

Hebrews 5:7-10 “Jesus – a Unique High Priest” March 20-22, 2021
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Hebrews 5:7-10 (NIV)

⁷ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Introduction

In the Old Testament time, the high priest presided over worship life. He came from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. His duty was to offer sacrifices on behalf of and intercede for God’s people. Today we hear of the priesthood not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek. Who was he? He is a mystery of Scripture. In Genesis 14 he appears briefly as he meets Abraham as Abraham returns home from rescuing his nephew Lot who had been captured in a raid by hostile kings. Melchizedek, whose name means “king of righteousness,” is called the King of Salem (Peace) and the priest of the Most High God. Melchizedek gives Abraham bread and wine. Melchizedek blesses both Abraham and God. Abraham gives him a tenth of all the spoils.

1000 years later the psalmist David in Psalm 110:4, referring to the Messiah, wrote, **“The Lord has sworn, “...You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”** A thousand years after that the writer to the Hebrews, moved by the Holy Spirit, refers to Melchizedek in several places. In chapter 7 he indicates that Melchizedek has no genealogy and no mention of birth or death. Hebrews 7:3 states, **“Like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.”** Our text picks up on Melchizedek and states that Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Why is this so important? To the Jewish Christians addressed in the Letter to the Hebrews, it was a re-enforcement of Jesus’ role as Great High priest. When these Jews came to faith in Jesus as the Christ, they let go of many traditions they had observed as Judaizers. Moses, the Sabbath, the high priest, the temple, and the OT sacrifices no longer played such an important role in their lives. In time some of these Jewish Christians began to have doubts. They suffered persecution for their faith. They wondered whether they may be getting short-changed in Christianity and may be left out when it comes to standing before God in eternity. They wondered, “Maybe we should go back.”

The book of Hebrews is a message saying that Jesus is superior to everything these Jews missed including the high priest. Jesus is the high priest who was appointed to be a priest forever. His priesthood goes back before Aaron’s and combines both a king’s power and a priest’s sacrifice. If they thought the human high priest of Judaism could sympathize more with them than could Jesus, because Jesus no longer was visibly present on earth, they should reconsider. If they thought the OT high priest could make them surer of salvation, they should rethink that too.

In Hebrews 5:7-10 the God emphasizes **“Jesus Is Unique High Priest ...” ...1) One who knows supplication, submission, and suffering; and, 2) One who is the source of our salvation.**

What difference does this make to us New Testament Christians?

...1) One who knows supplication, submission, and suffering

Consider this. The life of the Christian is a life of great blessings. But at the same time the Christian life is one of struggle. As a result of sin in the world and sin that has affected us, we experience sadness and suffering. So we have pain, heartache, frustration, and disappointment. There is the struggle that comes with submitting ourselves to God when a part of us is passionate about doing something sinful – loving self or something or someone more than God, doing something self-destructive, being with someone we shouldn't, looking past others and focusing only on ourselves, keeping things to ourselves that we should give to God. As a result we fail in submitting to God and obeying God. We feel guilt. We feel frustration. Christian life is not easy. It can leave us in tears.

When it comes to our struggles and suffering, we may ask for God's help. Sometimes it seems he doesn't answer. Or he doesn't answer right away. Or he doesn't answer in the way we want. We may think, "Doesn't God know? Doesn't God care? Doesn't God understand?"

He does. God knows by experience about serious praying, submission, and suffering. ***"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8) Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered..."***

Jesus knew struggle in prayer. In today's gospel (Jn 12) we hear of how his heart was troubled and he prayed. In Gethsemane he was distressed, troubled and sorrowful to the point of death. Jesus cried out to his Father that if it be possible the hour of suffering and the cup of suffering, crucifixion, would pass from him. But he submitted to his Father, praying, ***"Not mine will, but yours be done (Mk. 14)."*** He knows what it is like to have his Father not answer his prayer in the way he would like. In submission and obedience to his Father he went to the cross as Savior. On the cross he cried out in great agony as his Father laid on him our punishment for our sin. But while his Father, who had the power to spare his life from the cross, did not spare his life that way, he did spare it through the resurrection from the dead because his Son submitted to him and perfectly obeyed him. Jesus knows what it is like to struggle in prayer, suffering and submission.

When we say, "Lord, you don't understand how much I have struggled, prayed, suffered and sorrowed," the Lord can rightly say, "No, you don't understand how much I suffered, sorrowed, submitted and prayed as your Savior." Jesus can say, "I know what you're feeling and more." "I know suffering." "I know submitting can be a struggle." "I know sorrow, tears and supplication." "I learned obedience not out of a book, but by submitting to my Father." "I know guilt and shame; I carried yours." "I am your high priest who knows what you're going through." Jesus knows not only by omniscience, but by experience. Put that together with his love, wisdom, faithfulness, and power and you have a wonderful Helper in time of need. He is your Great High Priest who knows supplication, submission, and suffering.

Jesus is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek who also intercedes for us as the high priests after the order of Aaron were to do for God's people. As Paul wrote to the Romans, ***"Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is interceding for us (8:34)."*** He doesn't do this only for a while like an OT priest who had to retire at 40 yrs. Like Melchizedek Jesus is a priest forever. But at the same time he intercedes for us, Jesus, like Melchizedek who was the King of Salem, is the King of Peace who rules all things for his people. Jesus is better than the priesthood of the

Old Testament. He has experienced our struggles. He intercedes for us. He rules for us. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Not only is Jesus a priest after the order of Melchizedek who knows serious supplication, submission, and suffering, he is the source of salvation to everyone who obeys him.

One Who Is The Source Of Salvation To Everyone Who Obeys Him.

We come into the world with a sinful condition that puts us under the curse of God. As a result we sin. For the Jesus to be the Savior he could have no sinful condition at birth as we do. He could commit no ungodly thought, word, or deed. He had to submit to and obey his heaven Father completely. He had to suffer every bit of God's justice that we deserve for our sins. Jesus did that. Just before his death on the cross Jesus cried out, "It is finished."

In view of this the writer to the Hebrews wrote, ***"...And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him 10) and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek."*** As far as his person Jesus was always perfect. In respect to his mission as Savior, when he completed his perfect submission and obedience to his Father with his death on the cross, his mission was perfect and our salvation was sure. So God has declared us innocent, at peace, forgiven. ***"God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself through Christ, not counting men's sins against them (2Co5:19)."*** This peace, forgiveness and innocence is for all. Jesus brought rescue for all from the eternal suffering of hell.

But not all benefit from this eternal salvation. The writer to the Hebrews says only ***"all who obey him."*** This sounds work righteous. But it is another way of referring to saving faith. The only way we can have saving faith is through the working of the Holy Spirit. But when the Holy Spirit brings us to faith through the gospel, we are obeying that gospel invitation or command, ***"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31)."***

What does your future hold for you? Between here and heaven we can be sure that there will be struggles and blessings. Believe in Jesus and in heaven there will only be the blessings of being rescued from sin's curse and living in the glory of God.

But Christ, the priest after the order of Melchizedek has something in mind for us in the here and now. The apostle John wrote in Revelation 1, ***"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father ..."*** Our Lord serves as our High Priest and has made each of a priest to serve God. We do this as we live to his glory. But we also do this as we use our gifts to his praise. We do this as we serve and pray for one another.

Your lay and called leaders are thankful for all the people involved in ministry. But we also recognize is that there is much ministry to do and that we need more members involved. In our six-year vision we see the need to be adequately staffed at church and school. But we also see the need to engage, equip and encourage more members of our church family for ministry. As the kingdom of priests to worship, serve, pray, and live for God.

This involves you. Jesus did what he did as a priest after the order of Melchizedek so that not only are you saved, but that you might serve as a kingdom of priests interceding in prayer and serving in ministry. So let's serve as the priests Jesus made us to be. Amen. (DRS)

Prayer for the Church:

Lord Jesus, we praise you that as our Great High Priest you sacrificed yourself for our sins completing your service as Savior and accomplishing our salvation. Now we thank you that you are at the right hand of the Father always interceding for us.

Keep us mindful that you are a one-of-a-kind high priest and the only Way into the Kingdom of God here in time and hereafter in eternity. Guide us to share this truth gently and respectfully with those who do not know you. Grant success to our Easter outreach. Bless those who go to places we can't go with the message of love and forgiveness in Jesus.

Be with all you have been ill and especially with those who have been hospitalized. Be with those who are sad and lonely. Assure them that you are with them. Use us in any way you want to be of support and encouragement to them. Bless those who mourn and grant them your comfort and peace.

Guide and bless our leaders in government. Give them wisdom and lead them to do what is good in your sight and good for the overall well-being of our country.

As we celebrate Holy Communion today, may we do so in a worthy manner seeing our need for your forgiveness and believing that with the bread and wine, Jesus' body and blood are miraculously present for the forgiveness of sins. Bless us with your love, peace, and joy. In Jesus' name. Amen

The Lord's Prayer