



Introduction

Today's gospel starts with disciples obsessing over who will be closest to Jesus, leading to Jesus teaching his followers about God's take on importance and power. Here Jesus makes it explicit that the reversal of values in God's community is a direct challenge to the values of the dominant culture, where wielding power over others is what makes you great. When we pray "your kingdom come" we are praying for an end to tyranny and oppression. We pray this gathered around the cross, a sign of great shame transformed to be the sign of great honor and service.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of ✚ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

Opening Hymn ELW # 881 / LBW # 557 *Let All Things Now Living*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you turn your greatness into goodness for all the peoples on earth. Shape us into willing servants of your kingdom, and make us desire always and only your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 53:4-12

This reading is from the last of four passages in Isaiah that are often called “servant songs.” Christians are probably most familiar with this servant song. In light of Christian faith, the servant’s healing ministry and redemptive suffering are understood to be fulfilled in the life and death of Christ.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Psalm: Psalm 91:1-16

⁹Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,

¹⁰**no evil will befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your dwelling.**

¹¹For God will give the angels charge over you,
to guard you in all your ways.

¹²**Upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.**

¹³You will tread upon the lion cub and viper;
you will trample down the lion and the serpent.

¹⁴**I will deliver those who cling to me;
I will uphold them, because they know my name.**

¹⁵They will call me, and I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and honor them.

¹⁶**With long life will I satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.**

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:1-10

Using imagery from scripture and from Jewish worship practices, Jesus is presented as the great high priest who was obedient to God's saving plan. Through his suffering and death he has become the source of eternal salvation.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Gospel: Mark 10:35-45

On the way to Jerusalem the disciples ask Jesus to grant them seats of honor. Jesus responds by announcing that he and his followers will "rule" through self-giving service.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

I love a good mystery story in a book, TV show, or movie. Or at least I love the ones that I can read or watch and pick up clues along the way, hoping that I can solve the mystery along with the characters.

Today's text from Hebrews contains a bit of a mystery itself. It follows directly after the passage we read last week, so we have not missed any clues, yet you might – like me – be a bit puzzled by the reference to Melchizedek.

I did some research this week; sort of checking out his backstory. He is mentioned only two other places in scripture besides the book of Hebrews: in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. Even in those places, he is a somewhat mysterious character. Described as both the king of Salem (which means peace) and the priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek's name means "King of Righteousness."

According to Genesis, he received a tithe from Abraham, ten percent of the plunder that Abraham had taken after a war. Then Melchizedek shared bread and wine with Abraham and blessed him.

It is a confusing passage, taking place early in Abraham's story, while he was still known as Abram, while he and Sarah were still childless. It was long before God had Moses lead the people out of slavery in Egypt, through the wilderness. Long before God established priesthood among the people of Israel.

There is no explanation of where Melchizedek came from – or where he went after this encounter. Some people throughout the centuries have tried to link him to the magi that appeared to worship Jesus after his birth.

Still others say that he might have actually been Jesus, making a mysterious earthly appearance long ago, using the titles similar to those that have been given to him other places in scripture as Prince of Peace and King of Righteousness.

This is a mystery that I cannot give you an absolute answer to, as no one has been able to solve it through the years. Yet here, the author of this book, the Preacher to first century Jewish Christians, recalls his name and makes a connection to Jesus. Jesus is not just a high priest, but the great high priest, in the order of – somehow connected to – Melchizedek – a priest first mentioned in Genesis.

The Preacher points out, later, in Chapter 7, that Melchizedek was a sign of things to come as he received offerings; and in turn gave bread and wine and gave God's blessing. The Preacher also reminds us that Jesus did not make himself to be the great high priest, but was appointed by God the Father.

Unlike the high priests of the people who made sacrifices in the temple, both for their own sins and for the sins of all the people, Jesus did not need to make an offering for his own sins. Instead, in obedience to his Father, he came to earth to live and to sacrifice himself for the sake of others.

As I pondered this passage this week, it occurred to me that we often think of Jesus' crucifixion and death as his sacrifice; yet truly his whole life on earth – relinquishing his place in the glory of heaven to become fully human to live among us on earth was certainly a part of his great sacrifice for all of us, too.

Jesus exceeds the ancient priests of the temple in at least two key ways: He is not just a mediator on behalf of the people of one point in time; he is the source of salvation. And while the priests needed to sacrifice over and over again for the sake of the people, the salvation provided by Jesus is eternal. (Tom Long, **Interpretation: Hebrews**, p. 67)

There may be no resolution to the mystery of Melchizedek, but we need not worry about any of the questions we have about Jesus. We can simply trust in the great High Priest that God has appointed for us.

Some of the answers to our questions can be found in today's gospel text, too. Jesus knew that his disciples would stumble and suffer – just look at his answers to James and John – but he also knew that he had come “not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus was appointed by God as our Savior. Jesus invites us to bring our worries and fears to him; to walk with him; and to trust in him in faith.

In the words of pastor and preaching professor Tom Long, “Jesus never forgot that he was the Son [of God]... not only is he compassionate toward those who have lost sight of the truth that they are God's very own children, Jesus also takes them by the hand and leads them home.” (**Interpretation: Hebrews**, p. 68) Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn of the Day ELW # 789 / LBW # 481 *Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Apostles' Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Holy One, for the gift of the church handed down through the ages and for all who carry on the servant ministry of Jesus, we praise you. Send your Holy Spirit upon all who are discerning calls to ministry in its many forms and equip them with your gifts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating One, for the lush and abundant habitat you provide for all your creatures, we praise you. Provide healing for the earth so that waterfowl, reptiles, wild horses, dolphins, and all living things flourish as you intend. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Suffering One, for all who work toward peace and who lead nations with a servant's heart, we praise you. Bring justice for all who suffer violence, persecution, discrimination, hunger, poverty, and homelessness, and create places of refuge for all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful One, for all who do the work of healing in mind, body, and spirit, we praise you. Surround and comfort all who struggle with depression, anxiety, cancer, diabetes, dementia, or any illness, especially those we name now, that all may be healed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sustaining One, for all who volunteer for the vitality of this congregation, we praise you. Strengthen and encourage greeters, ushers, office volunteers, bakers, counters, committee and group leaders, teachers, students, evangelists, singers, builders, nurturers, and all who serve with generous hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Risen One, we thank you for those who have shaped your church and shared your gospel. Through the witness of your saints, continue to inspire us with hope until we all are gathered at your eternal feast. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Closing Hymn ELW # 818/LBW # 492 *O Master, Let Me Walk with You*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Worship adapted from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS027356.
Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ruth Ann Sipe.