

SERMON - THE 5TH SUNDAY IN LENT (PASSION SUNDAY) - 9 MARCH 2008
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

Hebrews 9:11-12 (KJV)

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Today is Passion Sunday. Today, we are entering the part of Lent that is commonly known as Passiontide, the time that is set aside to reflect on the Passion of our Lord.

In today's Epistle we hear and think about how Jesus, through His Passion and Death on the Cross, is now our Heavenly High Priest. In today's Gospel we hear Jesus claiming his Godship.

We ourselves have come this far in our Lenten observances, on our Lenten journey. We stared out in this season by going to the wilderness with Christ, to be tempted by Satan and to resist those temptations with varying success.

We have come to look at how we are to empty ourselves of the baggage of our lives and how we should then let God refill our souls with his presence. We have listened to the Gospel account of what can and probably will happen to us if we do not invite Him in. We have seen what happens when our souls, cleaned and swept and empty attracts more than we might bargain for, our old sins and seven more even worse.

We have talked about how we cannot rely on just following a set of rules and regulations but rather how we must come to know God on an one-on-one basis.

Now we hear that Jesus is staking his claim as I AM, his claim to be God the Son. It is now time for us to recognize his claim as God the Son and to claim Him as God also, as our Lord and Savior. It is time that we claim the Cross as the way to our salvation. It is

time for us to pick up our Cross.

***Matthew 10:38 (KJV)** And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

We all have come to that point where we have to realize that our salvation is not a free ride. We should all have come to the realization that our salvation depends on a commitment from us, from everyone. We should by now realize that being saved, accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour is not an instant matter but is a life long process, a life long journey with Him.

The story of Lent from this point forward is that Jesus suffered and died for our sins. We, if we are truly walking with Him particularly during this Lenten season, will be coming closer and closer to the Cross of Calvary right along with Him.

The question is, when we come to the foot of the Cross with Jesus, will we, like most of His followers then, run away and leave him forsaken.

When we are confronted with the Cross of Calvary in our own lives, will we bolt and run.

Each one of us here today will someday face Jesus. We can face Him now on his terms or we can face him on the Day of Judgment on his terms. In either case, that meeting will be on His conditions, not on ours.

Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to our salvation. Everything we need to know as to how to obtain our passport into Heaven is in the words of the Bible.

But if we have not translated Gods love from the words of Scripture and from our heads into our hearts, into our very souls, we haven't made any real progress at all.

If we have not come to be "in-love" with God, we have a lot left to do.

We all need to ask ourselves this Sunday morning just not where we are with God but rather where God is with us. Is he living with each one of us? Is he living in each one of us? Is he just a sometimes visitor in our life? Has He even ever come and paid us a visit?

If each of us cannot answer any of those questions, we still have time, we have the time of just this moment to make a decision in our lives that will change our life forever, forever through eternity.

Won't you make that commitment to pick up your Cross and come to the Cross of Calvary right now? Won't you make that decision to take your first steps on your journey, hand in hand, with Christ?

When you come to the Altar today for Communion and come face to face with our Lord in the Real Presence of His Body and Blood, won't you make your promise to Him to open your heart and open your soul so that He can come and make his home there?

He is waiting for you. He will not turn you away.

John 6:37 (KJV) *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

Salvation is a life long journey with God, won't you, on this Passion Sunday, toss away all those things, all those unnecessary things in your life, and take those first steps on that pilgrimage with Him?

Amen.

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