

Lenten Devotional Reflection
21 March 2020 (Lent Day 22)

Scripture: Hebrews 8: 1-end New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹ Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up. ³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵ They offer worship in a sanctuary that is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one; for Moses, when he was about to erect the tent, was warned, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” ⁶ But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one.

⁸ God finds fault with them when he says:

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord,
when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah;

⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors,
on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;
for they did not continue in my covenant,
and so I had no concern for them, says the Lord.

¹⁰ This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their minds,
and write them on their hearts,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

¹¹ And they shall not teach one another
or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord,’
for they shall all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.

¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more.”

¹³ In speaking of “a new covenant,” he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear.

Message

In the midst of the global widespread of coronavirus pandemic, our church Sunday services and activities are all locked down. Many our parishioners voice out their wish of gathering together at the church again to share the Holy Communion. Amid this longing of receiving the body of Christ, today's passage reminds us about the words of the prayers of thanksgiving of the Eucharist: a *perfect sacrifice* for the whole world; this is my Blood of the *new covenant*.

The writer of Hebrews highlights the importance of the once for all and perfect sacrifice of Christ as the new high priest. And now, He is ministering at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven as our mediator. In the heavenly sanctuary, Christ is still actively serving and praying for us.

Writer also reminds us, we, Christians are the people of God of the New Covenant that is established upon God's unfailing love and Christ's sacrifice as written in Hebrews 8:6: But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises.

Dear brothers and sisters, in the season of Lent, let us reflect this passage as a community of God's covenantal people. In Christ's sacrifice, ministry and offering, God has written the New Covenant in our heart as in Jeremiah 24:7: I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart. In responding to God's invitation of love, we should offer ourselves as a living, spotless, and perfect sacrifice in serving each other. Though we all are imperfect, Christ's perpetual service in heaven could always keep us together.

Reflection

1. In the services, do we have a vision of the heavenly sanctuary and work with Christ?
2. How can we build up each other as a holy and covenantal community?
3. Think of a time when you shared with someone in need your most precious thing.

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