

Our Great High Priest

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide#2 **Fire Drill:** see notes.
- B. Slide#3 **Wed night dinners:** 5:30-7pm each Wed night b4 service. [Rotisserie chicken]
- C. Slide#4a **Prayer:** *Throne of grace* (Sov + benevolence). This *throne* is Your mercy seat.

II. **Intro:** Title: **Our Great High Priest**

- A. Slide#4b **Outline:** A Great High Priest. A Sympathetic High Priest. An Approachable High Priest

III. Slide#5 **A GREAT HIGH PRIEST (14)**

- A. Not just a **priest**, nor only a **high** priest, but a **Great High Priest**.
- B. **History of priesthood:** 1st every man (Noah, Ab, Isacc, Jacob, Job); 1st named...Melchizedek; then Tribe of Levi (sp Aaron's fam); David divided into 24 classes (cont after captivity); all priests prefigured the Great Priest who offered *one sac for sins, once for all*. Now **no** human priesthood, **yet** term given to all bel.
- C. **Passed through the heavens** – Speaking of His Ascension.
 - 1. **Perf. Tense** – He has passed through the heavens & is still there.
- D. **Let us hold fast our confession** – Confession has to do w/the believers testimony of his faith in Christ & his faithfulness to live for Christ & gain the promised blessing.¹
 - 1. **Not hold fast** to your faith (i.e. so you don't loose it) **but** because it's **so sure/faithful**.
 - 2. As a Catholic boy I **held fast** to a **priest** who I was told could be *the bridge* (Lt. pontifex) between me & Jesus (even to the *forgiving or retaining* of my sins).
 - a) **But the passage here** is drawing the distinction between earthly priests & **this heavenly 1**.
 - b) **Not** an Imam, **not** a Catholic priest, **not** a Buddhist priest, **not even** Judas Priest.
But we have a *great, high priest in heaven!*

IV. Slide#6 **A SYMPATHETIC HIGH PRIEST (15)**

- A. **Tempted as we are** – Really? I mean really tempted as we are?
 - 1. For centuries Christians have debated the question, **Was it really possible for Christ to sin? If so, could He have fallen from being God? If He really couldn't sin did he experience "real" temptations?**
 - 2. Slide#7 The Latin word *peccare* = to sin.
 - 3. **So People line up on 1 of 2 sides:** Those who believe in the **Impeccability** of Christ(not able to sin); & those who argue the **Peccability** of Christ (able to not sin)

¹ Warren Wiersbe, Outlines on the NT.

4. I'll do my best to explain this but I can't help but thinking of **Martin Luther** as he once observed, *When the angels want a good laugh, they read the commentaries!*

B. What we are positive of:

1. Slide#8a Christ **never** actually sinned – vs.15 yet w/o sin.
2. Slide#8b Jesus **was** tempted, & these were **real** temptations(40 days v.15 tempted as we r)
3. Slide#8c **God** cannot be tempted w/evil – James 1:13,14 **When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.**
 - a) Hear the problem? Jesus was tempted / God cannot be tempted.
 - b) God doesn't tempt us, i.e. try to entice us into sinning. However He definitely does *test* us
 - c) **The Devil** however tempts us; **the world system** tempts us; & as James says, **our own desires** tempt us & entice us to sin.
 - d) **Yet**, Jesus' desires never tempted him as our desires tempt us, because Jesus had no original sin, no fallen human nature.
 - (1) Jesus was like the 1st Adam in that way. Before his fall Adam had no original sin, no fallen human nature, & yet Adam experienced **real** temptations!!!
 - e) Being fully human **Jesus** then came to temptations w/the same moral equipment as **Adam**. W/the ability to sin & the ability not to sin...& Jesus Prevailed!!!
4. Slide#9 Wayne Grudem explains, The moral strength of His Divine nature was there as a sort of "**backstop**" that would have prevented him from sinning in any case (& therefore we could say that it was not possible for him to sin) **but** he did not rely on the strength of His Divine nature to make it **easier** for him to face temptations.
 - a) So, we can ask, in Jesus' **human nature** (if it could be separated from His Divine) **could He have sinned?** (yes). w/His **Divine nature** could he have sinned? (No!)
5. **Were Jesus' temptations real?** Many theologians have pointed out that "only those who successfully resists a temptation to the end most fully feels the force of that temptation!"
 - a) Slide#10 **Examples:** The **Weightlifter** who successfully lifts & holds over head the heaviest weight **feels the force of it more fully** than one who attempts to lift it ½ way & drops it.
 - (1) **So any Christian** who has successfully faced a temptation to the end knows that that is far more difficult **than** giving in to it at once.
 - (2) Slide#11 **So it is w/Jesus**, every one He faced, He faced **to the end**, & triumphed over it. The temptations were **real** & in fact **most real** because he took them to the end...& never gave in.

C. Slide#12a **Sympathize** – (lit.) to share the experience of someone.

1. Jesus never gave people sympathy in the sense of saying, "Oh, you poor thing. Isn't it awful?" Jesus never encouraged people to wallow in their self pity, nor encourage those who were feeling sorry for themselves.
2. Slide#12b Sympathy (Defined) – *A relationship or an affinity between people or things in which whatever affects one correspondingly affects the other.*
3. Slide#13 Sympathetic Resonance: 1 thing vibrating makes another thing vibrate. *Like when an Opera singer breaks a drinking glass.*
 - a) If 2 Tuning forks of the same pitch are placed near each other. If one is struck & set in vibration, the other will take up the vibrations sympathetically. The 1st is the generator, the other becomes the resonator.
4. When a cord is struck in the weakness of our human instrument, it resonates in His.
 - a) There's no note of human experience that does not play on Christ's exalted human instrument
5. So it doesn't mean that Jesus experienced every individual temptation we do.
 - a) Jesus never experienced the pain of childbirth. He never experienced old age. Yet, he did experience the essential temptations that cover, & in His case supersede, whatever we may experience.
6. Where do you go for Sympathy? The most sensitive man who ever lived sympathizes w/you. Why go anywhere else? *Don't go anywhere else.*
 - a) He mastered the instrument down here & still has it up there.
 - b) He will not simplistically and heartlessly quote Scripture at you (like some well meaning friends do), but will empathetically grieve with you.
 - c) Play any key, any minor cord, any dirge, & see if it doesn't resonate in Him. *IT DOES!*

V. Slide#14 AN APPROACHABLE HIGH PRIEST (16)

- A. Come boldly – to come, to draw near. [was used in the LXX for the priestly approach to God in service]
 1. It is in the pres. tense emphasizing that *the privilege is always available.*
- B. Slide#15 Come, Come, Come...
 1. If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. - Let the little children come to Me - Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. - And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come."
 2. Come to His banqueting table; Come to His Throne of Grace; Come to Him w/your doubts; Come to Him w/your fears; Come to Him to obtain Mega Mercy & to find Grand Grace.
- C. Slide#16 Their whole Jewish tradition said just the opposite...*Stand back!*

1. We step on to the temple mount & walk through the court of the Gentiles. Going up the steps to the temple we come to the 1st entrance, the *Court of the women*, Yet to the Gentile it says, **Stand back!**
 2. You walk through that court to the other side & come to the bronze gate & it says to all women, **Stand back!**
 3. The men proceed into a small very crowded court, the *Court of the Israelites* until you reach a knee high wall & it says to all the men, **Stand back!** unless you are a priest
 4. The priest can pass until he reaches the sanctuary, *the Holy Place*, where at that door it says, **Stand back!** unless you have been chosen to burn incense.
 5. Then of course there is the very inner sanctum, *the Holy of Holies*, where its curtain shouts, **Stand back!** unless you are the high priest, & that only once a year, & under very strict conditions...can you then dare enter.
 - a) Slide#17 The *No Trespassing Sign* had been torn down, and in its place...a neon sign that reads **COME!**
 - b) No more fear & trepidation; but instead w/confidence & boldness you may come saints.
 - (1) I remember my 1st date with Kelly: I came in & sat on the couch in their families den, & her dad kept the paper in front of his face, after he said a quick hello. My 1st time, with fear & trepidation. But now I can go in & flop on the couch & relax.
 - c) You won't be denied access - Funny story, Dan & key yesterday. He didn't have access to a closet. Joked my key was same...then came back, "*I guess they forgot I notch on my key accidentally.*"
- D. Slide#18 Jesus is the perfect High Priest because He is **perfectly God, & perfectly man.** Because He has known our life, He can give us sympathy, mercy & power. He brought **God to men & He can bring men to God.** *William Barclay*
- E. **Prayer:** God, we count on **Your Mercy** for our **Past mistakes**; We count on **Your Love** for our **Present needs**; We count on **Your Sovereignty** for our **Future**.²

² Augustine