

**Holy Cross, Daggett and St. Mark, Wallace Lutheran Churches, Michigan**  
**The Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
**March 22, 2015**  
**Hebrews 5:7-10**

*During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was an incredible scene. He knew the magnitude of what he was going to face the next day. He knew he was going to be brutally tortured and murdered. This death would be bad enough, but he would also have to suffer for the sins of the world which would make his brutal death even harder to endure. Not only would he be dying a painful death, but he would have to go through the pains of hell just to be able to die.

This was what Jesus was praying about in the garden: he was praying to his father and asking if he needed to go through with this suffering or not. It was something which was weighing on his soul before Maundy Thursday. Our gospel lesson shows us this burden was weighing on him earlier in the week. **"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour."**

Jesus was fighting and wrestling with what was about to happen to him. Yet, as troubled as he was by the thought of his death, he knew what needed to happen. He knew he needed to go through with what the Father asked of him. Our lesson today gives us a window into this reality. We hear, **"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission."**

Our lesson takes us back to the time when Jesus was wrestling with his father in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. I talked about this in the introduction. He knew what was coming. He knew it was not going to be easy and it overwhelmed him. It caused him great stress and turmoil. It was so intense and severe that it caused him to sweat great drops of blood. It led him to **"offer up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death."**

Jesus was saying, "Father, if there is another way please let me do it." However, there wasn't another way to accomplish salvation. The only way it could be accomplished was by his suffering and death. Jesus knew and understood this fact. So at the end of his prayer he said the words, "Not my will, but your will be done." He got up from this prayer and faced his passion with resolve. He stared down his suffering and didn't look back.

What did God the Father think of this prayer? **"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission."** He listened to his son because his son was submitting to his will. He knew it would be hard for Jesus to endure his suffering, but he was pleased with Jesus because he was accomplishing the Father's will on earth.

We heard this incredible dialogue in our gospel lesson. **"Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.'"**

Jesus is talking about his death in these verses. He knows his death is part of his father's will to gain salvation for all people. He asks the father to glorify him because he is obeying his will. God the Father

promises he will glorify Jesus because of what Jesus has done. He will glorify Jesus by accepting Jesus payment for sin. He will acknowledge Jesus' payment for sin is enough when Jesus rises from the dead on Easter Sunday to show us he is the source of our eternal salvation.

The writer to the Hebrews indicates this for us when he says, **"Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek."** These words indicate Jesus is the source of salvation for all who have the obedience of faith and trust he is the savior of the world.

Jesus is the source of our salvation. We hear this truth week after week after week. We hear this truth during extra services during Lent. It is a truth which we will never be able to get enough of during our life here on earth. Jesus perfect obedience to the Father's will has made us perfect and has given us eternal life. I want us to stop and think about what this means for a moment. Stop and think about it. It's incredible. It's overwhelming. It's wonderful.

Yet, I wonder sometimes wonder if the incredible nature of salvation becomes nothing more than a yawn for some of us? Do we become underwhelmed by the source of our eternal salvation rather than overwhelmed? Does the wonderful nature of salvation become plain and boring? I know many if not all of us would probably say no to these questions, but I wonder how many times the answer to these questions actually is yes.

What do I mean? When could the answer actually be yes? Well, what is the reason you are here today? Are you here to lead worship, to serve as an organist, Sunday School teacher or usher? Are you here to be with your family or because it is what you always do on Sunday? Are you here to sit and learn at your savior's feet and be reminded of your eternal salvation? These are all reasons why some of us might be here, but we need to be on guard against some of them.

What might happen to my heart if the only reason I am here today is because I am here to lead worship so I can get paid? What might happen to your heart if the only reason you are here is to serve as an organist, Sunday school teacher or an usher since it is your turn to serve? What might happen to your heart if the only reason you are here today is to make sure your family is in worship or this is what you always do on Sunday? What might happen to our hearts in any of these situations?

Could the incredible, overwhelming and wonderful news that Jesus is the source of our salvation actually become an underwhelming and boring? You better believe it could happen. Why? It means we have turned worshipping our Lord into an obligation. It is something we have to do for him. This is an incredibly dangerous path to walk because when we start walking down this path it could cause us to miss the source of our salvation. How could we become blind to the source of our salvation?

Our obligation could become our work we offer up to Jesus as the reason he loves us. He didn't come to pay for my sins. He didn't groan under the weight of my sin. He came to pay for the other guy who is a lot worse than I am. Her sins caused him to groan. Not mine. Obligation is the work of our pride and it is

an incredibly powerful enemy which we need to guard against. Why? It blinds us to the source of our salvation.

Our pride says that it understands the Bible says Jesus is our source of salvation because he perfectly followed God's will. Our pride says I understand Jesus is the only way to heaven, but I don't care. He doesn't love me because of something he has done. He loves because of something I have done. God owes me salvation because I have convinced myself I am worthy of it. What's my proof? I'm a pastor, I serve here, my family is here because of me and I've done the right thing by coming to church all my life.

We are all at times guilty of this smug arrogance. There are no exceptions. It makes hearing about the source of our salvation underwhelming and boring. How can we prevent this from happening? Remember the reason why we come to worship. We come to sit at our savior's feet. Our savior is the source of our salvation. It will give a whole new meaning to your worship experience. It will restore the incredible nature of worship. We will be overwhelmed by his wonderful love.

I want us to picture our reading in our minds again. I want us to visualize Jesus as he **"he offers up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission."** I want each one of us to picture and imagine Jesus wrestling with and offering up prayers and petitions for you and you alone. I want you to picture your savior agonizing over your sin, but I also want you to picture his resolve when he gets up from his prayer.

I want you to picture looking into his eyes and not see fear, but determination. I want you to look and see that he knows your soul is at stake. I want you to watch as his steps do not waver, but continue towards the cross. I want you to visualize as he allows the blows to rain down on him. I want you to picture him with a crown of thorns and allowing the nails to pierce his hands and feet. All these things happen to him, but the determination to save your soul never leaves his eyes.

I want you to picture him hanging there dead because his sacrifice is complete. Now, I want you to picture him alive and risen from the dead and saying to you that your sins are forgiven. He has paid for them and freed you from them because he is the source of our salvation. This is what we come to hear and be reminded of. This is why we make it a priority in our lives. We come to be reminded about the incredible, overwhelming nature of Jesus' love for us because he is the source of our salvation. Amen.