

PENTECOST 22
ISAIAH 53:4-12
HEBREWS 5:1-20
MARK 10:35-45
OCTOBER 20, 21, 2018

YEAR B

By whose authority does one become a Christian? Do I get to choose if I will be a Christian? God calls each of us to follow where God is leading. God always makes the first move and invites us to respond by faith. Does claiming to be a Christian make me one? These are questions that come to mind as I read and studies these Bible readings and studies them. Claiming the name of Jesus Christ means I search for ways to be Christlike. It means I follow where the Lord is leading even when I'm not sure where I will end up. After someone becomes a Christian how does that one get a position of leadership? We often ask for volunteers. How are any in the church chosen for specific ministries?

Hebrews 5:4-6 And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

In many places Jesus said that many are called but few are chosen. This is confusing for many because we might see being called and chosen to be the same. The Lord God invites each of us into a relationship with God. It is by God's authority and invitation that we are joined to God through Jesus Christ. Our relationship with God is active through the Holy Spirit. This is a relationship based on faith and the fruits of that faith are the things we do in response to the gifts of God to us. The invitation and the relationship provide us with life, health and hope. We have a peace that passes all understanding because the Lord sets us apart to be children of God. While all are invited some do not want to follow. Some refuse the gift of life from the Lord. The Lord does not force anyone to accept the promises of God and God does not force anyone to receive the gift of salvation.

The author of Hebrews gives an important teaching about the high priesthood and about the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The priests in Israel were descended from Aaron. They were the ones appointed by God to carry out the duties of the priest. The priests came from among the people. The priest offered the sacrifice for the people. The priest offered prayers of intercession. The priesthood was responsible for the spiritual protection of the people. As the author says, Aaron was appointed and set apart by God for this purpose. He was anointed with oil and given the task of serving God as high priest. The priesthood then was the descendants of Aaron. The priest knew the problems and the temptations of being human. They could identify with the people. Because they came from

among the people they also needed to have their sins forgiven before they could lead the people.

Jesus is the great high priest. He was and is appointed to be our high priest because he was perfectly obedient. When we say that Jesus was perfectly obedient we are referring to Jesus coming from among us. He experienced what we experience. He was obedient even to death on a cross. The difference is that Jesus did not need to atone for his own sin. He was without sin but became sin for us. He was obedient to the limitations of time and space. Jesus was tempted in every way you and I are tempted yet he was without sin. As our Great High Priest Jesus sits at the place of honor with God interceding for us with the Father. Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice so that we have salvation. Jesus died our death so that we have life in the kingdom of God. He was chosen for this purpose and he was perfectly obedient.

Mark 10:39, 40 They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, **“The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”**

Just as Jesus was appointed you and I are also appointed. We each are invited to share eternity with the Lord. James and John were chosen to be disciples and they were apostles. They were obedient to the call to be followers. What was the nature of their call? They were called for a special purpose. They were called to be leaders but their leadership meant they would serve others. They would do great things in and for the kingdom of God but they would go where the Lord placed them and not where they themselves thought they wanted to be or deserved to be. They would also endure hardships and trials that Jesus endured. They would be persecuted and they would be immersed in many things as assigned by God.

Pastors are also appointed and assigned by God. When I was in the call process to be the pastor at Our Savior's there were many questions asked. The questions were asked so that the call committee would know what is important to me and what I believe. I also asked questions to be answered by the call committee. The call committee needed to know who their pastor would be and I needed to know about the congregation I would serve. The only way we have of knowing is through this interview process. Even though we asked questions of each other God already knew that I was appointed as the pastor of this congregation. God knew who the right person was. It was up to us to agree with God. As with any other decision in the church and in our lives we must decide to agree with God or decide we know better than God. The Lord assigned me to Our Savior's. I was not assigned somewhere else. You could have said that you wanted to keep looking but you chose to listen to the voice of God. I could have said I wanted to keep looking or stay where I was but I also listened to the voice of God. The truth is that you and I are included in the priesthood of believers. God has prepared a

place and a position for each of us. When we are faithful in our relationship with God we allow the Lord to guide us and place us where God wants us. We defer to God's wisdom.

Mark 10:43-45 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus was appointed as our high priest. He was anointed and sent by God. Jesus Christ was obedient. You and I are appointed to areas of service to the Lord. We serve God by serving God's people. Since we have been blessed by the Lord we also become a blessing for others. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Jesus also did what you and I cannot do. He gave his life as a ransom for many. You and I are included in the many. We are among those the Lord served and for whom he gave his life. Because Jesus died and rose again we have the life of God. We are appointed to be servants. We serve as our Lord calls us. We go where the Lord sends us and we do what our Lord tells us to do. Go where you are sent. Serve in the capacity God assigns you. Trust that God has chosen you to be part of this priesthood of believers. AMEN