

Christ, Our Great High Priest

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the significance of Jesus as our Great High Priest, who intercedes for us and calls us to holiness through His example and sacrifice.

Duration: 36:23

Scripture: Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 5:14, Hebrews 7:25, 1 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the theme of holiness throughout the Bible. He highlights that God desires a holy people and that the Bible is a holy scripture that reveals the holy Son of God who died and rose again. The preacher explains that Jesus came to save his people from their sins and to deliver them from the bondage of Satan. He emphasizes that God's purpose in grace is to conform his people to the image of his Son, and this is achieved through the intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ, our great high priest.

Transcript

Our theme, our great high priest, the text in scripture, that which has been read, Hebrews 4, 14, 5, 14. God wants a holy people. This is a holy Bible that tells us about a holy God who became flesh among us, who was none other than the Holy Son, who died and rose from the dead, that he might pour forth the Holy Spirit to minister in procuring for the Son a holy people.

This is a most holy faith and a holy scripture that tells us of it. Holiness is the theme of this book from Genesis through Revelation. Be holy for I am holy is the clear commandment to the people of God.

You only understand the purpose of God in salvation when you realize that Jesus Christ came into the world that he might save his people from their sins. God's purpose in grace was to take from Satan's dominion a people held in the bondage to sense and flesh, deliver them from that tyranny, translate them into the kingdom of his dear son, and make them in the image and in the likeness of Jesus Christ. This I say God provided perfectly through his son, and this his son is ready and willing and able to perfect in everyone that comes to him.

We understand that in God's sovereignty, he ordained that for those that are the heirs of salvation, the redeemed, all things must work together for good. To them that love him, to them that are the called according to his purpose, for his purpose is that he might conform his people to the image of his son.

God's purpose in grace is to make you like Jesus Christ.

To do this, he became what you were in order that you might become what he is. He was made to be sin for us that you might be made the righteousness of God in him. Now, God the father purposed our salvation, God the son provided our salvation, God the Holy Spirit waits to perfect in us all that the father purpose and the son provided by means of the intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ, our great high priest.

It is because he ever liveth to make intercession for us that he is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him. I want you to see this in the 14th verse of this fourth chapter, seeing then that we have a great high priest. This has been mentioned twice before, verses 16 and 17 of the second chapter, for verily Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but took on him the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. And the second reference to the high priest is in verse one of chapter three.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. The high priest of our profession. Let me illustrate something of what this means.

I'll have to use a common illustration for a deep spiritual truth. You go into a department store to do some shopping. You come up to the counter and there's a priest, a priestess perhaps, representing the concern.

She's behind the counter. You come to her. She says, what can I do for you? You say, well, I'm really not sure.

Well, would you like this? I don't think so. If I did like it, I don't think I could afford it. In fact, I don't really know whether I should be here shopping or not.

I'm not sure whether I should get this. And after a few moments of this, the high priest looks at you and says, all right, when you've made up your mind, come and see me. And she turns and goes to wait on someone who understands.

But if you come to this counter and you stand there and you say, I want that. She's the priestess of your profession, your confession. She takes it out, she boxes it, she wraps it, says it'll be \$7.

There are certain assumptions that she makes that if you didn't understand that there was a price, you wouldn't ask for it. If you didn't want it, you wouldn't ask for it. If you didn't know it was yours for the buying, you wouldn't ask for it.

And so she is there to give you what you profess by your demeanor. You shuffle, one man shuffles into the counter, all ragged and dirty and disheveled and unshaven, shoes out. And he looks at that and there's a suit for \$49.50. And he says, I'll take that.

And the clerk looks at him and says, well, all right, on certain considerations, you'll take it. It looks to me from your appearance that you don't have the \$49.50 that's necessary to take it, do you? Well, no, but I just thought that he that asks receives. Oh, no, no.

You see, there are certain conditions that are involved in the receiving. I'm sorry. And he escorts it to the door.

But if you come in with the insignia of sufficient prosperity to be able to afford the suit, they'll try it on courteously. You say, I'll take it. And they'll have it all marked and ready for tailoring to fit you because they are the priests of your confession.

Now, Jesus Christ is said to be the apostle and the high priest of our profession. Let me illustrate it. There are certain things that have been provided for them that love God.

There are certain provisions that grace is made. There are certain purposes that God has had. There are things that have been accomplished.

There are privileges that have been extended. And Jesus Christ is the one who is there that when you come and make and you confess with his word, when you profess what his book teaches, when you stand on the grounds that he's established and follow the principles that he has fixed, then he does that, which is there. He is the one that makes effective in your life what has been accomplished.

Now, one of the principles misunderstood by the children of God is the power of words. I want you to realize that everything that God created, he created by words. He spoke and worlds came into being and stars blazed and found their orbits.

Everything that God has done, he did by word. He created by word. He spoke.

Now he said, I have given unto them thy words. Remember when our Lord stood there beside the withered fig tree? He had spoken to the fig tree that promised fruit in Hatton and he said, die wither. And it withered.

And when they came back, they said, this is a strange thing. This has withered from the roots usually a tree dies from the top down, but this withered at the word of the son of God. And our Lord Jesus looked at his disciples said, you think this is marvelous? You think this is remarkable? I want to say to you something that if you have faith of a grain of mustard seed, you say to this mountain, ah, there's the secret.

If you say to this mountain, he didn't say pray for, he said, if you shall say to this mountain, be removed, be cast into the sea and doubt not in your heart to be even as you say. The power of word, the authority of word. That's why you should watch what you say.

Someone comes to you and says, how do you feel? Well, now if you doubt, you say, well, I feel terrible. I'm feeling worse every day. I was getting worse.

It's more difficult. Well, if you doubt not in your heart, it shall be even as you say. How's your job coming? Oh, terrible.

Everything's wrong. Nothing's going right. I just, well, if you doubt not in your heart, it shall be as you say.

The power of word. That's why a Christian should never witness a negative testimony. That's why a Christian should never consent to, uh, submit to using the words of his lips against himself or against the church or against, he's the high priest of our profession.

He is there to affect what we profess. Now he is there as our high priest, our intermediary, our intercessor, our advocate, our representative. You know, it's nice to know somebody in government.

I'm told that government is pretty well accomplished, not by how much you know, but who you know. I don't have any reason for believing it's true, but I haven't any reason for believing it's not true either. But I am certain of this, that it's marvelous to know someone in heavenly government, to have someone there that represents you.

And you do. If you're in Jesus Christ, you have someone there that represents you. You have a great high priest, Jesus Christ, the son of God.

Notice this in the 14th verse, Jesus Christ, the son of God. This is who he was, the eternal son without beginning. He said, I am the alpha before anything was, I am.

He didn't ever begin to be son. There never came a time when the father began to beget the son. He is the everlasting son.

He has existed glorious in all that he is without ever beginning. This is the son of God, Jesus Christ, our great high priest. But you see, the eternal son was manifest as Jesus.

Jehovah became a savior, for God became flesh. In the fullness of time, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. And this one who came was none other than God, very God of very God, who said to those who accused him, he that has seen me has seen the father, I and the father are one.

Now, he was given a nature like ours, a body like ours, and personalities such as similar to ours. Our Lord Jesus came, very man. Oh, I'm so glad for that Nicene testimony there at the council of Nicaea.

Well, there were those, you know, that challenged the son of God and said he wasn't a man at all. He was just a theophany, just appeared as a man. He wasn't actually flesh.

This was a horrible thing, a heresy that threatened to destroy the church at that time. Now, within the last 70 years or 100 years, we've had another heresy. He wasn't God, just a man.

And the two attacks on the son of God, one on his humanity, one on his deity, and both were answered perfectly in that announcement from the council at Nicaea. He is very man, a very man, and very God, a very God. That means that he had a nature like yours, a body like yours, a personality similar to yours, and in all things he might be like unto his brethren.

He was tempted. This is the issue. He was tempted in all points, like as we are, in bodily suffering.

He was hungry 40 days, 40 nights without food. Every cell in his body cried out for nourishment. And Satan's temptation to him was, you are the son of God, you have the power to change those stones into bread.

Why should you suffer? The answer was he suffered in the will of God. The will of God was more important to him than the nourishment of his flesh. But every cell in his body screamed out in the agony of good experience, wanting nourishment.

But he didn't, for it was better that he should obey the will of God than that he should satisfy the soul. There they say there's no pain quite so excruciating, no experience that's quite so tormenting as thirst. I've only known what it was for a matter of four or five hours, but in Africa, canteen empty and no water at all along the road that I had to go, no one to give any, and no cars passing with any.

I had to push a bicycle for about seven miles one afternoon through the hot sun. And my canteen with a cork out and dry and dust in it, all I could think about was water. My eyes closed and I could see gray tumblers of water with ice clinking and frost on the outside.

I was just tormented by this thought of water and the need for it. My mouth, my tongue began to swell and stuck to the roof of my mouth. It was a horrible thing.

And this was a matter of three hours. What if it were three days? What if it were 30 days? What if it were, as in the case of our Lord, that he might go beyond any human could stand, any man alone could stand, so that he should know it in measure that you couldn't know it. In weariness, our Lord labored, our Lord walked.

And I think that perhaps in pain there was none that could suffer as did he, because he was suffering not for his own sins, but for ours. And there was the double grief of the pain inflicted upon him by wicked men and the pain inflicted upon him by wicked sinners, your weight added to the mutilation that men poured upon him. But not only in bodily sufferings and loneliness, perhaps one of the most pathetic statements in the New Testament is that one where you see the Lord Jesus at midnight, having been with his disciples through the evening in fellowship, opening the word to them.

And it says, and they went to their house and he abode in the mountain, in the garden, for no man had been in. And as they left, talking to each other, wasn't this a wonderful fellowship, wasn't it, Lord Jesus? And arm in arm they went down the path of the sleeping torch, and the Lord's name was called. To go off and find a rock on which to lay his head, and to wrap himself in the rope that covered him, because no man had even come to his home.

He knew loneliness as no other could ever know, no place to lay his head. He said, the fox's head holds the bird's nest, but the Son of Man has no, not a place to lay his head. In persecution of men, the Lord Jesus Christ suffered as none other could.

He was pursued by a bitter, relentless animosity that would not wait until he died and did everything then to say that he had risen from the dead. They called him every name that the vile minds of men could imagine, a wine-bibber, a glutton, being possessed by an evil spirit, a deceiver. There wasn't anything too loathsome or vile to level with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then there were the attacks from Satan. We see him there in the wilderness when Satan comes at him, vulnerable now because the flesh is weakened. Now the Lord has to resist that fearful temptation.

And then in Gethsemane, and then at the cross, when the darkness that surrounds him undoubtedly is the movement of the government from the regions of Cain there to the scene of the cross to surround the Son of God. And finally, that of most awful of sufferings, when our Lord Jesus had to know those hours and cried out, My God, I submit to you that there is no experience that can ever come to you, no temptation that can ever press upon you, no allurements that can ever seize upon your entity. But what your great high priest is there, knowing full its power, its draw, its weight, and its sting.

He was by this means of identifying himself with us, prepared to sympathize with us. Now he can understand the full force of temptation. You say, no one's ever been tempted like I am.

Brother Edith, if you just knew, if you just knew what I'm going through, if you just knew the darts of the enemy that have been thrown at me this past week, if you just knew, I suppose I don't know. Perhaps I do

more than you think, but I know one who does. I know one who understands more than you ever allowed that he could, that he's been tempted in all points like you are.

And there's no pressure that's come to you but what he has felt it. It has to fall first on him before it can fall on you. Then our Lord Jesus can say perfectly what he said prophetically there in Exodus the third chapter, I know their sorrows.

He said this of Israel in captivity, but he can say it now of his people as there he holds your name written on his nail pierced hands to the father. And he says, I know their sorrows. I know their grief.

I know their agony. I know their battle. I've been through it father.

Isn't it marvelous to have a great high priest that can sympathize with you? Why it's come to the place now that he so acutely feels everything that happens to every member of his body that he says, who so persecuted them, persecute as me. My dear heart, you can't touch a member of the body of Christ without touching Christ. Did you know that? You can't slander a member of the body of Christ without slandering Christ.

Who so persecuted them, persecute as me. He's identified himself with his people. The persecutions that are being leveled against his church for instance in China are not being leveled against individuals.

They're being leveled against the son of God and so counted as against him. It doesn't make any difference what sources of troubles may be from whence they come. Perhaps your difficulties have come from men.

Men have turned their backs on you and despised you and reviled you and persecuted you. He knows about it. He can't enter that.

Your devils, they have sent demons of the pit to assail you and assault you and destroy you. He knows all about that. Perhaps it's from your body, weariness, he knows what it is, the invisible and pain and suffering.

Or from your mind, the great distresses that come from the imagination of the evil spirit. Or perhaps even from his own hand and limbs. For the godfather takes the two beloveds and scourges his own children.

Perhaps it's a source of sympathizing. Nothing can touch the child of God. But what? It has to go through the nail-pierced hand of the son of God.

Oh, notice the pre-evidence of this wonderful high priest. All priests were ordained of men, ordained of God to offer sin. The priest was taken from the people.

Aaron was taken from Israel. He was a man who had been tempted, tested, tried, passed through all the experiences of his fellows when someone came and said to him, I was overtaken in awful temptation. Aaron understood it.

I was led aside by my lust. Aaron understood it. Aaron was a man also.

This was the purpose of choosing a priest from among men. Because by this means, he had the compassion to become encompassed with the people in permanence. Difficulty with Aaron, however, was he had to offer sin, offer sacrifice for sin, as well as for the sins of the people.

For he was a sinner. How can it ever be realized that there's only one out of ten that is Jesus Christ? That the one who stands before you and teaches the Word or any other ministry is in just great need of the blessing of the Precious Blood? All it was the deep-seated process that said, I am a Christian of sin. For he himself had become, having had the blood of the body of Christ upon his hands, a slave also of the person of Christ.

Now, here it's all observed in any other way that we have been led to the Precious Blood of Christ in every way and way. He's the perfect high priest. First, he was called.

He didn't take his honor to himself. No man takes that to himself. He was called.

The Father said, Thou art my son. Today, I have begotten thee into another place. He said, Thou art a priest forever after the order of the Lord.

But Aaron was a priest for a few years, and then he was succeeded by another. But our Lord Jesus had an eternal priesthood. Not after the order of Aaron.

Aaron was simply a priest. Christ was a priest in a preeminent way. He was the King and Priest after Melchizedek.

For Melchizedek was the King of Salem, the King of Peace, the Prince of Peace, as well as the Priesthood of the Most High God. And so our Lord Jesus Christ reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and our great high priest, preeminent in every way. He was declared to be our high priest and ready to be adequate for it by the sufferings that he experienced, all these things in which he passed.

He earned obedience by the things that he suffered, by the prayer that he poured forth. He did his all for doing suffering. Our Lord gave us an example.

When you're tested, you ought to do what he did. Aaron was put under pressure. When you're put under pressure, you ought, I mean, Aaron was put under pressure by temptation.

You ought to do what he did. For our Lord prayed and he was heard in that he feared. This has become the example for all who follow him.

Do to the Lord pray. Our Lord had submitted to the experiences, saying, Father not my will, but thine be done. He earned obedience, perfect obedience, rendered to the Father by this one, our great high priest.

Thus he became the author of eternal salvation. He became the author not of a temporary forgiveness, seer, and offering, but eternal salvation. But to whom was this eternal salvation given? And what is the evidence that you are one for whom his priesthood is exercised? The answer is clear.

He has become the author of eternal salvation unto as many as obey him. What is the evidence that you are in Jesus Christ? At first you have a hatred for sin, and a hunger for God, a hard passion. A hatred for sin is going to lead you to a place where your desire is to obey him, not simply to say you obey him, not simply to pass in certain superficial ways as a Christian, but with a genuine desire to please Jesus Christ in everything.

How many there are that presumptuously say, well I have a great high priest who is interceding for me, I have an advocate for the Father, and so I can say it, and confess it. It's beautiful. And I challenge you to do it, I urge you to do it, I urge you to read through the Old Testament and see if you can find any place

that there was offering, provided, or forgiveness offered for presumptuous sin.

That's the one sin for which there was no promulgation. For presumptuous sin is for one who is full of the race of God, to go and lose compensation. I do it, I can still do it, I can still be forgiven.

Now, there is for the one who stumbles, for the one who is overtaken in the form, for the one who is led aside, by the one who is caught in the vortex and driven by the wind, for that one's race. But for the one who calculatedly says, well I can go ahead and do this, it's all right, then I can confess it and be forgiven, because I have a higher praise. This is presumptuous sin.

There we have the Scripture now. He's become the author of eternal salvation, and he's made a tribal mark, the mark of those whom the Son of God intercedes, is that those of us having a new heart, the law written on the heart, desire, purpose, and faith. It's in the purposeful aim and the failure, because of the flesh, and because of the failure to appropriate grace, that his grace is exercised.

Where there is that presumptuous sin, that cutting of the tooth and clenching of the jaw, and saying I'm going to do this, and then come back and ask you to forgive me, this isn't covered by any provision that grace offers. But it's when there's a heart, then the failure, but the desire of the heart is to please him, he's become the author of eternal salvation, of those many as obey him. This is the pre-evidence of his glory.

Now I would like you to see the progress that is to be expected by a people who have the ministry of such a great high priest, of whom many have many things to say. It's hard to be uttered, seeing the art of fear. God's provision was to secure for himself a mature people, perfect.

In the first verse of the sixth chapter you read, let us therefore go on unto perfection. This word perfection is the word maturity, fully developed, fully mature, come to grow, come to mature us. And this is what he's expecting, this is what has been provided in the sacrifice of Christ, this is the result of the ministry of the great high priest.

What does the writer of Hebrews find? This is what he finds. There are a people that ought to understand the proof that he now wishes to establish concerning Pilate as a great priesthood, for he has made us to be kings and priests also. But instead of being able to comprehend it, he says, you are dull of hearing, they are ignorant.

They are ignorant of divine things. Now this ignorance demonstrates something. First, it could demonstrate a lack of faith, an aging to live, but it may be death.

For you remember we said the three evidences that you're born of God are fear, forsaken, and a hunger for God. If you've been born of God, you want to know about your desire for God, a longing to be like Him. If these people here had been such that they had no desire for God, no appetite for the things of God, it would indicate a lack of life.

But we're not thinking that it's at this point. We're thinking that there's something else here. That there's a willful remiss or neglect that's brought guilt by it, too.

It's brought guilt. Someone might say, well, of course, you know, our pastor just doesn't make it through so I can understand it. I don't see it.

Now you could explain, you could dismiss that. That wouldn't be necessarily here, but somewhere in this present day with all immature Christians. You could say, well, it's the teachers we've had, it's the teaching we've had.

This is where the problem lies. But here are people that are taught by the apostles. That was the whole point there.

Who would be a more effective teacher than the apostles? Who would be better able to expound the truth than the apostles if this is Paul writing it? Who is better able to unfold it if it's Peter? Who is better able to explain it? You can't say in the Hebrews that it's because of lack of proper teaching. They had the apostles for the hell of a teacher. And yet it was, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

For when you ought to be teachers, you need the one teacher you have. There's a willfulness there. A dullness of hearing indicates a preoccupation with lesser things, you know.

In school, you remember how it was in school. You'd be paying attention, you know, putting a fine for the inkwell, or tying a knot in the girl's pigtail in front of you, and the teacher would ask you a question and announce your name. You'd be so preoccupied.

You were dull of hearing. Why? Because you had ear trouble? No. Because you had eye trouble.

You were looking at the wrong thing. You were thinking about the wrong thing. Your eyes were focused and your attention was focused on the wrong thing.

And because of preoccupation with something less than Jesus Christ, less than his purpose, less than his plan, less than what he wanted to do to kill the people that he said were dull of hearing, they were indifferent to heavenly things because they were preoccupied with earthly things. You know, it was Ezekiel who made a statement that was very appropriate in this connection, in pathetic. And lo, thou art among them that brought to Ezekiel a very lovely song, a one that has a pleasant voice, that can play well on an instrument before they hear that word, but they do them not.

This is what the apostles thought, that they had heard the song, but they didn't understand the word. Why? Because they weren't committed to follow the message. Now, here are some questions to ask yourself.

You've agreed with me when I've spoken to you concerning the preparation of Christ to be our high priest. I think there's been no challenge when I've talked to you about the preeminence of Christ as our high priest. But when I talk to you about the progress that's to be expected of someone who has this, where are you? Where are you in relationship to it? Let me ask you something.

When you hear the word of God, whether it's on a billboard in the subway, or on the radio, or in your own devotions, or from the pulpit, do you examine your heart by it? Do you test your own experience by God's word? Do you? Are you continually applying it to your conscience? You ought to be, you know. When you hear truth that's set forth as God's truth, do you pray over it? Do you hold this truth before the Lord and bathe it with prayer? Do you talk about it when you get home? Do you talk about it? Do you converse about it? They speak oft one with another about the Lord. What do you talk about when you get with your friends? Is Christ the center of the thing? Do you meditate on God's truth? Do you know where you are? Do you know what God wants to do for you next? Do you strive to make the truth experientially yours? Or are you one of those that ought to be teachers, but instead of being teachers, you need to be taught again? Instead of eating strong milk, you eat milk.

Strong meat, you eat milk. What are you? Here's a great high priest that's provided a full, complete, perfect salvation, and he's there to mediate it. Anything you come to him and present to him and ask of him, he's a high priest of your confession.

He'll affect it in your life. With such great precious promises, what manner of man aren't we to be? Are we? Or could it be that somehow we become preoccupied with the things of time and sense? I hope not. Oh, I trust there are better things of you than that.

That you'd give yourself wholly to the word in order that the spirit of God and the high priest, your Lord Jesus, can affect in you all that he died to make yours. Let us bow in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we have a great high priest touched with the feelings of our weakness, tempted, tried in every way, as are we.

There with our names written, those of us that love him, that have repented of our sins, and have received him as Lord and Savior, with our names engraven upon his hands, interceding for us, sympathizing with us, understanding all of our difficulties and problems with a full, complete, perfect provision to make us in his image and likeness. Bring us to that place that he died that might be ours, filled with his fullness. Oh, Father, what manner of men are we? Have we become dull of hearing? Have we become preoccupied with the tinsel of the toys? Have we become led aside by the little things of no consequence? Search out our hearts.

When we ought to be teachers, are we still having to be take the milk? Mead belongs to those who by reason of age are strong. Oh, God of grace, that such might be true of each of us here today. Stir our hearts, let thy word burn deeply, and do its lovely work, until we too profit from the ministry of our great high priest, and come to him, the high priest of our confession, confessing to him thy word, the provisions of thy love, to have him affect in us and do for us all that he died to do.

So apply it quickly to us, Lord. Let not the fowls of the air snatch it away, but make it profitable to the glory of Jesus Christ in the life of each of us. Should there be one here without him, might this be the hour when the heart is open to receive so grateful, so gracious a high priest as our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his worthy, peerless, matchless name, before which angels fall, we come today to worship him, the living God.

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