

Redeemed For Service By Our Great High Priest

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[0 : 0 0] Well, as I make comment on this chapter, we're going to keep that music running.! I'm only kidding. You'll be glad of that.! Let me pray as we explore this passage.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. Your word is good. Your word is true. Your word endures. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but your word will remain forever.

And man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. And so, Lord, by your spirit, would you teach us now? Would you illuminate your word to us?

And would you be glorified in our doing so? In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, this morning there are, at least, including myself, at least four pastors, maybe a couple more, and one retired, two of which were pastors of this church before me, and so no pressure.

But each of these men have been really kind to me and really helpful. David wasn't a minister here, but has been helpful to me. One of the pastors finished his pastorate here, Bill, has been supremely helpful to me, and one of the other pastors started his pastorate here, like me.

[1 : 2 9] And so, Craig has been a huge help to me in making sure I've got the right shoes on and the right outfit, priestly garments and all.

And perhaps Craig's wife could speak to my wife a word of encouragement later on how to put up with us in our first pastorate. But it's good to be here and it's good to see you all.

Exodus 39. We are going to be looking at these priestly garments and what on earth all this detail is about. But first, I don't know if you noticed that throughout, and maybe you can see it in front of you in your Bibles, but this repeated phrase in this chapter, as we come to the end of Exodus, this repeated phrase, just as the Lord commanded Moses.

This phrase is repeated over and over and over, down to verse 31. How many times, if you were to guess, is it repeated? Given that we've been exploring Exodus as a new creation event, this phrase is repeated seven times.

And then, we have this summary from verse 32 onwards of all of this creation where God would dwell with man like Eden.

[2 : 4 7] And at the end of it, we have this seeing all that had been made and then blessing them. And we're supposed to be reminded of Genesis.

We're supposed to be reminded that this is a new creation event and that God is doing something new here and recreating these people that he would dwell with them, that Eden would be restored and humanity would be restored.

It's a wonderful thing. And so, firstly, I'm going to explore a couple of illustrations about what is in a uniform with this priestly outfit.

And then, I'm going to look at how we have, like Aaron, we have been redeemed for service. And then, finally, we're going to look at how these details and this role in these garments point towards Christ, our great high priest.

Now, it was only around 50 years ago or so that nurse uniforms changed from white to the colors that you see in hospitals today. Some of the color coding was helpful for identifying the roles of departments, but there were also other factors in choosing these new colors for scrubs, such as how blood showed up in white.

[4 : 04] It was very difficult and even when it was washed it would still leave a mark. And white also caused a strain on the eyes for the likes of surgeons doing long procedures and it caused them headaches.

And so, these changes to colors like green and blue actually are a lot easier on the eye. they reduce the headaches and they help focus and they bring a sense of calm to patients and they actually reduce blood pressure.

Did you know that? These colors. So Fiona, your shirt actually is very calming this morning. I want you to go about afterwards and just calm everyone down. And so, I don't know if you knew that color can affect your heart rate and your blood pressure.

It actually can. And also, these colors help to hide stains better. So, there are reasons for uniforms and the way that they're made. Consider the uniform of a firefighter providing protection from heat and flames, smoke and chemicals, also providing freedom of movement and reflectors that are helpful to identify them in low visibility.

Think about how these things also increase confidence in the person wearing it to do their job and also confidence in the person who needs them to do their job.

[5 : 21] A uniform can increase productivity, morale and confidence as well as it can have many psychological benefits as well as practical benefits such as conveying professionalism, giving the wearer a sense of responsibility and wearing the brand and colors of the work that they represent can help them see how what they are wearing and doing in their role is part of something bigger.

And so it's not escaped me this morning that I've been thinking about these things and wondering whether to wear a dog collar this morning but I couldn't get my hands on one. There are many reasons behind different uniforms for different works and the uniform of the high priest was no exception.

It was symbolic of the work that he performed as well as visually representing the tabernacle itself. If you've been trying to listen throughout these very long and detailed chapters one of the things that I'm sure of is that if you were in a pub quiz somewhere and a question was asked about the details or colors you wouldn't realize it but you would know straight away because these have been repeated over and over and over gold and blue and purple and scarlet yarns and linen round about when I was first became a Christian I had this dream that I always remembered just right about the time I first became a Christian now I'm not saying that this dream was necessarily from the Lord or something mystical but it did show me something and I think it's helpful you see when I first became a Christian I was wrestling with this sense of belonging and identity whether I really was a Christian and whether I was part of this people and I had this dream that I was at this large gathering at a conference or something but I wasn't among the people

I was milling about at the side and I was unsure if I fit in or not and I saw this room to the side and I saw these leaders with these scarlet red jackets and one or two of them saw me milling around and they brought me into the room and I thought they were going to ask me about why I was there or tell me to leave that I wasn't supposed to be there but they didn't instead with a smile they handed me a package and in the package was the same scarlet red jacket as theirs and they said to me this is yours now this is who you are now you're one of us you belong and so again I'm not saying that this is necessarily from the Lord I don't want to over spiritualize a dream but it helped me understand in some way this big change in my life that God had turned me from sin and idolatry to now belonging to him and serving him and so one of the things that

I've been thinking a lot about in this chapter is that these incredibly detailed garments were made for Aaron Aaron the very person who had made a golden calf not a few chapters earlier and I thought about how God redeems us and he redeems us not just to be part of his family but he redeems us to be part of his work he redeems us so that our hearts would be his but also so that our hands would be his God redeems us for his service what a privilege it is not only to be made part of his people when we don't deserve it but to be made part of his work when we are so unfit for it isn't that a good thing if you are a true believer and this is true of every believer God did not redeem us to do the same things that we did before to live in sin and idolatry

[9 : 28] God does not only redeem your heart he redeems your hands when God has already given us such wealth and gifts and abilities as he did the Israelites all the gold and all the materials they were given by God through the hands of the Egyptians but they were not given to serve idolatry they were given to serve the living God who would dwell with them when God has already given us such wealth and gift and ability as it says in 1 Corinthians 4 what do you have that you have not received Acts 17 said God himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything and then like Aaron we are caught in our sin and yet undeservingly so it says in Romans 5 8 God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners Christ died for us in Ephesians 1 says in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us

God purifies us he redeems us he makes us new as it says in Ephesians 2 for grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it is the gift of God not a result of works so that no one may boast for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them you see Exodus is pointing to a greater Exodus where we are a new creation in Christ Jesus created in Christ for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them and we saw this before that before this golden calf incident God was preparing people like Aaron and the Israelites for a good work beforehand and yet they were caught in sin and idolatry and yet did God abandon them no he did not and so if we have been saved if we have been redeemed by God why would we not want to walk in these good works that he prepared for us beforehand why would we not want to serve this great

God of ours consider how God prepared Aaron beforehand the work that he would do Aaron grew up along with the Israelites in slavery he was in a good position to know them and represent them unlike Moses he came out to meet Moses in Exodus 4 and he bridged the gap between Moses and the people he was with Moses whenever he went to meet Pharaoh Aaron was there when Moses was commanding the people about the Passover in Exodus 12 he was there with Moses when the people grumbled in the wilderness in Exodus 16 Aaron was there with her holding Moses hand up his arm up when the Amalekites attacked in Exodus 17 Aaron was there with Moses and Jethro when they ate a meal before the Lord in Exodus 18 Aaron was invited up the mountain with Moses and the elders in Exodus 24 and they beheld God and ate and drank and then when

Moses went up the mountain he left Aaron down the mountain in charge of overseeing the people however in Exodus 32 we see that Aaron was pressured by the people and he got them to give all their gold and he made a golden calf and then when Moses came back down and confronted him Aaron lied and said I put all this gold in the fire and out came this calf when you think about the seriousness of the role of the high priest and the intricacy of his uniform and all that it represented and then you think about Aaron's sin how is it that he is fit for the role of high priest is he fit for the role of high priest any longer the truth is he's not fit and he never was fit he was never fit for this role yet

God will redeem him for this role look at the grace of God that Aaron could go from making a golden calf for idolatry to serving the living God in the tabernacle as high priest what a change what grace there is from God that he should get to wear some of the gold in one of his uniforms to represent the people before God that he should be one of the few ever allowed in the holy of holies before the presence of God after making a golden calf is only by God's grace that Aaron should wear the clothes of the high priest which were designed to match the tabernacle that he should be like himself a living tabernacle is only by the grace of God that he should wear a signet saying holy to the Lord is only by God's grace and so let us now think about ourselves how is it that a people like me and you sinners worshipping anything but God could be forgiven and made holy to the Lord how is it that we sinners as we are according to 1

[15 : 15] Peter 2 could be chosen a priesthood holy a people for his own possession that we might proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light how is that possible except by the grace of God see the grace of God if you know him how God has brought you and me from idolatry to priestly service that he would redeem us from sin and rebellion to holiness and service consider how we can now draw near the throne of grace with confidence as it says in Hebrews 4 or have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus as it says in Hebrews 10 how is that possible except by the amazing grace of God and so let me ask this when we consider ourselves how is it that any of us can be fit to serve

God God the truth is we are not and the truth is we never were but God God in his kindness and grace would redeem us and redeem our hearts and redeem our hands that we might know him love him and serve him and enjoy him forever isn't that good news as much as we can learn from God's dealings with Aaron from Aaron's humanity and his fallenness we can see our own failings and our own unworthiness we can see the amazing grace of God to redeem us from idolatry to holy service that he would clothe us with something made for glory and beauty what we see in the unique role of Aaron or any high priest is how it points to a superior high priest that we have namely Jesus Christ Christ is your great high priest we see

Christ not only in the role of the high priest but also in the uniform of the high priest the outfit that had gold which represented divinity blue representing the heavens purple representing royalty and red representing sacrifice all worn by this man who would serve God and yet Christ himself is the divine one his origin is in the heavens with the father his role is not only priestly!

He's the king of kings and lord of lords and the blood of sacrifice is his very own blood Christ fulfills even the uniform of the high priest when Aaron wore pure linen Christ did not need to wear righteousness or purity for he is the righteousness of God and he himself was sinless while Aaron wore the signet holy to the Lord he had to wear that to be holy to be set apart for this role yet Christ himself is the unique holy one of God while Aaron wore an outfit that represented the tabernacle Christ himself was the living tabernacle where heaven and earth meet together in him God dwells with man through God becoming man divine nature human nature brought together in Christ and while the outfit for

Aaron was made for glory and beauty Christ himself is the radiance of the glory of God and all beauty is derived from him it's like that song that we just sang your beauty and glory is endless there's nothing more glorious on this earth nothing more beautiful than any piece of music or sunrise that you've ever seen that will outshine Christ we have not even began to imagine the glory and beauty that there is in Christ which we will one day see if we love him and know him and the role of the high priest where Aaron bore the names of the nation on his shoulders and the onyx stones Christ bore the sins of the world on his shoulders carrying the cross while Aaron bore the names of the tribes on his heart before God in precious stones Christ bears his people on his heart before God not in precious stones but by his precious blood while the high priest could sympathize with man by sharing weakness with man

[20 : 05] Christ could sympathize by being tempted in every way to a degree like no man has ever had because we give in to temptation but Christ never gave in to temptation and so he was tempted to a degree that we've never known to the shedding of blood yet without sin Christ is a greater high priest because unlike the others he doesn't need to offer sacrifices for his own sin unlike the others he doesn't offer the blood of goats and bulls but in his very own life he offers the blood of the sinless son of God while the high priest couldn't continue in his office because of death so there had to be many Christ holds his priesthood!

Because he continues forever as it says in the book of Hebrews For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest holy innocent unstained separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens how good is Christ he has no need like those high priests to offer sacrifices daily first for his own sins and then for the people since he did this once for all when he offered up himself and unlike the others Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands which are copies of the true things in heaven but he entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf that's where Christ is for you and me and just as it has been appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment so Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many will appear a second time not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him are you eagerly and because he continues forever it says consequently he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to

God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them and so while you were sleeping last night Christ was making intercession for you your high priest doesn't need to sleep or slumber and finally consider at the end of our passage in Exodus 39 that all the work of the Lord that he commanded they did they did it and Moses saw all the work and he inspected it all and they passed the test and he blessed them as I said last week what is your hope at the end of your life when all of your work is judged will it be said of you that you did all that the Lord commanded and then will you be blessed how do you think you'll fare on that day have any of us done enough what is your hope you see people might think that they no longer need a priest but our only hope is the great high priest

Jesus Christ there's none like him there never has been there never will be he is the holy one of God who has done it we haven't done it he has done it our hope is not in our work but in his finished work in his sacrifice and also in his ongoing work as our high priest before God both that there was one sacrifice for all sins for all time and it is weak

I have reflected on my own weakness and my own failings whether that was my frailty with tiredness and weakness in my body or whether it's my own proneness to sin and I've been thinking about this and thinking about the role of high priest and I've been thinking how glad I am to have a high priest like Christ he is sinless he is righteous and pure in every way I don't need to worry about him wandering I don't need to worry about him slumbering I don't need to worry about his weakness or whether or not he's able to do the work he is perfect in every work is perfect and acceptable his sacrifice is complete he is not weak but he lives in indestructible life he's not prone to wander he has defeated sin and death and he is seated at the highest place at the right hand of

[25 : 37] God he will never fail nor forsake he will never turn any away who come to him he has bore our sin it is finished and he bears his people before God he never sleeps what a great high priest we have it's because of him and his grace and goodness that we will ever have the hopes of hearing the words well done good and faithful servant it's because he has done it he has done it he's done and he's done it for you and so what is your hope on that day when all of our work is measured except to say Christ did it for us it is not my works it is his and in him we are blessed for God will not look upon us in our sin he will look upon Christ and he will say it is good it is done well done in him we are blessed in a million and more ways praise

God let me pray