

He Is the Kind of Priest We Need

I am 100 percent sure that you have said this yourself or have heard a child or grandchild say this to you. It always happens in a store. A youngster's eye catches sight of something. "Dad", says the wonderful voice of a child, "can you buy this for me? I need it." It could be anything. A small item to snack on or to drink. A toy or trinket of indeterminate origin and use. Sometimes it is something large and expensive. Whatever it is, a small voice pleads with you. "I need it!"

For my own children, they usually got a look from me, and they all learned what that look meant. The first few times they uttered the phrase, "I need it" they found themselves in a discussion about the meaning of the words "need" and "want". Children know that a "need" is something important while "wanting" something is optional and unnecessary, so they begin using the word "need" very often. Needs tend to get met. While wants are deferred or not realized at all. So, everything becomes a need. A good parent helps the child understand the difference between need and want. We help them seek for the things that are needs and not mere wants.

In Hebrews 7, God deals with us as a good Father. He knows what we want. He also knows better than we do what we need. So, in verse 26, our Father tells us

what it is we need. “For this is the kind of high priest that we need”. Let’s take some time to consider what Father is telling us here. We need a particular kind of High Priest. Our Father created us. He knows all that is needed for every creature. Humankind, the special creation of God, needs something more than any other creature. We need a high priest. We need a high priest that is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. We need a high priest that is divine. We need a high priest who is God. I want us to take some time this morning and consider our High Priest. We need to look at Jesus as He is shown to us in scripture and consider Him in the past, in the present, and in the future.

It is a BIG topic to talk about the priesthood of Christ in the “past”. The “history” of God the Son is infinite. We could not even begin to understand His history and we certainly don’t have time to cover much of it this morning. I want us to focus this morning on the time of His earthly ministry during the incarnation. High Priests are responsible for offering the appropriate type of sacrifice. In the Old Testament Law, depending on the type of sacrifice being performed, the appropriate materials needed to be used. A Levitical High Priest that offered a lamb at the time a bull was mandated couldn’t just blame someone else. He had to offer the appropriate sacrifice as commanded by God. The Son of God

prepared the appropriate sacrifice for covering our sin. He lived a perfect life. He prepared the only sacrifice that could wash away our guilt. That's a priest's work! He taught us this truth. He said, "this is my body that is broken for you." Beyond that, we are shown in the Old Testament that the sacrifices on the day of atonement must have their blood brought into the Holy of Holies and be poured onto the mercy seat. The Book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus has passed through the veil. He is in the holiest place. His blood has been poured out for us. As it says in Matthew 26:28, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." When you take of the bread and juice, think of the priestly ministry He has performed on your behalf. Jesus lived among corrupt humanity and lived a pure and holy life. Our divine High Priest! He prepared what was needed by us to cleanse us from our sin. Our holy sacrifice! One final thing I want to point out to you about the priesthood of Jesus during His earthly ministry. In John 17, Jesus prays for you and me. Some theologians refer to this section of John as "The High Priestly Prayer". In verse 20, Jesus prays not just for the disciples, but those who will believe in Him through their word. Before going to the cross, He prayed for us. Priests pray for the people they represent. Jesus was no different. The priest we need prepared the proper sacrifice, offered the blood in the most Holy Place, and prayed for His people. What a great priest!

That all happened about two thousand years ago. His priestly ministry has not ended. Aspects of it are complete. He cried out on the cross, "It is finished!" Sins penalty has been paid. Jesus's priestly ministry continues. In the same teaching in the Gospel of John that I referenced earlier, Jesus tells His followers about the Counsellor that was yet to be sent. In John 16, He says "He", Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit, "will take from what is mine and declare it to you." If we wonder what is meant by the things of Christ, He specifies in the next verse. "Everything the Father has is mine." The Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus to bring to us the things that Jesus directs to us. He knows His sheep. He cares for His flock. We saw a few weeks ago in the Book of Hebrews that a priest empathizes with the weaknesses of His people. We are not saved and then left to drift along without help. Jesus, the priest we need, is at work caring for His people. The Book of Hebrews in chapter 12 verse 4 tells us that the blood of Jesus speaks better than the blood of Abel. You remember in Genesis in the story of Cain murdering Abel that God told Cain that Abel's blood was calling out from the ground. A victim's blood calls out for justice. That same verse in Hebrews tells us that Jesus's blood speaks better things. What kind of better things? For His people, Jesus's blood is calling out for mercy, grace, and forgiveness. His blood says, "I paid the price of this one!" His blood speaks peace when the blood of Abel calls for vengeance.

The blood brought into the Holy place by our high priest calls for our forgiveness. Hallelujah! If that was all of his priesthood that is still ongoing, that would be enough. We are ministered to by the Holy Spirit and the righteous blood calls for our forgiveness. But more is happening. He is seated, exalted in the heavens and He prays for His people. It is wonderful to have the people of God praying for me. It is beyond understanding that Jesus Himself is praying for me. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Who is more righteous than Jesus? Think about it! His prayers are for you. So in this time, we have the Holy Spirit ministering to us based on Christ's love for us; we have Christ's blood calling out our forgiveness in the heavens; we have Christ in prayer for our benefit. His priestly ministry is ongoing and it is what we need!

So, what does the future hold for his priesthood? He is what we needed. He has done so much but yet there is more. There is a culmination. We have all these blessings in force right now. Yet we still struggle with sin. We live in a world in which sin is ever around us. War, disease, hunger, and death are ever the news of the day. We are living in a time of already but not yet. I have eternal life yet I feel my body aging and breaking down. Jesus has a promise for us that is still in the future. Today is celebration Sunday. Part of that celebration is coming together as His people to partake of unleavened bread and drink some juice. We do so to

be reminded of the things Jesus has done for us and is doing for us. This table here in the front. What does it say on the side of it? Speak it out. What does it say? "In remembrance of me". Those were Jesus's words to His disciples. As often as you do this in remembrance of me. It looks back at the past and it looks around at the current. But the whole phrase directs us to the future. In Matthew, Matthew records him pointing out that he would not drink of this cup again until he drinks it new with you in the Father's kingdom. That's pointing to the future. In First Corinthians chapter 11, we are taught about the Lord's Supper. It is explicitly called out that we are to do this "to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes". Both statements are eschatological statements. They are statements about the end times. They point us forward to the consummation of all things. As Lewis put it in the Chronicles of Narnia, "The school term is over. The holidays have begun." Those will be wonderful holy-days. We look forward to them based on his priestly duties.

Jesus is the priest that we need. Did you know that? None of us knew that truth until God revealed it to us. Even then, we are sometimes too careless to keep that in mind. We never begged the heavenly Father for a priest. We wanted other things and it usually centered on wanting our own way. God gave us not what we wanted but what we needed. "For this is the kind of priest we need."

Is Jesus your High Priest? If He is, I ask you to join me in one thing right now. Let us confess together that He is our High Priest by saying together, "Jesus is my high priest". Say it with me now. JESUS IS MY HIGH PRIEST. Amen. Let's pray together.

BENEDICTION

Hear this benediction, this good word, from God found in the Book of Hebrews.

"May you hold fast to the hope set before you, having a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on your behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, Amen!