

OUR HIGH PRIEST
Hebrews 3:1-6; 4:14-16

Intro: All of the titles which our Lord has, and all of the offices which He fulfills, are designed for the comfort and blessing of His people.

Did you ever stop to think how wonderful it is that you can say, along with the writer of the book of Hebrews, "We have a great high priest"! He is, the Lord Jesus is, "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession."

The priest, you will remember, represented man to God. Without a priest, a high priest, we would be left without anyone to plead our case before the Father. We would have no salvation. Our Priest went into the Holiest of All, not with the blood of sacrificial animals, but with His own blood. He went there for us. He is ours, our High Priest. No other could do for us what He has done.

This truth is so wonderful that an entire book of the Bible has been devoted to it--the book of Hebrews. If we want to understand what it means that Christ is our great High Priest, the book of Hebrews is the book that we need to go to.

But tonight let me take just a part of what is revealed in Scripture concerning this office of our Lord in the hope that it will provide us with some of the encouragement that we need.

Let us look at His priesthood from two viewpoints: God's, and our own. Both will help us.

I. CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST, AND GOD.

Hebrews 3:2 uses the word . . .

A. "Appointed."

When the writer said that our Lord was "faithful to him that appointed Him," he had reference to God, the Father. The Father appointed Him.

The same thing is emphasized in Heb. 5:4-6. He did not take this office of His own accord, but the Father made Him our High Priest.

This means that, if the Lord Jesus is our High Priest, we have the High Priest that the Father intended for us to have. What He does as our High Priest, He does having the full approval of the Father. Others may claim to have this office, but only the Lord Jesus has it. That should encourage us.

But there is a second thing that is mentioned. It is to be seen in the words,

B. "For ever." See Heb. 5:6.

We have presidents, but we do not have them "for ever." We have Supreme Court Chief Justices, but we do not have them "for ever." There were prophets in the OT, but not one of them is living today. The Apostles were here for a time, but they are all gone now. Pastors live, and they die. Parents live, but they die, too. How amazing it is that the Lord Jesus Christ will never have a successor. He is our High Priest "for ever"! He is the only real High Priest there has ever been. He will never be replaced because He Himself will never die.

That certainly ought to encourage you. What a dreadful thing it would be to think that something might happen to Him, so that we would be left without a High Priest because the Word of God does not speak of any other.

But there is still a third thing that I want to bring out about our High Priest and His relationship with God, the Father. It is this:

C. "Faithful." See Heb. 3:2, " . . . who was faithful to him that appointed him."

What does this mean?

It means that the Lord Jesus always does exactly what the Father wants Him to do. We all know what it is for a politician to be un-faithful in his office. There have been many examples of that throughout history in every nation on the face of the earth. Usually when they are un-faithful, they are removed from office (but not always).

Moses was faithful, but the Lord Jesus is even more faithful because there were some occasions in which Moses was not faithful to God.

There has never been a rift between the Father and the Lord Jesus, and there never will be! What did the Lord Jesus say? "I do always those things that please Him" speaking of the Father. Cf. John 8:29b. What did the Father say, speaking from heaven? "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

So you and I can be sure that whatever the Son does for us as our High Priest has the full approval of the Father. This should encourage us.

But what does it mean that the Lord Jesus Christ is our High Priest? Let us think for the rest of the time about . . .

II. CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST, AND US.

Again the subject is too great for us to include everything in one message, but let us notice some of the more prominent things mentioned here.

First, and what is most obvious, and yet we rarely stop to think about it, for Him to be our High Priest means that He is always . . .

A. "For us." See these two words in Heb. 9:24.

The Lord Jesus is never against us. He is always on our side. He does not excuse our sin, nor does He overlook it. He purges it.

But let your mind dwell on this. He is always and for ever "for us."

This is true of the Father, too. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31b). What a blessed people we are! This is why the Lord Jesus has been "appointed" as our High Priest--because God is "for us," and so is He! He seeks our spiritual welfare. He will not let anything hurt us. All things are designed for our good. "He ever lives to make intercession," not against us, but "for us"! This is not true just part of the time, but all of the time. And do not let anyone tell you differently.

Think what God could righteously do against us! Think of the times you and I have displeased the Father with our sins. There stands a High Priest, our High Priest, who is there to intercede for us. Cf. 1 John 2:1, 2.

But let us go for some more encouragement to another word. It is the word . . .

B. "Great" (Heb. 4:14).

How "great" is the Lord Jesus, our High Priest?

Let me mention three ways in which He is "great."

1. He is great in His Person.

Although the Lord Jesus became a man, and went back to heaven as a man, He is nevertheless God, and, as

such, is everywhere present at the same time. He is not limited to one place in this Portland area, nor is He limited to Portland. The Lord Jesus is "great" in His Person, so that He is present everywhere, and able to meet the needs of His people wherever they may be.

Secondly,

2. He is great in His position.

What is His position? We are told four times in the book of Hebrews: He is at the right hand of the Father. And He is the only One Who is there! No One has access to the Father like the Lord Jesus does. And He is there to tell the Father about you and me.

People often want to know who has the President's ear; that is, who does the President listen to. If you can't get to the President, then get to those who do get to Him.

I know that we have access to the Father, too, but not in the same way that the Lord Jesus does. He is our "great high priest" because of His position.

Is this not encouraging?

3. He is great in His power.

Who has power like our Lord Jesus Christ? Can you and I bring a problem to the Lord that is too great for Him? Or can there be a time when we bring too many problems to Him? Do we ever have to wait because He has too many other things to do, or too many other people who are seeking to get His help?

A father will often have to say to his children, "Wait a minute; one at a time." Teachers will often say to a student, "Go back to your seat. When I am finished with so-and-so, I will help you." But the Lord is so "great" that He never has to say any of these things. Our problems can never be too great. We can never bring too many of them to Him. And it is not possible for too many to call upon the Lord at one time. He truly is a "great high priest." If this does not encourage you, you simply are not understanding what I am saying.

So much for this word "great."

Let me take up two more words, and I will take them together.

They are:

C. "Merciful and faithful" (Heb. 2:17).

See also Heb. 4:15, 16, and then go back to Heb. 2:18.

All of this means that He is sympathetic with us. He suffered while He was here on earth, more than we ever will. He suffered in every way, being exposed to sin, subjected to the hatred of His enemies, suffering with human frailty. He knows. He understands. And He is always ready to help us. And when He does help us, He is "faithful to us, just as He is faithful to the Father. He always does what is best for us even though it might not seem the best at the time. We can always trust Him to help us, and to help us in the right way.

The writer of Hebrews laid heavy emphasis upon this truth, and it is right that he should. This is most encouraging truth.

Concl: Much more could be said, but I just wanted to pick out some of the prominent truths concerning the high priesthood of our Lord for your encouragement and mine. Meditate on what we have seen. Make it your own. And draw from these truths the encouragement that you may need now to face the trials and testings of your daily life. How wonderful it is to have an high priest like our Lord Jesus Christ, One Who is our High Priest for our salvation, and Who continues to be our High Priest in our daily lives!