Sermon- Lent 5 3-21-21

Title: “Appointed "

Text: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Heb. 5:1-10, Mark 10:35-45

Prayer

Salutation

**Bridge**

**When I read the Gospel for today, I had trouble with it. I could not get past one little sentence. It was, "Teacher, WE WANT YOU TO DO FOR US WHATEVER WE ASK OF YOU." Did that stick out like a sore thumb to you, too? They had a lot of chutzpa. Then they ask Jesus to do something so outrageous that their companions with them get upset. The term the writer uses was "indignant". I think we'd use a different one if we'd have been with them. Maybe, “Hey Man!” Regardless of that fact, it shows something about their nature. Even these esteemed disciples are positioning themselves for an honored place in the kingdom. And the Lord, without raising an eyebrow just asks them, “What do you want me to do for you?" These two, James and John, had great faith in Jesus. They knew that He could do miraculous things, much more than the High Priest that served God in the temple, for the High Priest was just a man like them. But like the high priest of the day, which the Hebrews text said about him, "He can deal gently with the ignorant and the wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness,” Jesus let this slide for a moment. Well, the disciples were indeed wayward and ignorant in this case, not knowing how the God of the universe does things. And in this case, Jesus was gracious and merely explained to them what was what. He didn't reprimand them in front of the other disciples, not in the way we would with these days. He shamed them by saying that in His kingdom authority works differently. In humility, one is appointed to become humble enough to serve. One does not come to be served, but to serve. And these disciples were not exhibiting that quality one bit. Just the opposite.**

**Law**

**Our OT text clarifies that for us. The covenant the disciples knew was one that God had made with them from of old. God had established that. He had done it because man cannot make himself righteous before God because as you and I know, we are mud. We remember in this Lenten season that God created us from the earth and to that we will return. How humbling is that? God does all the work in covenants. We can do nothing. ALL WE DO IS want. This or that or everything! We put ourselves before God! But the prophecy of Jeremiah speaks of a New Covenant, which Jesus is the fulfillment of. He did not come to replace the old, but to fulfill it in His High Priestly role! Surely the disciples saw this. Or did they? This New covenant was standing right before their eyes, a great High Priest who was appointed by God to serve, that their sins would be remembered no more.**

**Unfortunately, sin showed its ugliness that day with the disciple’s request. They wanted to set up a cozy job in the kingdom. Kind of like an in-house promotion to the top of the ladder. I just shake my head when I think of it. Jesus told them; He was not able to grant their request because that was alone the work of the Father to do. And then He goes on to ask this, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Once again, their response shows their ignorance. They replied, "Yes, we are able." Jesus, knowing the future for them, must have opened His eyes wide and shook His head in the affirmative when He said in so many words, and please excuse my paraphrase, "Yup, you betcha you will." For they too, would drink the cup of martyrdom for the sake of Christ. But in a much different way. They were sinners and deserved death. We are no different. In our day and time we deserve death! But Christ, appointed by His Father the Great High Priest, offered up an offering to God for their sins and the sins of the whole world, the perfect offering He was baptized into, His sacrificial death on the cross. And His time was almost there.**

**Gospel**

**That is the Good News! The New Covenant was upon them. Fulfilled by the only One who could do so, for God had not changed His plan one iota since the beginning. It just needed time to come about in Christ, the bloodline passed down through chosen people of Israel for this appointed time and place. And we, are baptized into Him. There at the font. Listen to Paul, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death , in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” Romans 6:3-8 Marked upon our foreheads and breast with the cross as one redeemed by Christ the crucified, the appointed Great High Priest! He gives us a great honor. We do nothing. And He does this simply by His pure grace and mercy. Jesus humiliated Himself for us. He took upon Himself our sin, bore it in humility on the cross and died, serving with His very life. He was a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. For you and for me. And we shall live with Him forever.**

**Therefore, this word, “appointed”. You’ve heard it multiple times in this message. Especially as it pertains to Christ and His role as the Great High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. The dictionary has two definitions, the first being, “decided on beforehand”. This fits the context, but so does the second, which is, “specified to a certain standard”.**

**We know in looking at God’s plan, the High Priest Melchizedek was a prototype of the prefect One to come. However, the first was a mere man, still offering satisfaction to God for the people and also for himself. But Christ, the appointed to come at the perfect time, came appointed by His Father to place the satisfaction upon Himself, by the perfect sacrifice for sin. This standard no man could make, except Christ the Great High Priest. In that sacrifice, our sins are forgotten by God.**

**But we have a tendency to have selective memory. We only like to remember the good things. the stuff that doesn't make us feel uncomfortable. We conveniently forget the bad stuff, like our sins. We forget that we, too, have been appointed the priests of our homes. We are a royal priesthood! We forget how we fail to fulfill our duties even in our roles in the ministry of all believers. And we wonder why our country is such a mess? Lord have mercy!**

**And when we do confess, we sometimes doubt our sins are forgiven. This is what Luther says about our misgivings and fears:**   
  
**"To be sure, the person who is to be absolved must guard himself very carefully from any doubt that God has remitted his sins, in order that he may find peace of heart. For if he is uncertain of the anguish of his conscience (as it must always be if it is a true sorrow), yet he is constrained to abide by the judgment of another, not at all on account of the prelate himself or his power, but on account of the word of Christ who cannot lie when he says, ‘Whatever you loose on earth’ [Matt. 16:19]. For faith born of this word will bring peace of conscience, for it is according to this word that the priest shall loose. Whoever seeks peace in another way, for example, inwardly through experience, certainly seems to tempt God and desires to have peace in fact, rather than in faith. For you will have peace only as long as you believe in the word of that one who promised, ‘Whatever you loose, etc.’ [Matt. 16:19].” -- Martin Luther, Luther's Works, AE 31:100, Career of the Reformer, Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses**

**Thus, we show our complete and utter failures as men. But *God doesn't forget* . God only forgets as He chooses to do so. And once He forgets- namely all those sins we hide from- they are gone from His memory. This can only happen by the death and resurrection of the appointed Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, under the new covenant. Thanks be to God! Don’t doubt what He says is true! Your sins are forgiven!**

**What does this mean? This means that you, in Christ, like the covenant, are new. Before you were joined to Christ in your baptism there was no way God was even going to listen to you. Even if you confessed your sins a million times a day, He would hear, but it would be like He heard blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But in Christ our Great High Priest, He hears His son say to Him, “This man confesses, and I plead his case for him. Father hear his prayer and forgive him in my blood.” And it is so. You walk anew each day both sinner and saint, because of Christ our great High Priest who pleads our case daily. And here, at the rail, we participate in the New Covenant He established before His death, the Holy Supper. A foretaste of the feast to come in heaven. So, let’s talk about that as I close.**

**Conclusion**

**The Pharisees of their time were just like James and John, they wanted to sit in the place of honor at the banquet. It made them feel important. I suppose that they, (James and John) wanted to feel what that was like. I'm sure they also wanted to brag that they served the King and great High Priest. But they had it all wrong. I've never sat in the place of honor before. At least not in the presence of a large group of people. I don’t want that. I think I’d squirm in my seat. But being taken to heaven to the wedding feast of Christ will be enough for me, no matter where I sit, it will be a great honor to even *be there*. Because I am baptized into Christ I will be there. So, will you. Are you ready? Because we don’t know when. Christ wants that *for us*! Christ, our Great High Priest, took the seat of honor at the right hand of God because He was appointed to the seat of humility on the cross for me and for you. Because of this, we baptized all will have a seat of honor at His banquet in heaven. To God be the glory! Amen.**