

The Great High Priest

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[0:00] The subject tonight is the Great High Priest.

! The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Great High Priest.! We see that in Hebrews 4 verse 14.! The Great High Priest. A priest represents man to God and God to man. The priest we speak of is the Great High Priest. Of course, every believer is a priest today. Each one of us. There is no distinction of really clergy and laity as some churches manifest. There is no priest as the Roman Catholic Church would teach and others. There is one great High Priest and every believer is a priest in ministering unto him and to one another. And the priest that we are speaking of tonight is the Great High Priest.

[1:06] It says in Hebrews 4 verse 14 through, Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest. The book of Hebrews tells us of this Great High Priest. Our Great High Priest of his great ministry unto us.

In Hebrews 2 through 17 through 18. It tells again of this Great High Priest. There's numbers of times that he appears in God's Word. Hebrews 2 through 17 through 18 speaks again of this Great High Priest and his character.

His special character. He is merciful, he is faithful and he is helpful unto us. In verse 18 it says, For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able.

He is able to succour or to help in the modern sense of it. He is able to succour to help them that are tempted.

[2:16] In that he has been tempted, he is able to help us when we are tempted. He is able today, the Great High Priest. And we see his character right through the book of Hebrews.

The character of our Great High Priest. In Hebrews 4 it continues verse 15. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin.

Amen. We can, number one, know his compassion. Know his compassion. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin.

We see this Great High Priest. We see his great compassion. He has great compassion. This Great High Priest has great compassion because he is touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

He knows the human condition. He knows the human heart. He knows human need. He is, as someone has expressed it, God with skin on.

[3:32] He came down in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says God was manifest in the flesh. He clothed himself.

He enrobed himself with human flesh and became man. God became man and mediated. And so we understand that he understands.

The Lord Jesus Christ understands you and I and our deepest feelings and frailties. He understands our weaknesses. We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

He is not remote and distant. He is close. Very close. And he is touched. Touched with those sympathies for our condition.

When we are going through tough things. He is not cold and hard and distant. He is very touched with our feelings. He knows what it means as in the person of Christ.

[4:38] He was afflicted. He was rejected. He was spurned and humiliated and ashamed by man. He was wounded and bruised.

And he has sympathy for your suffering and mine. He knows earthly sorrows. He knows earthly griefs and agony and temptation. He endured rejection at the hand of his creation. Even his own people, they received him not. We know in John 1. He knows rejection. He knows sadness and disappointment. Our great High Priest. He knows earth's painful trials. He knows your cares and your struggles today. And he understands. He understands. He is tender and full of compassion. People today, the God that we know. He's not some stone idol, some manufactured image of man, or some philosophy that will fail you. He is a living, breathing person. He came in the person of Christ, full of compassion and tender mercies.

[5:44] And his heart, as we see through the pages of the Gospels, as we see Christ alive, we see his pity, we see his love, his compassion, as it was extended to every human being that he touched on his journey on this planet.

He wept at the grave of Lazarus. He wept over unbelieving Jerusalem. He had an ear ready to hear the cry of the despairing ones, of the blind, of the sick, as they cried for help, and he extended his touch.

And he is ever doing that today, as he was then going to those afflicted. And one of his last thoughts on the cross was again of compassion, as he looked out and he saw his mother there. And he wanted to ensure the care of her. And he is watching still today, this ever-loving, ever-living, great high priest. He's looking for the weakest lamb that he might hold and care for them with his mercy and tenderness.

He is the man, Christ Jesus, very God and very man, our very great high priest. He is divine in his ability and he is human in his sympathy.

[6:59] And he makes intercession for us. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. A preacher put it as this, Sorrow can be good for the soul.

It can uncover the hidden depths in ourselves and in God. Sorrow causes us to think earnestly about ourselves. It makes us ponder our motives, our intentions, our interests.

And we get to know ourselves as never before. Sorrow also helps us to see God as we've never seen him. Job said, out of his terrible grief, I've heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you.

He saw that in the grief he knew God. He was drawn to God. And the Lord Jesus, the perfect man, he's the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He's intimately acquainted with human circumstance. There was a man, a preacher called Booth Tucker, who was preaching in Chicago in some evangelistic meetings.

[8:06] And he was talking on this subject. He was preaching on the sympathy of Christ one night. Speaking of the sympathy of this great high priest, of this loving, understanding, sympathetic God.

And at the close of the meeting, a man came up to him, to the preacher, and kind of scorned him and mocked his message. And he said, if your wife had just died, like mine has, and your babies were crying for their mother, who would never come back, you wouldn't be saying what you are saying.

A few days later, the preacher's wife was killed in a train wreck. Her body was brought to Chicago, to the very place that he had preached, to the same building that he would preach the funeral. And after the service, the bereaved preacher looked into the silent face of his wife in the coffin. And then he turned to those who were attending, and he said, the other day when I was here, a man told me that if my wife had just died, and my children were crying for their mother, I would not be able to say that Christ was understanding and sympathetic, or that he was sufficient for every need.

The preacher went on, if that man is here, I want to tell him that Christ is sufficient. My heart is broken. It is crushed, but it has a song.

[9:40] And Christ put it there. I want to tell that man that Jesus Christ speaks comfort to me today. The man was there.

And he came and knelt at the altar as the preacher introduced him to Jesus Christ. A great high priest with a great compassion.

A great compassion. Hebrews 4.16 We read further of this great high priest. Hebrews 4.16 We should know his compassion.

And secondly, we should know his grace. Hebrews 4.16 It says, Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need.

[10:47] We can know the grace, the great grace, of this great high priest. It's got the sense here of a continual drawing near. That's the sense, I understand, the present tense that underlies this translation.

That there's a continual sense of drawing near, of coming boldly, coming boldly, coming boldly unto the throne of grace. Continually drawing near unto our Lord in prayer, in worship, in devotion of heart and life.

Know his grace today. His grace today. Hebrews 8.1 tells us of how we have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

That's the location of the throne of grace of our God, our great high priest. The great throne is the throne of majesty in the heavens.

Hebrews 8.1 His throne is in the heavens and yet he can draw near to each one of his people who call upon him today. He still can draw near whilst he is in the heavens as the word tells us that by faith he can reside in the human heart.

[12:03] And his throne is one that we can still draw near to today. He can still come to the throne today. He hasn't closed the door. He doesn't have some opening hours that says he shuts off for the night.

He doesn't slumber or sleep. Excuse me. He neither slumbers nor sleeps.

It's a bit like at the moment I've been on call with my job. In fact, I'm currently on call. If there's an emergency I need to be ready to answer the phone at any hour of the day or night.

And that's our God. He's on call 24 by 7 by 365. And we can come boldly unto him. He doesn't lock off. We can continually draw near to him.

His throne is in the heavens and yet we can still draw near. We should draw near to the throne of grace whenever we need help. And friends, the word of God is called the word of his grace.

[13:06] The spirit of God in Hebrews 10 29 is called the spirit of grace. So grace is very manifest as the feature of our God, of our great high priest.

He provides help in time of need. Every hour that we live his ear is ready for our call. Every hour that we live is a time of need.

Let's face it. Is there any time you don't need him? Draw near. Come boldly. In time of need. In time you need help. It's good to know that God's throne, God's throne is the throne of grace.

Isn't it? What if it wasn't the throne of grace? What if it was the throne of law? What if it was the throne of his wrath? But thank God he extends grace by his mercy.

He extends grace. And grace is on a throne. Another preacher said this, you probably know of him, Spurgeon, and I'm ad-libbing somewhat, that grace is on a throne.

[14:09] In the gospel the Lord Jesus Christ extends grace as one of the most predominant attributes that he has. And grace came down to earth, personified in the person of our Lord, grace.

And what did grace do? Grace, when it came to earth, grace met with sin. Grace met with sin. I'll quote, long and sharp was the struggle and grace appeared to be trampled underfoot of sin.

But grace at last seized sin, threw it on its own shoulders and though all but crushed beneath the burden, grace carried sin up to the cross and nailed it there, slew it there, killed it there, put it to death forever and triumphed gloriously.

And so grace now sits on a throne. Thank God grace sits on the throne today because grace has conquered human sin. Grace has borne the penalty of human guilt and overthrown it.

Grace sits on the throne. Isn't that a wonderful truth today? That grace is enthroned because Christ has finished his work. He's gone into the heavens and grace is enthroned in power.

[15:24] So we can know his compassion. We can know the wonderful grace of this high priest and thirdly we can know his great salvation.

Great compassion, great grace, great salvation. Hebrews 7 24 it says, but this man because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Verse 25, wherefore he is able, there's that word again, he is able, he is able to succor us, to help us when we're tempted and verse 25 of Hebrews 7, wherefore he is able to save, Hebrews 7 25, wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lived to make intercession for them.

The Lord Jesus is your intercessor. when we don't know how to pray and we had a lovely prayer tonight that was very heartfelt and when we don't have the words to say, when we can't put it into our own understanding, when it's just a groaning and a crying out with hardly words we can express, that then he is able to make intercession for us, he is able to intercede for us, he is able to plead our case before the Father, before the judgment time, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him.

A preacher, a missionary, pioneer missionary to America, Robert Murray McShane said, if I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, if I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies, yet distance makes no difference, he is praying for me.

[17:25] Friends, today, if you're a believer today, the Lord Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for you. Verse 26 of Hebrews 7, it says, he is such a high priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily as those high priests to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the peoples, for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

We know there's many religions and churches where there's some, as they think, are re-commemorating of the mass, as if Christ could be somehow portrayed in a real sense in the manifestation of the abomination that is called the mass.

And yet, people, not knowing, think that this is the case. But the Bible says very clearly that he is once offered, he is once offered for sins.

There is no recreation of his death, there's no manifesting him in some physical form again. His sacrifice was once for all.

And we see that he offered up himself, that's Hebrews 7, 27. As John the Baptist saw him, he cried out, he said, Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, John 1, 29.

[19:05] And Hebrews 9, 12, it says, of the blood of our Lord, it says, by his own blood, by his own blood, he entered him once to the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Friends, this great high priest has great saving power and there's a great extended invitation, an access that is open to us.

The word tells us that we can be accepted in the beloved. And the word accepted is alike to the word grace. It's all about grace, it's about the blood, the blood makes us accepted in the beloved. I love Ephesians 2, verse 13, it says, but now in Christ Jesus, you who are sometimes afar off, were made nigh, made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Isn't that wonderful to know that even, I know, as was expressed in the prayer, how sinful we feel, how inadequate, how unworthy, how far away we can feel from him, we are brought near.

[20:12] How? Not by our own works, not by our own doings, not by our own strivings, but entirely by the blood of Christ. We who are sometimes far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

And friends, we're urged in the scriptures to draw near. Hebrews 10, 19, of this great high priest, again the context here of the holiest place, Hebrews 10, 19, it says, having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he had consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

Now, looking back in the Old Testament times, the most holy place, the most holy place, was a very reserved place. It was only for a select person, time, the most holy place, was the dwelling place of God himself.

It was the centre of the tabernacle, it was the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, and the whole Old Covenant system was to keep people away from God's presence.

But today we have boldness, today you have boldness, you have boldness to enter into the holiest by the virtue of the blood, by the power of the blood.

[21:33] And it says, verse 22, Hebrews 10, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.

The curtain has been taken down by God's hand, torn from the top to the bottom. The curtain has been taken and we can enter, as it were, through the veil of our Lord Jesus himself.

We can enter in to the very holiest place now. On that curtain there was some embroidered pictures of the guardian cherubim. The guardian cherubim that guarded the garden from Adam and Eve after they sinned.

It was a picture of God's people being removed and made distant and the entry closed to God's presence as happened in Eden.

But now the curtain is gone. The curtain is gone. It went on the cross at the time of his crucifixion and now there is entry. There is an entrance that can be made if you have a great sacrifice and a great high priest.

[22:44] Friends, if you know the Saviour today, you have a great sacrifice and you have a great high priest and so you can have a great confidence, a great confidence, a great boldness to enter in.

In Hebrews it says seven times this command to draw near. Draw near. Draw nigh. Enter in. Enter in to the holiest today.

Friends, we can enter in. It's not for some select number. It's not for some who are of a select tribe or the high priest of the day and only at the day of atonement that once a year occasion.

We can come close to him. We can draw near to him. We can have confidence to draw near to him in prayer. We don't have to be in Jerusalem or in some holy posture or holy frame of mind.

We can draw near, draw near, draw near, day by day, moment by moment, praying without ceasing, praying always, drawing near, drawing near, drawing near, seven times in the book of Hebrews.

[23:52] Draw near to him today, draw near to him today, draw near by prayer, draw near by the blood, the blood that saves, the blood that sanctifies. You have confidence today, you can have boldness today to enter in, enter in, into the curtain, into the holy, into the holiest, the holiest, the very holiest place.

Why? Because of the blood today, it's because of the blood, it's because of the great high priest, the blood that cleanses the heart, that purifies the conscience. Friends, today, you can enter in, you don't have to be from the nation of Israel.

The curtain is gone. The curtain is gone. Enter in this evening, enter in today, salvation, salvation is great.

So great salvation, we read on Hebrews 2, so great salvation. Friends, salvation is great because as someone has expressed it slightly tongue in cheek, if it was expressed in the terms of a policy, if God was to write it in terms of this is an offer that you cannot refuse, without meaning to cheapen it in any sense, but as whosoever will, may call on the name of the Lord.

Salvation is great because there are no exclusions. There are no exclusions. God's policy of salvation is free.

[25:28] It's free. You don't have to deserve it. You don't have to work for it. You don't have to be a particular type of person.

It's extended freely to the uttermost, to the gutter most, to the broadest reaches of the human race across this planet.

It's free. Secondly, it's fast. It happens instantaneously, in a moment, in a moment. God does that miraculous work of the new birth, of regeneration.

It's fast. It's instantaneous that this policy takes effect. Thirdly, it's full. It's full. It's loaded with all kinds of benefits.

Peace, joy, love. to be saved is to have life, and life more abundant. Life more abundant. Fullness of life.

[26:28] People might cram their lives full with all kinds of things, but without salvation, it's very, very empty. It's really in vain. It's like the wind.

It blows away. Friends, but life in Christ is full, and lastly, it's forever. It's forever. salvation, the benefits, last a lifetime and go into eternity. It's free, it's fast, it's full, it's forever. Salvation, it's great, and it's made possible by the blood, by the work of the Spirit and the Son and the Father. Friends, today, we've got a great high priest, a great high priest. Seeing then, we have a great high priest. Let us hold fast our profession. We see his compassion, his great compassion. We see his wonderful salvation, great salvation, and we see his great and wonderful grace today. Friends, a great high priest, one who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. [27:33] Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can come boldly today in prayer, and each one here present that knows you can do so.

They don't have to be in a church building, so-called. They don't have to be in a church service, so-called. But moment by moment, instant by instant, day by day, as you walk with them and they walk with you, they can draw near to God and you can draw near to them. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the great high priest. You have great compassion on us because you've suffered even temptation yet without sin. We know, Lord, you offer a great grace that is extended to unworthy ones such as me. Grace great, greater than all my sin. And, Lord, salvation, so great salvation. Lord, we pray that each one here present will not make the mistake of neglecting so great salvation.

[28:39] that they will not neglect so great salvation but they will take heed. Work in each heart by your spirit, Lord, we pray. Extend your tender mercies, we pray.

If there's any here tonight yet to be saved, yet to know that great salvation, yet to know that great high priest, they might cry out, cry out from the bottom of their hearts, cry out, call on the name of the Lord that they may be saved.

Lord, let them call out, and let it be real today that you might save them by your tender mercies.

Lord, we thank you and praise you. In Jesus' name, amen.

