

2nd Wednesday | 2021

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Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17

Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High, met Abraham as he returned from his defeat of the kings and blessed him.

And Abraham apportioned to him a tenth of everything.

His name first means righteous king, and he was also “king of Salem,” that is, king of peace.

Without father, mother, or ancestry, without beginning of days or end of life, thus made to resemble the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

It is even more obvious if another priest is raised up after the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become so, not by a law expressed in a commandment concerning physical descent but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed.

For it is testified:

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

Psalm 110:1, 2, 3, 4

The LORD said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand

till I make your enemies your footstool.”

The scepter of your power the LORD will stretch forth from Zion:

“Rule in the midst of your enemies.”

“Yours is princely power in the day of your birth, in holy splendor;

before the daystar, like the dew, I have begotten you.”

The LORD has sworn, and he will not repent:

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

Mark 3:1-6

Jesus entered the synagogue.

There was a man there who had a withered hand.

They watched Jesus closely to see if he would cure him on the sabbath so that they might accuse him.

He said to the man with the withered hand, “Come up here before us.”

Then he said to the Pharisees, “Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?”

But they remained silent.

Looking around at them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart, Jesus said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.”

He stretched it out and his hand was restored.

The Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him to put him to death.



There was a man there who had a withered hand.

*Jesus said to the man,
“Stretch out your hand.”*

Can you sense the impending tension?

I imagine myself as the man reaching forth towards Jesus.

I hear rumors of a healer, this Jesus from Nazareth. I need to see him. Sometimes the pain is unbearable when something brushes up against my bad hand. My bad hand. It's good for nothing and my life with one good hand is good for nothing. My wife and children are aggravating—they stay their distance and that's just fine by me. I bet this Jesus-thing is all trumped up anyways. Still, I'll try anything. This Jesus may be at the synagogue again tomorrow. I need to see him.

What can go wrong?

Well, may I be a bit facetious in recalling a joke I heard (and shared) in high school? This was in the middle of the previous century. You need to imagine a physical demonstration of this joke by a 16-year-old. It's a re-enactment of Jesus' healing scene.

So, imagine me standing there, looking up to the heavens with my one limb all curled up (ala withered). I call out, “Oh God, oh God, PLEASE, make my hand like the other one (as I offer up both of my limbs, one limb straight, the other curled). I make an imitation noise like a lightning strike and shake my body all about and come to rest... with both my hands curled up! Well, I guess you had to be there.

Now, my mom would have scolded me saying it was disrespectful. Yet, I do pine for that time decades ago when the life of Jesus was so real and present to us that we would construct our conversations and humor around and through it. I lament that it is not so in today's secularized society.

And yet, that brings us back to our disabled soul in that synagogue. Like my joke, what could go wrong? What's an attempted miracle look like if it goes awry? How would he be treated by his community if it didn't work out? Would he be scoffed at, leading to even more alienation? What if it worked? Would people be astounded and distance themselves? Would they accuse him of faking his disability so that he could sponge off of them and then later on, team up with this Galilean to pull off some kind of hoax?

He stretched it out and his hand was restored.

“Restored.” There is a fullness about this word. There is more going on here than a disability being corrected. May we understand that the whole man has been restored? Imagine that in his gratitude he may have become a joy to be around. Imagine that whenever after that he spoke of Jesus, that he would proclaim his name with praise. Imagine that this man, who had become intimately known to Christ, makes Christ intimately known to others.

Our disabled man knows the death-like experience of before-Christ and the fullness of life after-Christ. This is nothing other than sharing in the Paschal Mystery.

Just like the man with the withered hand, we are invited into Jesus’ Paschal Mystery. In Jesus’ life, passion, death and resurrection, we find the One who promises us what we were made for, destined for.

Surprising to our earthly logic, as creatures of the clay we were designed completely insufficient to accomplish all of what our better natures aspire to.

But, we are more than creatures of the clay. We are made in God’s divine image. We are designed to be filled with Him where we are insufficient. As instruments of God’s love, we together, as the Body of Christ, are called to share God’s love beyond all mere human capability. That’s the stuff of miracles.

Stretch out your hand. Be restored... for now and forever.

