

INTERCESSOR

THE LESSON: HEBREWS 7-8

By thy heavenly Intercession... Good Lord, deliver us.

Scripture tells us that Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days before ascending into heaven. On several occasions Jesus warned them that he would not always be with them, but had to return to the Father. Why? Didn't he say, "it is finished" on the cross? Hadn't he already accomplished all that was necessary?

Jesus is not like someone who gets hired to do a job and then walks away when it's finished. The work of our deliverance is an ongoing commitment carried out by one who loves us and has promised to see it through to completion. So why did he leave? Well, we know that Jesus left so that he could send the Holy Spirit to us; we know that he is preparing a place for us so that we can be with him; and we know that he is now seated in a place of authority at the Father's right hand – *interceding for us*. (To "intercede" means to intervene on behalf of someone.) So Jesus is actively working on our behalf!

How does this impact our daily lives? It should encourage us. Scripture tells us that even though our lives are filled with challenge, "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). That doesn't mean we won't mess up. But "if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). An advocate is someone who speaks up on behalf of another person. And what is this Advocate like? He is a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, "one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). So, in Christ, we have the best possible advocate, mediator, intercessor and defender. No matter what we are facing, we can take it to him.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER).)

Scripture is filled with prayers and praises in the form of poetry and songs. During this unit, try your hand at song-writing; drawing inspiration from the love God has for you, made evident in the work of Jesus Christ.

Spend some time this week writing your own song of praise inspired by the intercessory work of Christ.

(Stuck? Spend some time instead reflecting on the words of this hymn penned by Joseph M. Scriven (1819-1886): "Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer! Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer!")

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR ROGATION DAYS BEFORE ASCENSION, BCP PAGE 198)

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HEBREWS 7-8: **OUR INTERCESSOR FOREVER**

7²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴but Jesus holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. ²⁵Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

²⁸For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

8¹Now the 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 heaven, ²a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.