



Purification

Monday 20th January



Image via StockCake

Scripture: Hebrews 5.1-10

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, 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 for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

To reflect

In Sunday’s Gospel Jesus turned purification jars full of water into wine at the Wedding feast in Cana. The clay jars held water that was used for Jewish purification rituals – washing and compliance with Jewish law.

Why did Jesus use the purification jars full of water to be the vessels for the wine? It could have been possible to pour the water into the empty wine containers. The Gospel of John is full of sign and symbolism so there is a suggestion that Jesus’ first public expression of ministry, this miracle, points to Jesus’ purification of body and soul through his death and resurrection, again after a third day. This is seen in the reading from Hebrews above.

What do you think?

A Purification by Wendell Berry

At start of spring I open a trench
in the ground. I put into it
the winter's accumulation of paper,
pages I do not want to read
again, useless words, fragments,
errors. And I put into it
the contents of the outhouse:
light of the sun, growth of the ground,
finished with one of their journeys.
To the sky, to the wind, then,
and to the faithful trees, I confess
my sins: that I have not been happy
enough, considering my good luck;
have listened to too much noise;
have been inattentive to wonders;
have lusted after praise.
And then upon the gathered refuse
of mind and body, I close the trench,
folding shut again the dark,
the deathless earth. Beneath that seal
the old escapes into the new.

[From New Collected Poems, Counterpoint (2012)]

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rj2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>*)*

- ‘Refiners Fire (Purify My Heart)’ by Brian Doerksen. This worship song speaks of a heart being made pure.
- ‘Messiah Pt 1. No. 7 And he shall purify the sons of Levi; by G.F. Handel, one version is by Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.