

Jesus—Our Unique High Priest Heb 5:1-10

Intro: .Think about your perception of Jesus today. Many agree he was a unique man. Many believe he was a good man. Few deny his impact on history. But the greatest tragedy in our thinking about Jesus is that it often stops far short from really thinking of Him as He really is. If we were to think through all His words and claims and come to the conclusion that all were true it would bring entirely new meaning to the word unique.

The Gospel of John tells of one who did not fully understand the uniqueness of Christ. We are told of a royal official whose son was near death. This man heard Jesus was nearby, so he went to Jesus, begging him to come and heal his son. (John 4:43-54)

This man's perception of Jesus existed dimly within his perception of real things. Imagine his situation: His son lay sick at home, death moments away. Time and space were very real to him. Hearing of Christ's arrival, he left quickly hoping there was "still time."

Jesus' uniqueness was also somewhat real to him or he would have never made the trip. He believed there was something real enough about Christ to take care of the threat of the moment. He had most likely seen and undoubtedly heard of Jesus' miracles. Yet, at this moment, time and space were more real to him. Like countless others of his day and ours, his perception of Christ's uniqueness had not fully sunk in. Consumed by weight of time, he begged the creator of eternity, "**Sir, come down ere my child die!**"

What happens next is fascinating; Jesus replied, "**Go thy way; thy son liveth.**" And in this defining moment, the man had to decide whether Christ was who he said he was or not.

The Gospel simply says the "**man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way**" or he "**took Jesus at his word and departed.**" Be sure to catch the importance of that phrase. At Christ's word, the man's perception of reality was completely cleared up. Jesus became more than a good man, more than a miracle worker. Trusting beyond time and space, beyond his eyes, the man took Jesus at his word, and went home to find his son well.

You may not have child dying at home; you may not have something so saver as that weighing heavy on you today but that doesn't minimize the weight you carry on your shoulders. But I can tell you that having Jesus as **Our Unique High Priest** can help when it comes to giving that weight to Him. It always was and still is the priest's job to carry our burdens before the Lord.

But in order for us to fully appreciate and apprehend Jesus as our Unique High Priest we need to understand what it is that makes Him so unique.

[Read Heb 5:1-10/Pray/Dismiss Jr. Church]

As we discussed last week the priest's job was to represent the people before God and represent God to the people. Today I want to look at the uniqueness of our Savior Jesus Christ. Why is this important?

Unique—According to the Encarta Dictionary of English, unique means, **Only one; being the only one of its kind; Better than others; superior to all others.** Jesus is all that and much, much more. So what is it that makes Jesus so Unique?

JESUS IS OUR UNIQUE HIGH PRIEST BECAUSE HE...

1. IS MORE QUALIFIED Vv. 1, 4-6

A. No man could appoint himself as a priest, let alone as *high* priest there were qualifications they had to meet.

- 1) They had to be from the line of Aaron
- 2) They had to be selected by God from among the people.

- 3) When someone not qualified tried to enter into the office of priest God's wrath was savor:
 - (a) King Saul (1 Sam. 13).
 - (b) Korah and his fellow rebels (Num. 16).
 - (c) When King Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16-21).
- B. Aaron was chosen by God to be the high priest, and he was duly ordained and installed in office (Ex. 28).
 - 1) Unless the sacrifices were offered in the **right place**, by the **right person**, they were not accepted by God.
 - 2) The very existence of the priesthood and system of sacrifices gave evidence that man is separated from God.
 - 3) It was an act of grace on God's part that He instituted the whole levitical system.
- C. Our Unique High Priest is more qualified than Aaron or any of his decedents **V. 5**
 - 1) The phrase, "**Today have I begotten Thee**," (from PS 2:7) does not refer to the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, but to **His resurrection from the dead**.
 - 2) When Aaron was ordained to the priesthood, he offered the sacrifices of animals.
 - 3) But Jesus Christ offered the sacrifice of Himself—and then arose from the dead!
- D. But God the Father not only said, "**Thou art My Son**"; He also said, "**Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek**" (v. 6, quoted from Ps. 110:4).
 - 1) When Aaron was ordained, God did not speak directly to him and declare his priesthood.
 - 2) But the Father did make this special declaration concerning His Son.
- E. Two facts make Christ's priesthood unique and, therefore, Him a more qualified priest:
 - 1) **First**, He is a High Priest **forever**.
 - (a) No Old Testament priest ministered forever because each priest died and relinquished the office to his successor.
 - (b) Since He is a Priest forever, He gives His people salvation forever (Heb. 7:23-28).
 - 2) The **second**, He [Jesus] belongs to a **different order** from the Old Testament priests.
 - (a) They belonged to the order of Aaron; He belongs to the order of Melchizedek.
 - (1) Melchizedek is mentioned in only two places in the entire Old Testament—Genesis 14:17-24 and Psalm 110:4.
 - (2) His name means "**King of Righteousness**," and he was also "**King of Salem [peace]**."
 - (3) Melchizedek was both **a priest and a king!**
 - (4) King Uzziah wanted to be both a priest and a king, and God judged him.
 - (5) Only in Jesus Christ and Melchizedek were these two offices combined.
 - (6) Jesus Christ is a High Priest **on a throne!**
 - (7) The reason Jesus Christ can be "**a Priest forever**" is that He belongs to the "**order of Melchizedek**."
 - (i) As far as the Old Testament record is concerned, Melchizedek did not die (We will look at this in Heb. 7:1-3); of course, because he was a real man, he did die at some time; but the record is not given to us.
 - (ii) So Melchizedek becomes a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who is a **Priest** forever.
 - (8) But Melchizedek also pictures our Lord as a **heavenly** High Priest.
 - (i) Jesus Christ could never have served as a priest when He was on earth because He did not belong to the tribe of Levi.
 - (ii) Jesus was born of the seed of David, the tribe of Judah.
 - (iii) He became the sacrifice on earth that He might become the High Priest in heaven.

JESUS IS OUR UNIQUE HIGH PRIEST BECAUSE HE...

IS MORE QUALIFIED

2. IS MORE COMPASSIONATE Vv. 2, 7-8

- A. Every Old Testament high priest had to minister to people who were "**ignorant, and ... out of the way [wayward]**" (Heb. 5:2).
 - 1) God made no provision but judgment for high-handed sins of rebellion (see Ex. 21:12-14; Num. 15:27-31).
 - 2) But He did make provision when people sinned through ignorance or weakness.
 - 3) An Old Testament priest could identify with the sinners, since he himself was a sinner.
 - 4) In fact, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest had to offer a sacrifice for himself before he could offer one for the nation! (Lev. 16; Heb. 9:7)

- B. Without compassion a priest cannot **Function for us**.
- 1) The Lord Jesus is an ideal priest, because He understands us.
 - (a) He understands human nature, not just academically and theoretically, not even omnisciently as God, but experientially.
 - (b) No angel can function as a priest for man.
 - (1) Angelic beings might study us and our faults and follies, just as we study plants and animals
 - (2) But, not having entered into human life by way of birth, they cannot appreciate our problems and needs.
 - (c) That is why Israel's priests had to be **"...taken from among men..."** V. 1
 - (d) When offering gifts and sacrifices, they could appreciate the sinner's experiences.
 - 2) The Lord Jesus cannot only **function for us**, He can **feel for us**.
 - (a) The OT priest could **"...have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity"** v. 2
 - (b) But here was the problem with the OT priests.
 - (1) They themselves were sinners, and although that gave them ability to feel for others, is also meant that they had to offer sacrifices for themselves as well as for the people.
 - (2) You would think that one sinner would have compassion for another sinner, but this is not always the case.
 - (i) Sin makes a person selfish.
 - (ii) Sin can blind us to the hurts of others.
 - (iii) Sin can harden our hearts and make us judgmental instead of sympathetic.
- C. Our Lord was prepared for His high priestly ministry during His days of ministry on earth (Heb. 5:7-8).
- 1) The phrase, **"In the days of His flesh,"** means, **"In the days when He was on earth in a human body."**
 - (a) From birth to death, our Lord experienced the sinless infirmities of human nature.
 - (b) He knew what it was to grow and mature (Luke 2:52).
 - (c) He experienced hunger and thirst, as well as weariness (John 4:6-8, 31).
 - (d) He also faced temptations to sin (Matt. 4:1-11) and persecutions from the hands of sinful men.
 - 2) How could the Son of God **"learn obedience"**?
 - (a) In the same way any son must learn obedience: by the experiences of life.
 - (b) We must remember that our Lord, in His earthly walk, lived by faith in the Father's will.
 - (c) As God, He needed to learn nothing.
 - (d) But as the Son of God He had to experience that which His people would experience, so that He might be able to minister as their High Priest.
 - (e) He did not need to learn how to obey because it would be impossible for God to be disobedient.
 - (f) As the God-Man He had to learn what was involved in obedience.
 - (g) In this way, He identified with us.
- D. This preparation involved the experience of death.
- 1) The writer of Hebrews (5:7) focuses on our Lord's experience in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46).
 - (a) As He faced the Cross, it was not the physical suffering that burdened Jesus but the fact that He would be made sin and separated from His Father.
 - (b) Other servants of God have faced death and not expressed such great emotion; but no other servant ever bore on his body the sins of the whole world.
 - 2) In His Gethsemane prayer, our Lord did not oppose the Father, but prayed, **"Not My will, but Thine, be done"** (Luke 22:42).
 - (a) He was not praying to be spared from death, but to be saved out of death.
 - (b) He was praying for resurrection from the dead, and God answered that prayer.
 - (c) He had prophesied His own death and had made it clear that He was laying down His life of His own free will.
 - 3) The writer of Hebrews states that Jesus' prayer "was heard" (Heb. 5:7), that is, answered by the Father.
 - (a) Since He did die on the cross, this could not have been what He was praying about; for if the Father had answered, the Son would not have been crucified.

(b) He did not pray to be saved from death, but out of death; and God answered His prayer by raising Him from the dead.

E. No matter what trials we meet, Jesus Christ is able to understand our needs and help us.

- 1) We need never doubt His ability to empathize, sympathize and strengthen.
- 2) Sometimes God puts us through difficulties that we might better understand the needs of others, and become able to encourage them .

JESUS IS OUR UNIQUE HIGH PRIEST BECAUSE HE...

IS MORE QUALIFIED

IS MORE COMPASSIONATE

3. IS A MORE COMPLETE SACRIFICE Vv. 3, 9-10

A. Two important points regarding His Sacrifice need to be understood:

B. **First**, Jesus Christ did not need to offer any sacrifices for Himself.

- 1) On the annual Day of Atonement, the high priest first had to sacrifice for himself; and then he could offer the sacrifices for his nation (Lev. 16).
- 2) Since Jesus is the sinless Son of God, there was no need for Him to sacrifice for Himself. He was in perfect fellowship with the Father and needed no cleansing.

C. **Second**, our Lord's sacrifice was once and for all, but the Old Testament sacrifices had to be repeated.

- 1) Furthermore, those sacrifices could only cover sins; they could never cleanse sins.
- 2) It required the sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God for sin to be cleansed and removed.
- 3) Because He is the sinless, eternal Son of God, and because His sacrifice was complete and total, Jesus Christ is the **"Author of eternal salvation"** (Heb. 5:9).
- 4) No Old Testament priest could offer eternal salvation to anyone, but that is exactly what we have in Jesus Christ.
- 5) The phrase **"being made perfect"** does not suggest that Jesus was imperfect!
 - (a) The word means "made complete.
 - (b) By means of His earthly sufferings, Jesus Christ was equipped for His heavenly ministry as our High Priest.
 - (c) He is able to save, keep, and strengthen His people.
- 6) Does the phrase **"them that obey Him"** (v. 9) suggest that, if we do not obey Him, we may lose that eternal salvation?
 - (a) To "obey God" is the same as "to trust God," as "them that obey Him" is a description of those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Acts 6: 7 says **"A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"**
 - (2) Romans 10:16 says **"But they have not all obeyed the Gospel."**
 - (3) **"Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth"** (1 Peter 1:22).
 - (b) Once we have put our faith in Jesus Christ, and thus obeyed His call, we experience His eternal salvation.

Conclusion: As I stated in when I began this message, Jesus is our **Complete Priest**. He is Whole – has every necessary part and everything wanted. He is absolute—He is the greatest degree of priest. He is accomplished—He has all the necessary qualities or abilities for His ministry as our High Priest. But most importantly, as a result of His death, burial and resurrection the work of Salvation is Finished—having reached its expected end.