

March 22, 2015  
Sermon for 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent  
St. Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Hebrews 5:1-10

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Hebrews 5:1–10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup> Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. <sup>4</sup> And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. <sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; <sup>6</sup> as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” <sup>7</sup> In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup> being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Grace, mercy, and peace from the one who touches our lives, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (v 6). So says the writer to the Hebrews about Jesus, and he’s quoting from Psalm 110. So fair enough; it’s true. But who is Melchizedek? Melchizedek is a mysterious figure who suddenly crosses the stage in Genesis 14, exits, and then is recalled in the Psalms and later in the New Testament. Yet he is a strangely significant person.

Melchizedek appears, unbidden, at one of the lowest points of Abram’s journey through life.

Abram—later God renamed him Abraham—we do know. Abram has been called by God to go to a new land, and he has been promised an heir. He has been told that his offspring will be as uncountable as the dust of the earth.

God has promised to bless him and make his name great. However, after several years, Abram does not have much to show for it all; his situation in life has gotten worse rather than better.

He has endured a famine, sought refuge in Egypt, been deported from Egypt, and mediated a dispute with his nephew Lot.

Just prior to this, he was been drawn into a war with “Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar” (Gen 14:9). It shouldn’t have been his fight; he only went off to war to save Lot, who had been taken prisoner.

Abram has endured much and still has not yet received the promised heir. At the very least, he needs a sympathetic ear!

But God has something far greater for Abram.

As the dust of battle begins to settle, this man Melchizedek, the “king of Salem” and priest of God Most High, suddenly appears to Abram—with bread and wine.

He blesses Abram, vindicates him, and defends his cause and gives him a much needed lifting up.

Abram is strengthened to continue patiently waiting for the Lord’s promise. That’s it. That’s all biblical history records about Melchizedek.

But are you beginning to guess why the psalmist and the writer to the Hebrews bring him up millennia later—and why he’s so significant for us today? Christ Is for Us as Melchizedek Was to Abram, and Even More.

Like Melchizedek, Christ enters our life right when we need him, but He never disappears. We don’t even have to look for Him because Jesus is revealed to us in His Word.

Moreover, He calls to us by His Holy Spirit.

In Holy Baptism, we, like Abram, have been called by God. It is not to a life of ease or worldly glory. The world does not follow Christ nor do they care to.

Jesus tells us in today’s Gospel that our call is to be servants, not masters, and to be slaves, not lords. We reach out, we preach the Gospel, not because the world wants to hear it, but because they need to hear it!

Like Abram, our worldly situation isn’t always that pretty. We don’t battle with kings but with the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh.

In many ways, we can identify with the Hebrew Christians to whom our text was written.

Like Abram, they had discovered that their faith and loyalty to God exposed them to trial and suffering. Were they to fall back or press on?

We often, sometimes daily face the same trials that they do. The times may be different, the locations and leadership has changed, but we face the same temptations and the same roadblocks.

At times like this, we need a sympathetic ear. We turn to those who can deal with us gently and who know as best anyone can what we are going through. Those that may have faced some of the same things. Our caring friends, family and other loved ones.

But as good as that can be for us, our brothers and sisters in Christ are, like us, have the same weaknesses. Sinners helping sinners is a good thing, but without something more, some One more, what can a fellow sinner really point to?

We need a high priest after the order of Melchizedek! This is where Jesus is to us as Melchizedek was to Abram—and more.

Jesus intercedes for us. Jesus said: “ *am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 (ESV)*

We were separated from God by our sin, but Jesus interceded. He opened the way for us to again communicate with God. To confess our sins and most of all, to be forgiven. No amount of payment or being good on our part would have ever mad a difference, only through the intercession of Christ is our salvation assured.

Jesus was obedient for us. He did all that was required by God's Law. As we are told in Matthew 5:17–18 (ESV)

<sup>17</sup> *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*

Jesus suffers for us. He didn't get a free ride. There was a price to be paid for the sins of the world, and Jesus didn't shirk paying that price. Included was suffering and death. In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter we read: <sup>18</sup> *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,”* 1 Peter 3:18 (ESV)

And He did die. On the first Good Friday, Jesus died for the sins of the world, sacrificing Himself for our sin. It wasn't an empty gesture, not just good intentions because God accepted that sacrifice. Christ is the source of our eternal salvation and we know this because God raised Him for the grace, showing His acceptance of the sacrifice of His Son.

Like Melchizedek, Christ feeds us too. In, with, and under the bread and wine, He gives us His very body and blood to forgive our sin, strengthen our faith, and energize us to press on.

Like Melchizedek, Christ blesses us by His Word, and by that Word He vindicates us from our enemies: sin, death, and Satan.

Melchizedek blessed Abram and in the same way, Jesus blesses you.

In His Word you receive His blessings. In His Sacraments, Jesus blesses you.

In His promise of eternal life, through faith in Him as your Savior, Jesus blesses you.

And finally, in His words of “I forgive you” you are truly blessed.

Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the glory*

### **Sermon Outline**

After the Order of Melchizedek

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1. Like Melchizedek, Christ enters our life right when we need him, but he never disappears.
2. Like Melchizedek, Christ feeds us.
3. Like Melchizedek, Christ blesses us by His Word.