

After the Order of Melchizedek

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Lent / A Priest; Melchizedek; Christ / Jeremiah 31:31–34; Psalm 119:9–16; Hebrews 5:1–10; Mark 10:32–34; Mark 10:35–45

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Lenten King. Amen.

Our text tells us this morning many things about Jesus, but one to point out is this:

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“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

The writer of the Hebrews is quoting from [Psalm 110](#). So fair enough, it is true. Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek. Who is Melchizedek? He is a mysterious figure who crosses the stage in [Genesis 14](#), exits, and then is recalled in the Psalms and later here in the New Testament. Yet, he is strangely a significant person. If he wasn't, why would Jesus be likened to him.

Melchizedek appears, unbidden, at one of the lowest points of Abram's journey through life. Abram—later God changed his name to Abraham—we do know. Abram has been called by God to go to a new land, and he has been promised an heir. Abram has already been told that his offspring will be as uncountable as the dust of the earth, the sand on the seashore, and the stars in the sky. 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. Abram has endured a famine, sought refuge in Egypt, been deported from Egypt, and mediated a dispute with his nephew Lot.

In [Genesis 14](#) we learn that he has not just been drawn into a war with:

English Standard Version Chapter 14

Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim,

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 in his life and still not received his promised heir. God has yet to fulfill his promise. So, at the very least, he needs a sympathetic ear.

But God, being God, has something far greater for Abram. As the dust of the battle begins to settle, this man Melchizedek, the "King of Salem" and priest of "God Most High" suddenly appears before Abram—with bread and wine, no less. Melchizedek blesses Abram, vindicates him, and defends his cause. And Abram is strengthened to continue patiently waiting for the Lord's promise.

That's it! That's all biblical history 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?

Let me tell you this. 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.

In Holy Baptism, we, like Abram, have been called by God. It is not to life of ease or worldly glory. Jesus tells us in today's Gospel that our call is to be servants, not masters, and to be slaves, not lords. What does a servant look like? As I think about the servants in life, these are the people that are there when you need them the most. These are the people that will drop exactly what they are doing and come to help. Servants come in all shapes and sizes...many of you just about two years ago stepped up when called upon and served my family and I when we lost our little Eden in miscarriage. You served us. Many of you sacrifice your time to serve in various aspects of the church. Many of you serve in many and various ways in your daily lives. The questions are simple: Are we

there for people when people need us the most? Will we respond when called upon to act?

Like Abram, our worldly situation isn't always that pretty. We do not with kings like Abram does, but we do battle with the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. We battle all the time with our self-centeredness, with our pride. We battle with our differing priorities. We battle with the things of this world, that the world calls more important than our faith. We are now battling very different worldviews. They are out there and plastered on the front pages of newspapers, internet news sites, and are shared on social media. We battle with our own personal sins...those sins that we don't know want anyone to know about. We battle against those sins that we would be embarrassed if someone, anyone found out about. We battle against the sins of greed, lust, pride, hate, jealousy, gossip, and the list goes on and on. We also battle the results of living in a fallen world - we battle against disease and depression and doubt. We are in a battle and we are suffering, we are hurting in our battle, just like Abram

In many and various 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. We are at that point now more so than ever in our country...we are being persecuted for standing up for biblical morals, for the creation account where God made humankind male and female. He assigned each person their sex at birth. He instituted marriage in the garden to be of one man and one woman till death parts. When we stand up for these things and the battle over life, will we fall back or press on? Our faith and loyalty to God expose us to trial and suffering. We know it. We live it. When we express our faith and loyalty to God—who attacks us? The world! Satan! And Yes our own sinful flesh! It happens each and every day! It's time to take a stand for who we are and continue to fight, continue to serve!

Definitely at times like this, at least, we need a sympathetic ear.

At times like this we turn to those who can deal with us gently and who know us as best as anyone can with what we are going through? Who do you go to for a sympathetic ear? Is it your spouse, your best friend, your mom or dad, a brother or sister, your pastor, perhaps another brother or sister in Christ? But as

good as that can be for us, our brothers and sisters in christ are, like us, best by weakness.

We need more—we need vindication. We need a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

We have one! This is where Christ is to us as Melchizedek was to Abram—and more!

Christ intercedes for u! He does. St. Paul writes to the Romans in Chapter 8:

English Standard Version Chapter 8

Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Christ does intercede for us. He takes our wants, our needs to His Father. The author of Hebrews tells us about the interceding Jesus:

English Standard Version Chapter 7

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Jesus is constantly interceding for us. He know our needs. He takes our suffering, your pains and hands them over to His Father. He goes to His father and your Father for you. On the Cross, Christ was speaking to His Father to forgive you of your sins. He was taken even that very important need to Your Father.

Christ is also obedient for us! Christ humbled himself for you, even to the point of death, death on the cross. Christ lived a life of perfection. Even as you are tempted in this wold and suffer because of Satan, know that Jesus was tempted in every way you are, yet without sin. In the verses right before our text, the writer to the Hebrews proclaims:

English Standard Version Chapter 4

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus knows the temptations you face, but yet was obedient. He did not sin. Therefore, He went to the cross for you to save you and bring to your forgiveness.

Christ then suffers for you. We are just one week from Holy Week. We are one week from when we remember the donkey ride our Lord took into Jerusalem, where Christ suffers and dies. It is true, Christ suffered for you. Yes, we suffer in this world, but He suffered all the more. He took the weight of your sin on His back and went to the cross, where He suffered from the hands of man, with whips and scourges, nails, and thorns. He suffered from the voices of men, with their mockings, betrayals and denials. He suffered from the actions of His own Father, who abandoned Him on the cross! God the Father forsook His Son. Jesus Christ Suffered so much for you so that you can have life!

Because of those sufferings for you, because of that obedience for you, because of those intercessions for you. Christ is the only source for your salvation. Christ Jesus died and rose for you so that you may have life and have it abundantly.

If you noticed, I told you that Melchizedek brought to Abram bread and wine to drink. Jesus, as our Melchizedek also feeds us with bread and wine. In, with, and under bread and wine, He gives to you His very body and blood to forgive your sin, strengthen your faith, and energizes you to press on. He gives us His Body and Blood for us Christians to eat and drink so that we can live in peace with God. Peace that enlivens our hearts and minds to press on in this world.

Like Melchizedek, Christ blesses us by His Word, and by that Word He vindicates you from your enemies: Sin, death, Satan. By His Word, He spoke creation into being, and by His Word He defeats our enemies. He won that victory for you over sin, by never sinning, and by taking our sins, yours and mine, onto himself

on the cross and forgave us. He won His victory over death, as He walked out of the tomb, that wonderful message that we hear every Sunday, but in all of its miraculous grandeur we will hear it in person in two weeks. He won His victory over Satan as He lived His life, as He died His death. and lives His Life again. He went to Hell to declare victory over Satan on that first Easter morning. By His very own life, death, and resurrection, Jesus Christ vindicates you from your enemies and He shares that message with us in His Very WORD, the Holy Scriptures.

“Blessed be Abram,” Melchizedek said...and blessed be you too.

English Standard Version Chapter 14

by God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
20 and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, our Great High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, who is our Lenten King. Amen.