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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
March 4, 2018  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Lent

Scripture Lesson: Genesis 22:1-18;

Passion Lesson: Trial & Denial in the House of Caiaphas

Hymns: 358; 142:1-4; 159; 401

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Hebrews 5:7-9

“*Christ*, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, <sup>8</sup> though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Crucified Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Itasca State Park

Have you ever visited Itasca State Park in west central Minnesota? It is a popular tourist destination. It's a pretty park, but there are many parks with more stunning beauty in Minnesota. There is a modest lake in the middle of the park. One could probably walk around in a couple of hours or so. A little stream flows out of that lake. Again it is not so impressive. It's maybe twenty feet across and a foot or two deep depending on the time of year. People walk across on the stones sticking out of the water all the time. I've done

it myself more than once. One might ask, “What’s the attraction then?” Well, I’m guessing most of you already know. Some of you have probably been there yourself. The attraction is that this modest lake, this humble stream is the source of the Mississippi River, the river known as the Mighty Mississippi!

In Psalm 46 we read of a Stream of a different sort; “***There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God.***” This is the river of God’s grace that flows through the midst of the city of God (which is His Church) and makes us glad. The source of that River of God’s grace is found in a Stream that appears very humble indeed but in fact is the source of our salvation. We are speaking of Jesus.

The theme of our Sunday meditations this Lenten season is taken from Hebrews 12:2 which reminds us to keep looking to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. That would be better translated as the originator and finisher of our faith. It wasn’t just an idea that came from Jesus, it was our entire salvation. We are --

**THEME: Looking to Jesus Who Endured the Cross;  
He Is Our Source.**

When we look for the source we look to beginnings. Surely with Jesus we see that in His birth; that the Son of God became incarnate, born of the virgin, born in that humble stable where the shepherds came and worshiped Him. We see it in His childhood when as a boy of twelve years Jesus was found in the temple asking questions and answering questions in discussion with spiritual scholars there, simply because He must be about His Father’s business, the spiritual business of saving our souls. We certainly also see it at the beginnings of our Lord’s passion in the Garden of Gethsemane where our text takes us that we might look to Jesus as the –

**I. Source of Humble Submission.**

Our text directed these Hebrew Christians to hearken back to before Jesus’ exaltation that they might better appreciate how special a Savior and Intercessor Jesus is as our great High Priest.

**Hebrews 5:7** “*Christ*, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear.”

Those who are familiar with the sufferings of our Lord remember the anguish Jesus experienced even as He entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Matthew 26:36-38** “<sup>36</sup>Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’ <sup>37</sup>And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. <sup>38</sup>Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.’”

Jesus appealed to His Father in heaven for this cup of suffering that lay before Him to be taken away. Burdened in His heart and soul, it caused Jesus great distress. We know that Jesus was in such an anguish that His sweat fell from Him as if it were great drops of blood. Our text also reflects that intensity of heart in Jesus’ prayers and supplications, which bring the sense of urgency to Jesus’ prayer, and then even to loud cries proceeding from our Savior’s lips and tears of woe. These are the prayers the Lord Jesus asked His closest friends to share with Him, asking that they would watch with Him for one hour, but they could not, because it was late and their eyes were heavy.

Now we might feel that all this agonizing and prayer was pointless. Jesus was going to suffer and die in spite His pleas. It wasn’t pointless. Jesus was praying to His Father in heaven, who was able to deliver Him from the cup of sufferings that lay before Him, but then how would we have been saved from sin and death? However, we are told in no uncertain terms that Jesus was heard in His anguished prayers in the Gethsemane. Jesus’ prayers were answered. An angel came and ministered to Him, strengthening Jesus.

We might be tempted in the weakness of our flesh to question this response from the Father as being something less than what Jesus actually needed. It was exactly what our Lord needed, even as His

prayers continued. What we see in Jesus, in the throes of agony in the Garden, is His willing submission to the Father's will. Again we recall from the Passion of our Lord:

**Matthew 26:39** “*Jesus went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’”*

Even under the greatest duress we see the humility of our Lord. Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's will. He possessed every confidence that the will of God is always right. It was right, for it was according to the gracious will of God for us and for our salvation. Without Jesus' humble submission to the Father's will we would be lost forever.

Jesus' humble submission to the Father's will is not only an example for us, that we also should submit to the Father's will, but it is the **source** from which we draw strength to submit to the Father's will. We need to know, and we do indeed know by faith that the Father's will is always good and right. The Apostle Paul's promise recorded for us in Romans eight confirms this: “<sup>28</sup> *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* <sup>29</sup> *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” (Romans 8:28,29) While it is oh so easy for us to lose sight of the ultimate good which the Father has in mind for us that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, our Father in heaven never loses sight of that grace which He desires for us. So His will for us is always to that end, and we trust His will, and submit to that will which has its source and its fruition in Jesus.

This is true because we keep looking to Jesus as our --

## **II. Source of Perfect Obedience.**

Again we read in our text:

**Hebrews 5:8** “*though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*”

It wasn't as if Jesus had ever been *disobedient*. Of course not. He was holy in all His ways and not only in compliance with the Father's will for Him in His life and in His ministry, but seeking always to advance the kingdom of God. Jesus was the personification of the coming of the kingdom of God among the people of the Jews, and for all the world. Jesus was establishing that kingdom of God's rule in this world, and most importantly in the hearts of God's people. So Jesus preached repentance, and forgiveness of sins, and healed many people, so bearing their sorrows and diseases. In all this Jesus was obedient to the Father's will, the Father's plan for our salvation. In all this He had set aside His divine glory and majesty, using it only for the benefit of others, and not for His own ease.

Our text takes us to Jesus' passion beginning in Gethsemane, and ending on the cross of Calvary. Jesus, following the Father's plan, went forward as the Lamb of God who was to bear our sins, and serve as the all atoning sacrifice for sin.

**Philippians 2:5-8** “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

This obedience is so critical to us and for us. We might strive to learn obedience from Jesus' example, but in this life we shall never attain perfect obedience. Jesus lived, and suffered and died, and rose again in obedience to the Father's will. In all His sufferings He did not rebel against the Father's holy will. In that entire walk from Gethsemane to the shameful death on the cross at Calvary Jesus was obedient. The next words of our text complete the thought, “**Having been perfected.**” Again that doesn't mean that Jesus wasn't perfect before His sufferings. It means that His mission as our Savior wasn't complete. His obedience in His sufferings and death brought the Christ to completion of His mission as our Redeemer. And so you have a perfect circle, everything matches up just as the Father planned for our salvation, just the prophets foretold.

Because of this perfect obedience of Christ the Father looks upon us as possessors of perfect obedience. All is complete. All is fulfilled for us and righteousness and true holiness is credited to us through faith in Jesus. We are encouraged to keep looking to Jesus: He is the --

### **III. Source of Eternal Salvation.**

**Hebrews 5:9** “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”

We need to understand exactly what the inspired writer was communicating to his original audience. The word translated in our text as “**author**” could certainly be understood correctly, but the Greek word correlates much better with our theme for today: Jesus is the **source** or cause of our salvation. Apart from Jesus there is no salvation. It is by faith in Christ as our crucified Savior who shed His blood for us and for our salvation that we are granted life. Remember how we started with the idea of a source for a river, and how that picture was used by the Psalmist for the river of God’s grace, that is exactly what we have in Jesus. Remember Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well:

**John 4:14** “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

That is what we have in Jesus. He is the source of this living water of life. When we drink of this water of the gospel of God’s love and forgiveness in Christ crucified, then we have a spring of living water welling up in our hearts. Our sin parched souls are refreshed, and we are spiritually renewed, and Jesus brings us eternal life. Jesus is the source of eternal salvation.

Our text concludes that this is true for all who obey Him. Again we need to properly understand what the inspired writer was communicating to His original audience. In today’s English and in the religious culture of our day we may take away from these words the exact opposite of what was being encouraged. He was encouraging the Hebrew Christians not to look to their own deeds for righteousness but to look to Jesus! So many today look to Jesus

as a new law giver about whom we need to ask, “What would Jesus do? What would Jesus have me do that I may have eternal life?” Too many forget to ask, “**What has Jesus done?**” You see, it is knowing and trusting what Jesus **has done** that makes Him the source of righteousness and everlasting life for all those who believe. And that requires the obedience of faith, not of works. Jesus told the Jews:

**John 6:40** “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

With eyes of faith **we have seen**, and by the grace of God **we do believe** in Jesus for righteousness and forgiveness, and so we possess the promise of everlasting life and the hope of the resurrection at the last day.

Keep looking to Jesus who endured the cross: He is our Source! He is our Source of humble submission to the will of the Father, our Source of perfect obedience that brings us His righteousness, our Source of eternal salvation through faith in His name!

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans 15:13)