

# ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

---

The Rev. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector  
All Saints' Episcopal Church, San Diego, CA

Often parishioners in the congregations I have served have asked for assistance in understanding how their Christian faith is supposed to interact, or even be in contrast to, the world around us. Like answering the question, "How do we live in this culture but be a witness to God?" The reality is that there are differences, and there are clashes between what can be called world views. It is a very important and very valid question to ask for the resources – often called apologetics – to stand faithfully with a Christian world view.

Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my rock and my salvation. Amen.

My personal world view of relationship with God gets affirmed and practiced every morning early -- earlier than my internal physical world view tells me is natural and normal! We're still working that out, but I'm happy to report that discipline is winning. In order to maintain that discipline, I use our "Anglican World View System", the Book of Common Prayer. I make use of the office of Morning Prayer to make thanksgivings, to set forth God's praise, to read his holy word, and to ask on behalf of myself, and my family, and the leadership of this parish, and the search team, and for all of you, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. I make use of the daily lectionary from the back of the Prayer Book to lead me through that two-year daily reading of God's Holy Word. Right now we are finishing up the Gospel of Matthew, which means that the events of Jesus Christ's Passion have been part of my daily readings for the last week or so. And that got me thinking exactly about an enormous clash of world views, not just between the Imperial government and God - Jesus, but also between the Messiah – Jesus - and the leaders of the chosen People of God, the Jews, and even in a couple of moments of fear and betrayal, between Jesus and his disciples.

You know it hasn't been that long since Holy Week, when we ALL observed these world view clashes, so you will probably remember that scene in Jerusalem at the Praetorium between Pontius Pilate and Jesus, when Jesus replied to Pilate's question by saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." All in one short sentence, Jesus brings to our awareness that he can recognize that there are different peoples who each see the world in a different manner. We can refer to those different views as orientations, or cultures, or context of living, or more simply, world view.

And as the scene plays out between Jesus and Pilate and the questions of both Truth and Authority, we can recognize only too clearly the clash of different cultures. But MORE than cultures, right? Embedded in the concept of culture is an underlying recognition of philosophies and religions, and that each may see the world around them differently as a result.

So World view and world views come head to head, toe to toe, and eventually, nail to cross. This is the clash of worldviews. It is an inevitable clash. Perhaps you personally have felt this too closely if you have loved ones militarily deployed these days, where worldviews are at disastrous odds with each other today.

**August 5, 2018**

Sometimes the simplistic illustration brings this clash into view, just as much as what we see on the world news on TV. I'm not making light of the world view clashes, often so destructive, by bringing the simplistic, but perhaps enlightening the greater problems. So, if you will bear with me.....and let me tell you up front that this is intended to be humorous, so I give you permission to smile, chuckle and laugh.....you can all agree I think that there is a significant difference in world views between the windshield of a car, and a mosquito. Right?

And, in fact, a windshield, firmly attached to an automobile, traveling at most any speed at all is going to have a serious impact on the worldview of the mosquito moving towards the windshield at their own speed. In fact, as this meeting of world views is coming closer and closer, in reflection, what is the last thing that goes through a mosquito's mind at the moment of clashing impact? Yes. It's tail.

A worldview is a set of beliefs used to understand the world. Everyone has a worldview. Everyone has a set of principles by which to judge right and wrong, and which guides them in everyday living. You stop at a red light, go at a green. You leave a tip with a waiter or a waitress. You try and color-coordinate your clothes. You voice your order for food to a speaker box while sitting in your car. You cast a vote for a political leader. Why do these things? Because you are accustomed to doing them in a manner that is consistent with what you believe. In other words, you behave according to your worldview.

But more than behaving in a particular manner, your worldview forms the basis of how you interpret reality. Your world view is a lens through which you look at the world. Your worldview shapes your moral opinions. It affects what you believe about God, marriage, politics, social structures, environmental concerns, educational requirements, economics, the raising of children, what kind of foods to eat, etc. It affects everything, because all of that which is around you and all of that with which you interact must be interpreted and must be understood in light of your worldview.

We personally make the mistake in thinking that we on behalf of the world can create the peace that we want the world to have. That in itself is a worldview decision. And it comes from a worldview that the whole world has absorbed, called a Christian world view. But it is Christianity apart from its center.

And from that disparity we see even more than a foundation for behaving, and the basis for our interpretation of reality, a world view is about certainties and our belief in them, or now more correctly, in WHOM beyond ourselves, and our upholding of that central core of existence.

"What the world needs now" is a worldview statement and belief, but it is not something that the world itself can provide. Because the world by itself has only itself to rely upon. And if only myself, and MY worldview, well, that means a whole lot of world view clashes, both personal and culture, even in the Church.

There are those ideologies and philosophies that do try to provide a foundation. But face to face with good solid faith that there is in fact a WHO at the center of all things, and that in Jesus Christ we are able to see and hold on to the one who has revealed our Christian worldview that it is God who created all things, not us, and he calls us not to a proclamation of intimidation, but of His love – and his power and grace. Face to face, every other system, every other contrived religion, every other progressive religion will be found wanting.

**August 5, 2018**

I'm going to list for you some of the essential elements of a Christian World view. But first I want to say these two things: The Ancient Christian Creeds which many of us have committed to memory remind us weekly of the worldview of God himself which is assumed and internalized by us who believe in him. They are in a tightly woven statement, but they are there. And second, let's recognize that a lot of people fall asleep in college classes on philosophy of life, and world views, etc. It is usually only when people ask those questions I mentioned at the beginning that there is a willingness to learn. These are basic questions, too, which we all have.

Such as,

Where did we come from?

What happens to us after we die?

Why are we here?

Is morality absolute or subjective or relative?

Is there a God?

If there is a God, what does he want?

Once those questions have been uttered, and my worldview is suddenly relational, and I'm wondering about what is BEHIND my acting and thinking, then the following elements of a Christian worldview become much more interesting because they are personally important. All of these are found in the Holy Scriptures, and as I said not only summarized in the Creeds, but also in our very Eucharistic liturgy.

Such as, An absolute God exists

So then God is self-sufficient and lacks nothing. And this would mean he is eternal.

And, God created the universe

So then he is all powerful. Also, although separate, God's nature would be reflected in the created order. We can then expect to find a predictable, regular, and testable world.

Also, Man is created in God's image

This means that God has impressed his image of rationality and intelligence upon the hearts and soul of human beings. And that means we have the ability to unlock the secrets of the universe.

As well, if man is created in God's image, then all people are worthy of respect and honor.

This would also mean that when a new life formed in the womb from conception, we have purpose and identity by God's hand and desire

And we hold that Man was given dominion over creation by God.

This means all aspects of the created order on earth. Therefore, politics, medicine, art, ecology, society, economics, exploration, philosophy, mathematics, education, etc. all fall under the domain of human responsibility and should be considered realms for man to control -- under the wisdom and direction of God's revelation, the Bible.

We acknowledge that tragically Mankind is fallen

**August 5, 2018**

The Fall of mankind tells us that at the heart of every one of us is a predisposition toward sin. Therefore, the valid Christian worldview would say that even man's best reasoning is touched by sin and cannot be perfect, whether in secular or church societies. What a mess.

### The Bible is the Word of God

It is from the Bible that we learn about God himself, his created order, and it reveals the will of God for mankind, and for our order of life together.

### And another essential to a Christian world view, God Provides for his creation

We are informed that God lets the sun and rain fall down upon both the good and the bad, and thus God has promised that he will never leave us or forsake us. Therefore, we can pray, Give us this day our daily bread.

There are more, and as I said, so much tightly packed into the Creed. Unpacking the creeds will show you these Christian world view essentials.

One more that we cannot overlook brings us back to Jesus with Pilate, and Jesus and his proclamation in the Gospel today.

And that is,

### Jesus is mankind's only hope for redemption

Because man is fallen, there is no way he can redeem himself. We need rescue. Therefore, Jesus, who is God in flesh, died for us and rose from the dead. This essential means that Christians should then actively promote Jesus Christ as the means by which we are made right with God.

I left that one for the end, because it brings us back to Jesus Christ with Pontius Pilate, and it brings us to his words in the Gospel today. These take us out of the statement of principles into the relationship with the living principle, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The world view of Jesus spoken to Pilate is that His Kingdom is the Kingdom of Heaven, of all creation. Which means everything. Period. And just to underscore his world view, he would say also to Pilate, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

In today's Gospel, The worldview of Jesus, spoken so clearly to those living in a different world view to which he has come to fulfill, is that HE is the LIVING bread. And if you do not eat of the flesh of the son of God, then you have no life in you. Period.

If then the world wants life, and order, and abundance, and peace, and holy living, then only those who eat of the flesh of the Son of Man will get it and have the strength to live it. This is an essential of the Christian worldview.

If in the clash of world views, I am being threatened in my life or my society by such atrocities I have the right to stand up and say, this is wrong. This must stop. YOU are wrong in doing this.

But it is the Christian message and action that is the most important, and which will be the most effective. What then we find as an overarching essential of the Christian world view is

**August 5, 2018**

that we to choose to make GOD's worldview OUR world view, No matter what else we might want to think. Standards of living follow.

And so, in tandem with the radically exclusive world view of Jesus Christ, this same essential principle includes that the followers of Jesus Christ are to actively promote Jesus Christ as the means by which we are made right with God.

And that is the only guarantee for a world view that rules the world for peace.

At every Sunday liturgy we proclaim and even receive in the very Presence of the Living Christ the articulate elements of our Christian world view. So today again the invitation is to come. Come and receive life. Come and fuel your worldview that is the only worldview of everlasting import. And then turn, and pray in power in the name of the Bread of Life. And stand firm in your reliance upon this and only this worldview.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**August 5, 2018**