

## Jesus is the High Priest

Jesus is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek

### Opening Prayer & Introduction:

This week we continued our look at the eight portraits of Jesus in the first half of Hebrews. The writer is demonstrating to us that Jesus is the Lord, divine, and the source of God's mercy, grace, and peace. He implores his first readers to press into their faith, and not to depart from it. Spiritual drift comes with the high price of spiritual peril. In this week's lesson, we were introduced to the idea that Jesus is a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek...a mysterious figure in Genesis 14 who was a priest of God in Jerusalem, predating the priesthood of Aaron established in the days of Moses. The writer makes the point that like Melchizedek, whose coming and going are a mystery, so Jesus has no beginning and no end, and is a priest according to God's calling, and because of the power of a sinless life.

**Ice Breaker Question:** Christian maturity matters. As we grow in Christ we should progress to "eating steak" and not an infant's milk. What's one area of your spiritual life where you feel you've grown the most in the past year? Where do you feel you've stayed the same?

**Key Scripture:** Hebrews 4:14-16 "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

### Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon contrasts the repeated sacrifices of the Aaronic priesthood with the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus. What does it mean for your daily life that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient and complete?
2. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews describes some believers as 'dull of hearing' and still needing milk instead of solid food? What areas of your spiritual life might still be in the 'milk' stage?
3. The mysterious figure of Melchizedek appears briefly in Scripture yet points prophetically to Jesus. What does this teach us about how God weaves His redemptive plan throughout all of history?

4. If Jesus had to learn obedience through suffering despite being divine, what does this reveal about the value and purpose of our own suffering and trials?
5. The sermon warns against returning to traditions, customs, and rule-based religion instead of resting in the finished work of Christ. What religious practices or traditions might we be tempted to trust in more than Jesus' sacrifice?
6. How does knowing that Jesus was 'tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin' give you confidence to come boldly to the throne of grace rather than hiding in shame?

### **Practical Applications:**

1. **Option 1: Bold Access** Each day this week, come boldly before God's throne of grace with one specific struggle, temptation, or weakness. Journal about how it feels to bring these things openly to Jesus, your High Priest.
2. **Option 2: Solid Food** Commit to reading Hebrews chapters 6-10 this week in preparation for upcoming sermons. Take notes on what you learn about Jesus that you didn't know before.
3. **Option 3: Examine Your Foundation** Make a list of religious practices or traditions you've relied on. Prayerfully examine whether any of these have become substitutes for simple faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross.
4. **Option 4: Share Your Priest** Tell someone this week about Jesus as your High Priest who understands their struggles and offers mercy and grace. Look for someone who seems burdened by guilt or shame.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Jesus is uniquely qualified as our High Priest** because He is both fully God and fully human, tempted in every way yet without sin.
- **We can approach God boldly** because Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses and provides mercy and grace when we need it.
- **Jesus' priesthood is superior to the Old Testament priesthood** because He offered Himself as the once-for-all sacrifice that completely atones for sin.
- **Spiritual maturity matters.** We should not remain spiritual infants but should grow in our understanding and application of God's Word.
- **The choice is clear:** Will we trust in Jesus alone, or will we return to religious traditions, customs, and works that cannot save?

**Closing Prayer:** Pray that the Lord would help you to understand the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus, and to rest in His finished work at the cross. Ask God for help to move past the basics of the Christian faith and to move into greater maturity.