

# Lent 5 Year B 2021

## Epistle

**Hebrews 5:5-10**

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; as he says also in another place,

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

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

## The Gospel

**John 12:20-33**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

**Prayer:**

Oh Father, Help us all to live gratefully, fearlessly and abundantly in your love. -Amen

**Sermon:**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish

But have eternal life.”<sup>i</sup>

John 3:16.

Although is more than 2,000 years old,

It was “discovered” in the 70’s... and it spread like wild fire!

Football games and bumper stickers.

Longhaired Jesus Freaks even had it tattooed.

It really was and it really is The Good News.

It’s why we’re gathered here today,

Whether in real-life or on Face Book Live.

*Jesus still matters.*

Today’s Gospel gives us a hint of what it means

That God GAVE his one and only Son.

We get a hint of what it meant for Jesus,

fully God and fully human, To be *given* for our sins.

Context is everything when it comes to understanding the Bible.

Think about what had happened to Jesus in his last 6 months.

There was his Transfiguration. A few of his apostles,<sup>ii</sup>

Saw Jesus hanging out with old time prophets.<sup>iii</sup>

*Peter offered to build some tents and have a BBQ.*

Then there's Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus,

in the dark, Where they wouldn't be seen,

And Jesus mysteriously said,

*"You have to be born again."*

Remember what Nicodemus said back?

*"You mean like I have to go back to my mother's womb?"*

Jesus wasn't easy to understand. He still isn't.

Sometimes they didn't get it. Sometimes we don't, either.

He isn't easy to get. It isn't always an easy life to live.

St. John's Gospel may have been written last. Maybe 90 or 100 AD.

The earliest partial manuscripts go back to about 200 AD.

He may stop and started over many years.

Anyway, it's been around a long, long time.

It really is the real deal, even if it doesn't always tie-in  
with the other three Gospels.

John describes many of the same events,  
but in a different sequence.

For example, John has Jesus' big arrival in Jerusalem at the  
beginning of his ministry. The others have that at the end.

John's Gospel has a different point of view than the others.  
Many stories overlap in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Even with the Gospel variations,  
they all try to tell the story of Jesus' life and work.

Matthew, Mark and Luke Like were like early biographies.

They tend to focus on *what Jesus said and did*.

*But John focused on who Jesus was.*

And what that meant for people.

John's Gospel was written so that we may know and believe that  
Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,  
And that we may have life in his name."

John wanted us to know that came to affirm life,  
Here and in heaven. *Life as it was meant to be.*

John talked a lot about Jesus' miracles, which he called "signs".

When we're lost driving down the highway,

We look for look for signs.

When we're lost on the path through life, We look for signs!

Jesus' signs point the way home.

Even if we claim Jesus, we sometimes lose our way.

His signs help get us back on the road.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he knew was headed to the cross.

Even though he rode in on a donkey,

The people greeted him as a King.

They cried out Hosanna. "Save Us Now".

The crowd lined his way with palm branches.

They sought a leader. A Messiah King. They sought Jesus.

The political masters of that day were not pleased.<sup>iv</sup>

But the crowds missed the point. We often still do. v

But, Jesus did talk in riddles.

He told his people that that to live a life for oneself alone

Is to lose one's life. If you give your life, you gain it?

When we look back at the cross, we see a sign.

It's the sign of the Good News,

which no one back then saw coming.

They saw Jesus as a King in this world. NOT the next.

They just didn't get it. *And do we?* I wonder.

I know that we are marked as Christ's own forever.

God won't leave us alone, twisting in the wind.

I really do know that!

In the 1970s I hung out in New York,

with a Left Bank guy from Quebec.

And later with a pack of chatty, spoiled French revolutionaries.

It was all about *revolution, when convenient.*

Plenty of times I was cold and hungry. I lived on cigarettes.

But I've seen miracles. And I've been saved by miracles.

*Miracles happen.* I believe in miracles.

I've been lost. And I've been found.

I needed a sign. And I got one. I needed a friend and I found one.

“... To live for oneself alone, is to lose one's life.”

Through our acts of kindness and decency,

Through our own love, Jesus' light shines bright.

Jesus gives us the signs to show us the way.

Go with the light.

God loves us. God is our hope. God is our joy.

Come Home, because you are loved, and because you love.

Serve the Kingdom because YOU have been served.

Go with the light.

**-AMEN**

---

<sup>i</sup> John 3:16.

<sup>ii</sup> Including Peter the Impetuous!

<sup>iii</sup> Giving his friends a brief view of Jesus as the Christ. A definite tie-in with Moses coming down from the mountain with the 10 Commandments, his face glowing brightly. See, Exodus 34:29.

<sup>iv</sup> This was more of a patriotic rally. They saw Jesus as a political and national savior from the oppression of the Romans. Maybe, also, from the oppression of the Temple Authorities, whose tables Jesus famously overturned. They knew that many believed in Jesus because he had raised Lazarus. One scholar has said: "He who could summon a dead man back to life would certainly be able to deliver the holy city from the yoke of Caesar." (Bruce)

<sup>v</sup> Maybe they were waiting for him to mount a campaign against what St. Paul called the "principalities and powers". A couple of Greeks came looking for Jesus. Maybe they were wondering when he would make his move. We don't know what they asked Jesus. Maybe they asked, "Sir, when are you going to move forward? Is that why you are here in Jerusalem during the Passover?" But, Jesus said, mysteriously, "Father, save me from this hour". They must have thought: Did he say "Save *me* from this hour? We thought he was here to save us!