

Lenten Devotional Reflection
20 March 2020 (Lent Day 21)

Scripture: Hebrews 7:11-28 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹¹ Now if perfection had been attainable through the levitical priesthood—for the people received the law under this priesthood—what further need would there have been to speak of another priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than one according to the order of Aaron? ¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ¹³ Now the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

¹⁵ It is even more obvious when another priest arises, resembling Melchizedek, ¹⁶ one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is attested of him,

“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

¹⁸ There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God.

²⁰ This was confirmed with an oath; for others who became priests took their office without an oath, ²¹ but this one became a priest with an oath, because of the one who said to him,

“The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
‘You are a priest forever’”—

²² accordingly Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant.

²³ Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Message

Don't know if you have noticed an advertisement "Hong Kong Wedding Fair". It is an exhibition expo on wedding fair. In the coming summer, the expo will be in its 99th year. Yes, it is the 99th year of the Expo. From this, we can guess how Hong Kong people anticipate, value, and demand a wedding. Many lovers commented their weddings as doing a project instead of treasuring the process. The goal of the project is to have a "perfect" wedding.

Perfection, do we have this on earth? The author of the Book of Hebrews reminds us in today's scripture, that on earth we can have this "perfection". God had promulgated the Law, His original intention was to teach His people to know Him, to draw near Him through observing the Law. However, years after years, the people of God repeatedly violated the Law. Not only that they did not come closer to God, but also again and again they relinquished Him.

In this way, "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless" (Hebrews 7:18) and now "a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God." (Hebrews 7:19). The author uses the following words to further explain the latter "a better covenant". (Hebrews 7:22). Like "but because Jesus lives forever he has a permanent priesthood" (Hebrews 7:24); "Therefore He is able to save completely" (Hebrews 7:25); "one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26); "He sacrificed for their sins once for all" (Hebrews 7:27). At last he said, "but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever" (Hebrews 7:28).

Even after we have tried very hard, we can never arrive to a perfect wedding or a perfect project or plan. However, God has already prepared a perfect salvation for us, so that God and the whole mankind can be reunited again.

Reflection

1. Knowing the perfect salvation of God, how would you feel?
2. Since Jesus has sacrificed himself, we can draw near to God. Do you often come closer to God?
3. Due to the coronavirus epidemic, we cannot join the public worship. How will you keep a closer relationship with God?

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