

HEBREWS 7:20-28
Saved to the Uttermost

The priestly function is something that most of us just don't think about in our everyday lives or even in our spiritual lives.

But let's consider how we actually encounter the priestly concept on a regular basis.

The idea of a priest is that we have someone who is a "go between" for us for something that we can't or don't want to do on our own.

The idea of a priest is a unique person uniquely trained for a specific task.

Example of a priest in everyday life:

Your mechanic – garage is a sacred space and has those with special knowledge and access who mediate between you and your car problem.

Your lawn priest – It's a mess and you don't know how to deal with it so you call in a "lawn priest" – Blake Owen to do the job that you can't or don't want to do.

Your coffee bean priest – many people visit the temple of the coffee bean on a regular basis to see the mediators who have a unique task to go before you and help solve a problem.

The idea is that priests are brought in to repair or restore something. Brokenness and separation require a mediator.

There is no greater problem or issue than that of being right with God. Just about every culture has a system of rituals to deal with the problems. Are they sufficient?? NO. That is why we need Jesus, a SAVIOR, not an example to follow.

In the history of the Bible those people are called priests and they must be called by God and set apart. They must be qualified. Those who took on the role of a priest experienced divine consequences. Jesus came forgiving sinners and the religious leaders were scandalized. He was not a priest and only they could do that. The argument of Hebrews is that Jesus is THE ULTIMATE PRIEST who brings complete forgiveness and eternal security.

Hebrews 7:20-28 TLB (adapted)

²⁰ God took an oath that Christ would always be a Priest, ²¹ although he never said that of other priests. Only to Christ he said, "The Lord has sworn and will never change his mind: You are a Priest forever, with the rank of Melchizedek."

²² Because of God's oath, Christ can guarantee forever the success of this new and better arrangement.

²³ Under the old arrangement there had to be many priests so that when the older ones died off, the system could still be carried on by others who took their places.

²⁴ But Jesus lives forever and continues to be a Priest so that no one else is needed. ²⁵ He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him. Since he will live forever, he will always be there to remind God that he has paid for their sins with his blood.

²⁶ He is, therefore, exactly the kind of High Priest we need; for he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin, undefiled by sinners, and to him has been given the place of honor in heaven. ²⁷ He never needs the daily blood of animal sacrifices, as other priests did, to cover over first their own sins and then the sins of the people; for he finished all sacrifices, once and for all, when he sacrificed himself on the cross. ²⁸ Under the old system, even the high priests were weak and sinful men who could not keep from doing wrong, but later God appointed by his oath his Son who is perfect forever.

HERE'S WHERE WE'RE GOING TODAY:

SUMMARY V. 1-11

The author finally explains to us about Melchizedek and how he relates to Jesus.

Melchizedek is seen as being greater than Abraham who gives him a tithe and receives a blessing from Melchizedek. **Since Melchizedek is greater than Abraham, he is also greater than Levi- a descendent from Abraham. The priests came from the tribe of Levi, via the line of Aaron. They were the official priests, but Jesus is said to come from the order of Melchizedek – one who is greater than the line of Levi. His greatness is not based on lineage, but on his glorious life.**

11-28 Jesus, the Better priest is Compared to Melchizedek.

The Mosaic law was unable to make men perfect, since it was administered by a succession of sinful, mortal priests. Jesus, however, is by God's oath established forever as the High Priest priest/Son, permitting his followers to draw near to God on the basis of his person and work.

The argument is very simple. If the old priesthood had been capable of bringing about the kind of believing maturity and assurance that God desires for His people, then there would have been no need for Jesus Christ. And the very fact that Jesus Christ has come is a reminder that the old priesthood was a shadow of the reality to come in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The author is not simply dealing with a minor doctrinal dispute, though his concerns deal with doctrine. His concern is about the souls and the spiritual state of the people he is addressing. He cares about them and he knows that bad ideas have victims.

****Application for us all: The author gives us a good example of a way to approach an argument.**

When you are in a discussion with someone over an issue that you care deeply about, don't get carried away by emotion. As believers, we must consider the teaching / instruction from God that addresses the issue. **A good indicator of our own spiritual health and maturity is how we process God's truth that we may not like. Do we rule it out because it seems unfair, harsh or cruel, or do we seek to trust God and understand the bigger spiritual issue at stake? Do we give God the benefit of the doubt or do we assume the worst about Him and give ourselves the benefit of the doubt?**

Your answer to the question, "Who gets the benefit of the doubt?" reveals where your heart is. It reveals where you are looking for truth and wisdom. Do we bow our hearts to God's Word or to our own understanding or the voices around us?

v. 18-19 the Levitical priesthood is set aside and thus so is the Mosaic Law since it was not able to accomplish God's saving and transforming purpose.

The law is like an X-ray or MRI – it can detect and reveal a problem, but it can't cure one. The law exposes our hearts, but it doesn't cure them. The cure has to be an inside job – a new heart.

We all rely on some sort of ritual or standard of performance to assure our hearts that we're "OK" with the world, "God", "the force", etc., even if it's that "we have no standard".

Coming to Jesus is how we get saved and are brought near to God. **Continuing to draw near to God through Christ is proof that we came to him in the first place.**

A theme of Hebrews is that there is no assurance of salvation, no peace about salvation for those who don't draw near to God through Jesus. If we want the uttermost impact of salvation, we need to keep drawing near to God.

Nearness isn't just proximity; it is in intimacy (in-to-me-see)

Some of us are continuing to get short circuited in our lives, in our relationships, in our battle with besetting sins because we don't draw near to God in our hearts. We may draw near externally and through attendance at the right activities, but in our hearts, we are not near to God. We are "near enough" in our minds, but deep down, we know we're keeping Him at arm's length.

We are short circuited when we cling to an old covenant way of viewing God. Sadly, it is like a treadmill. We need a spiritual insight and inner heart experience of all that God is for us in Christ, our great high priest and savior. We need to be persuaded of his love for us through Christ and the free access we have to the throne of grace. That is a legitimate biblical prayer.

God's goal for us is that we glorify Him because that is the way to our greatest joy and happiness. Do we believe that?

Andrew Murray – The Two Covenants p. 12

All that God has ever done for His people in making a covenant was always to bring them to Himself as their chief, their only good, to teach them to trust in Him, to delight in Him, to be one with Him. It cannot be otherwise. If God indeed be nothing but a very fountain of goodness and glory, of beauty and blessedness,... the more we have Him ruling and working all in us, the more truly happy shall we be. This new Covenant has become for us one of the windows of heaven through which we see into the face, into the very heart of God.

We need to take our place at the window and gaze upon the glories of Christ.

v. 20-22 The Better Covenant is based on God's oath and the superior quality of Jesus' life.

The OT priesthood was never meant to be permanent. It was there to point to Christ and his glory in perfectly fulfilling all that was written and foreshadowed in the laws and rituals. The new covenant is "better" because it is forever and is confirmed by the oath of God and the indestructible life of Jesus.

The Levitical priests had their heads on a swivel. They looked back to the sins committed and made sacrifice for them. They, by faith, looked forward to the day when God would send the ultimate sacrifice for sin. In the same way, the benefits of Christ go back and cover people of faith in the days of the OT, and they go forward and cover those who by faith would trust in Christ as savior. He lives forever, so his benefits never run out.

The author is appealing to his audience to consider the assurance of atonement that comes through Christ.

The OT system required a sacrifice year after year. That in itself makes one wonder how secure it is.

EX: many things we buy these days have built in obsolescence. You know they won't last long. It can be a bit discouraging. If something has a "lifetime" guarantee we tend to be skeptical. Surely there are loopholes, right?

In clear terms the author wants the hearers to put confidence in Christ as an eternal high priest who has made a once for all sacrifice for sin.

Heb 10:11-12

v. 23-24 Jesus lives forever so he is a priest forever. All the other priests died.

"There ain't no busy signal on the hot line to God". Jesus ever lives and he doesn't take time off. You don't have to go through a secretary to arrange an appointment.

"Sorry, but the priest died and we're waiting for the replacement" NOT.

WE HAVE RIGHT NOW ACCESS TO Jesus.

He makes intercession for us. Word used 5 times – 3 in Romans, 1- Acts, 1- Hebrews

HOW DOES HE INTERCEDE? “to confer with; entreat” He “reminds” God that our sins are paid for, that we are forgiven, that we are being conformed to his image.

v. 25 Jesus saves to the **UTTERMOST** those who draw near to God through him

THE MORAL CENTER OF THE BIBLE IS THAT WE NEED A PRIEST, A MEDIATOR TO BRING US TO God. We are so flawed that God had to become a man and die for us.
(someone here may really need to hear this today)

I know that this is offensive to us as humans. It always has been, but even more in an age where self-esteem and individual self-identity are put at the center of everything. The individual autonomous self does not like the idea of needing a mediator and a savior. “If God can’t accept me as I am, then I’m not interested in knowing him.”

He will meet us and love us where we are, but He also loves us enough to not leave us where we are.

Jesus saving to the uttermost relates to the idea of being “complete or entire”.

The word translated “uttermost” is only used a second time in the NT in Luke 13:11 describing a woman bent over for 18 years. She could not “fully” straighten herself up until Jesus healed her to the uttermost.

Jesus doesn’t just want to give you heaven. He wants to begin the full impact of salvation now. He wants us to experience it to the uttermost.

Many of us are bent over because of relational issues, drug, food, anger, greed, fear, rage, sexual, or financial issues, whether it be coveting or being irresponsible as stewards.

However, we are bent over, we need to understand that Jesus came that we might be saved to the uttermost.

Jesus enables us to stand up and straighten out. With that woman, the result was immediate. It may not always work like that, but Jesus is in the process of enabling us to break free from what has us bent over.

Is that what Jesus means to you? Drawing near to God for salvation, satisfaction, and transformation.

A silly question? No. Over the centuries people have used and positioned themselves with Jesus for any number of reasons, usually to further their own agenda – moral, spiritual, social, or political.

EX: John 6 Bread of Life – the crowd came to make him king because he had fed them.

People are always trying to baptize their own agenda with Jesus (from racists to abortionist. From Westboro Baptist to Madonna.)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/madonna-says-jesus-supports-abortion-wants-to-change-catholic-churchs-stance-on-life.html>

While Jesus will have implications for such issues that was not the primary reason He came. He came for broken people, sinful people, those who hated him, so that they might be able to draw near to God.

He intercedes for us. That does not rule out difficulties in our lives.

Ex: Peter – Satan asked if he could sift Peter and Jesus said, “Yes, but you will return to me because I have prayed for you.”

Don’t assume that trials mean that Jesus is off the throne of the universe or that he is no longer praying for you.

Jesus is a savior to the uttermost for those who “draw near to God” through him.

The author uses the expression several times. Listen to last week’s sermon about “Drawing Near”
Heb 4:16t, 7:25, 10:1, 10:22; 11:6

The author doesn't want us to have a distant relationship with God or a secondhand relationship with God, but a real, vital, honest relationship with God.

Ps 16:11, 42:2, 63, 73;

We are to draw near, not the old covenant way with blood of bulls and sheep, but the precious blood of Christ.

He died for you, so draw near!

We are drawn to people we find attractive or we think can do something for us, but have any of them died for us? NO.

If we're going to be drawn to anyone it should be the person who knows us totally and was still willing to give his life for us. When that sinks into our hearts, we will move toward the uttermost experience of the saving work of Christ in our lives in the here and now.

He not only died for you; he is interceding for you! We are drawn to people who pray for us, right? We're crazy not to be.

v. 26 A Fitting Savior

²⁶ He is, therefore, exactly the kind of High Priest we need; for he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin, undefiled by sinners, and to him has been given the place of honor in heaven.

Jesus is just what we need because we are none of those.

Taken together, the three adjectives clearly describe the sinlessness of Jesus.

The phrase "separated from sinners" doesn't mean that he is aloof from us, but that in terms of his purity, he is set apart.

As high priest, Jesus now enjoys direct, unhindered access to God, which enables Him to fulfill his high priestly ministry on behalf of His people. And through Him, we too have access to the Father.

Concluding contrast (7:28).

The differences between other priests and Jesus are striking:

Imperfect vs Perfect -- the priest and the sacrifice he offers

Sinful priest vs Sinless priest - the Son of God

Mortal vs Immortal

Dead vs Alive forever and seated at the right hand of the God.

What a huge difference.

We all look to someone or something to be our priest / mediator. It may be ourselves -our own resume of righteousness or good works - or it may be someone else, i.e. "my mother was very religious, my grandfather, uncle, aunt,"etc.

How do those other options compare with Christ? You may need to wrestle with some key questions...

Will they die for you?

Will they forgive you? Will they deal with your guilt and shame?

Will they give you access to the throne of God?

We need a high priest who is tailor made to meet us in our brokenness. Sit in the good news of the gospel today - He has come to meet us so let's learn to lean into and draw near to Him.

--	--