs Consequences of Sin Dominates:* God → created everything good, perfect, gave us **freedom in fellowship with Him and in obedience to His Word.** Sin is when man seeks to act independently and rebelliously then fellowship with God is broken → Spiritual death follows immediately → physical death will follow [*life ceases to be immortal and now under the curse of sin*]. All mankind are corrupted, all creation is corrupted. God’s plan seems jeopardized! Until the time of Noah when God looked on His creation and mankind and He said, “Every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.” and by Gen 11, we are at Tower of Babel [**make name for self not for God**] [perhaps Babel is a tower around which your life revolves? It is a city near you? you live in it? Or a relationship / arrangement that gives you comfort? Etc]. **The big story of sin and mankind – is a trail of covenants broken by men:** [Find some in OT!] God created holy and perfect Adam and Eve but they sinned. God in OT promised a Savior, a Redeemer who would reconcile people to God [Gen 3:15]. The promised Savior is traced through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, Judah, King David and Mary. The Bible narrative is about the constant contrast between a Holy, Merciful God and sinful / sin controlled Man. God in His infinite love and mercy and grace sets up a redemptive plan to save His people but man presents every obstacle imaginable during this story. God finally resolves each one through His son Jesus, the Redeemer. **So the OT reveals the scourge of sin over our lives and faithfully works to redeem us through Jesus Christ.** Do you **recognize yourself** as you read of others that were afflicted and crippled by lack of faith and a self-centered focus? What will you do about that knowledge today? God calls us to repentance as we hear and obey His Word. **Listen for His voice daily** as He calls you to lay down your life [forsake sin] and follow Jesus in the company of His people. We experience profound changes in our relationships as we put His Word into practice: friendships changed; how we spend time changed as we understand the purposes that God has created us for. **So the OT promises and the NT delivers Jesus who cleanses the guilt you and I when we are alive to the Spirit of God feel for our sin.** Does sin in your life, in the life of those around you bother you? **If it does**, what are doing about it? **If not why not?** Do you know that Isaiah already foretold the good news that Jesus would be a full and final sacrifice for all sin? What is your response to the amazing price JC paid for your sins?

Principle: *The Old Testament anticipates Jesus Christ as the Saviour of a distressed humanity.*

Jesus the Messiah in His death is the sacrifice that reconciles sinful men to God – *Isaiah proclaims Him as the Suffering Servant whose death (in our place as condemned sinners) is the cure for all sin* [Jesus the substitute in God's "game plan" is not like in a football game **where subs are second best**: Jesus was the most valuable team member (in God's Team!) and He came on and scored the goal that earns us victory against sin!]. Without that goal our loss in the fixture against sin would have consigned us to permanent death (separation from the presence of God).

Applications: The OT reveals Jesus as the firm ground of our being, our sustenance and our salvation from the scourge of sin. ***What ground are you standing on?*** On the shifting sands of secular wisdom? Incoherence of identity and culture wars? Wealth, reputation, connections, etc ? The point of the Bible is: God calls us to live our lives from *the divine perspective*. Life seems to spell defeat and compromise only because we see life from an earthly vantage point. ***The OT provides another way to look at life through the person of Jesus that is real and enduring.*** It starts by you and me embracing Jesus Christ as revealed in the OT as our Maker, Sustainer and Savior. Have you considered the one who will make you and your family complete, purposeful, and a glorious witness to Jesus Christ's saving power?

5. Concluding Remarks [Call to Commitment & Renewal] (1 min)

The Old Testament about Jesus the Source (all holiness, goodness, fullness, purity etc); Sustainer of all who choose to obey Him; and Savior of all who repent of sin and accept the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross as the complete cure for their sinfulness. Is it your take-away message as well? Will you take that message to heart and live by it - you and your family starting this Advent season?

6. Short Closing Prayer