Jesus, Our Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Introduction

Who do you turn to when you need help or counsel or someone to talk to?

Do you know that we have someone who is available to help us 24 hours a day, every day, wherever we may be?

His name is Jesus and he is our great high priest.

The role of a high priest was more than just a title or a leader of the priests. “In his hands rested the spiritual responsibility for the entire people of God.” Walter Elwell

He was the representative of his people before God.

Jesus is our great high priest par excellence – without equal.

There are three qualifications listed in chapter 5 and Jesus fulfilled them all.

I. Jesus is one with his people. Hebrews 5:1

“Every high priest is selected from among men.”

He had to be like us in order to represent us before God.

This the mystery of the incarnation – that God would become a man.

“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.” Charles Wesley

The high priest offered up prayers and petitions, gifts and sacrifices. He stood as the mediator between God and man.

Who better to do that than Jesus?

Jesus became like us so we could become like him.

II. Jesus is compassionate. Hebrews 4:15; 5:2-3

“He sympathizes with our weaknesses.”

“He was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.”

His temptations were even more acute than ours for two reasons.

• Because of his sinlessness.
• Because of his mission.
Jesus overcame every test.

“He is able to deal gently.”

It is the middle ground between apathy and anger.

We can come to Jesus when we have failed because he is merciful and forgiving.

III. Jesus was called by God. Hebrews 5:4-10

“Every priest must be called by God.”

In the Old Testament, we have examples of what happened when people arrogantly took that role for themselves.

Even today, we still speak of ministry as a calling.

And so God says,

- “You are my Son.”
- “You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”

The key character quality being stressed is humility.

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.”

“He has become the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

Conclusion

Hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Come boldly before his throne of grace.

Martin Luther made the observation that there are two thrones mentioned in chapter 4 – one terrifies us and the other comforts us.

- The throne of judgment in verse 13.
- The throne of grace in verse 16.

What do we find when we come to his throne?

- Mercy – for our failures and sins.
- Grace – because there is a work for us to do.
- Help – at just the right time.