

*And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Heb. 5:9,10*

It is amazing how much can be crammed into two little verses of Scripture. For example, in the verses for today's devotion we have clear teaching about what theologians call object and subjective justification as well as sanctification otherwise known as the Christian life. Let me unpack that for you a bit further by walking through the text itself.

“And being made perfect.” The root of the word for perfect in Greek is same as the root of one of the last words that Jesus spoke on the cross, *tetelestai*. It's the word that we get telescope from and it is often translated as the brief sentence, “It is finished.” For a person with a knowledge of Scripture there can be no doubt that Jesus was made perfect or completed or finished on the cross where His death provided a sufficient ransom for the sins of the whole world. The concept is that Jesus' death serves as a deposit of “forgiveness funds” that people may then draw on in order to be made right with God. That's objective justification.

As I've written and said a number of times of late because it is a Lenten theme, the wages of sin is death. It is the death of the God/man, Jesus, which satisfies every sin's wage. But that “money” needs to be withdrawn and applied to an individual's account. This is where subjective justification comes in. Jesus, having been made perfect, becomes the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. For the author to the Hebrews obedience equals faith. God's plan of salvation requires nothing more than faith in Christ Jesus and that faith is given through the means of Grace, that is through the word of God, Baptism and Holy Communion.

Hebrews has already dealt with the word in an earlier passage that is well known and well loved by many, stating in chapter four, that “The word of God is living and active, shaper than any two-edged sword.” It's by the word of God that we become obedient or faithful and that faith produces good works in the form of worship and praise to God as well as love for neighbor by acts of charity, social distancing (see what I did there), being a buddy to someone who should not go out of their home by bringing them groceries and if they are technologically illiterate supplying them with daily devotional materials such as this one. (Yes, you are encouraged to share these devotions with your friends and neighbors.)

Finally, the connection between Jesus as High Priest and Melchizedek is a curious one. For those who don't remember him, Melchizedek was the king of Salem, to whom Abraham offered a tithe. Normally we would expect the connection to be with the Aaronic priesthood. But here the author to the Hebrews is saying that God the Son stands outside of that line claiming that Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to Aaron's on account of Abraham's actions.

In fact, he is not the first to make such a claim, no one in the church should ever strive to be novel, instead our desire is to be faithful by holding to the faith once delivered to all the Saints. Psalm 110 speaks directly of the Messiah's coming and his priesthood stating, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Your faith or obedience is being honed as you take advantage of each of these additional opportunities, to hear and read God's word, that the corona virus outbreak is affording you. Out of faithfulness and love to you the Lord God Almighty is working good in all things to strengthen your faith and ultimately to bring you safely heavenward.

Have a great day, full of God's grace.