Sola Lectionary Text Study

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2027 (Year B)



"One Christian who has been tried is worth a hundred who have not been tried, for the blessing of God grows in trials. He who has experienced them can teach, comfort, and advise many in bodily and spiritual matters."

- Martin Luther -

Exposition on Genesis 27, WA 43

Proclamation Points

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

As an act of faithfulness to his chosen people, God promised to make a new covenant with Israel and Judah. This covenant was unlike the one he made with them at the time of the Exodus, and it was not based on any merit on their part, but solely on God's promises.

- *Why does God refer to himself as being a "husband"? What point is God making about his people? What point is he making about his own faithfulness?*

Throughout the history of Israel, God has given external signs of his presence with the people such as the *Shekinah* (the divine dwelling place) that led the way through the wilderness — the tent where God dwelled in the Holy of Holies, and was enthroned upon the mercy seat above the Ark of the Covenant. God gave the people specific instructions for worship and for living.

- *Why do we need external signs and rituals in our lives of faith? How does that help? What happens when religion becomes purely a matter of externals in our lives, and nothing more?*

As part of the new covenant that God was giving to Israel and Judah, the Lord said that he will write his law upon their hearts. No longer would faith simply be an external matter, but now the sign of God's presence would be his Spirit within them, marking his children as his own.

- *How does this passage suggest that God's putting the law on our hearts is different from an external code of conduct? How does this imply a change, not just in what we do, but in who we are?*

Psalm 119:9-16

The psalmist asked a poignant question, "How can a young man keep his way pure?" The answer is very simple, "By guarding it according to your word." In a world where confusion abounds about sexuality, gender identity, right vs. wrong, the opioid crisis — you name it — we still seek the answer to this question. And, the answer remains the same, "By guarding our lives with the Word of God."

- *How can we guard our lives with the Word if we don't know the Word? Is there even a way?*

Hebrews 5:1-10

The high priest had an incredibly important job to do for the people and for God. It was his job to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of sinful people, including himself.

- *How does acknowledging our own weakness and struggles help us minister to others?*
- *Why does Scripture emphasize ministry as a "calling" from God rather than a "choice" on our part? How is this true of our Christian ministry — regardless of whether we are lay or ordained?*

To say that Jesus was appointed "a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" is to confess his uniqueness. The name *Melchizedek* (mel-KIZ-a-deck) in Hebrew means "king of righteousness" and is taken from an obscure story in Genesis 14, where Abraham made an offering of thanks to a mysterious priest-king of the town that would later be known as Jerusalem. Inasmuch as this man, who was both priest and king, served Abraham "bread and wine" (Genesis 14:18), many Christian interpreters have pointed out the foreshadowing of Christ's new covenant in the Last Supper.

- *In the Old Testament, Melchizedek was portrayed as someone unlike the Hebrew priests, the sons of Aaron. How is Jesus' priesthood unlike that of the Old Testament Jewish priests? What did Jesus do that they could not?*

On behalf of sinful people like us, the only One who knew no sin made the ultimate sacrifice of atonement for humanity through his death. Jesus is the perfect, blameless, blemish-free Passover Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

- *In what sense was Jesus the only one who could serve as our high priest forever? Why is this something that only one who is both God and man could accomplish?*

Mark 10: (32-34) 35-45

This lesson comes in the context of Jesus having said, "the last will be first and the first will be last" (Mark 10:31), and the prediction of his own death (Mark 10:32-34). Ironically, it was at this moment that James and John stepped forward, asking Jesus to allow them a place at his right and left hand in glory. Jesus promised that James and John would share in his "baptism" and in his "cup." Though the two brothers may not have realized it at the time — both of these are references to his coming death (compare Luke 12:50 and Matthew 26:39). Ironically, on the day of Jesus' glory in the cross, there would be one "at his right and at his left."

- *In the Church, and in our lives of faith, why are we so quick to measure success and glory by worldly standards?*
- *In what way, or in what sense, do all Christians "share" in Jesus' death? How does Jesus illustrate the way in which true power and glory comes through sacrifice, self-denial, and suffering for the sake of others?*

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