A Priest Forever

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[0:00] You can get your Bibles out and turn with me to Hebrews chapter 5. It's good to be here tonight at another Elevate this semester on a warm day.

! Hopefully warm weather will last but we'll see. It'll be in Hebrews chapter 5. And I don't know about you, I personally don't like a whole lot of change in my life. I'm the kind of person that likes things to be just the way they are.
Mike Christie has told me this before and I very much agree. He was like, I wish I could just get the perfect haircut. Like just one haircut and it just stay there. Never grows again. Never have to go get the haircut. I agree. I wish things in my life, if they're going well, could just stay that way. Some of you might like change more than I do. Some of you might think change is exciting or keeps things fresh. But regardless of what you think about change in general, I think something we all want is stability. Something that we all want is constancy. We would like it if we could know where we're going to be in 5 to 10 years. We would like it if we could know what the future holds. We want this kind of stability that gives us confidence and a sense of peace. We're all looking for a forever, really. We're all looking for a perfect ending. We all want something that will last forever. We're looking for friends forever, looking for a forever home or a forever relationship. But here on earth, in this fallen and sinful life that we live in, everything is changing all the time.
Things are changing all around us just constantly. We age, which for y'all is a good thing. Once you get a certain point, it becomes a bad thing. We grow in and out of friendships. Someone was clapping. I don't know what the clapping was for. But we grow in and out of friendships. We lose family members and we lose friends. And in the midst of all this change, all of this difficulty that change can bring, is there anything that lasts forever? Is there something that is going to remain the same forever?
[2:31] And in Hebrews chapter 5, we see that in Jesus, we have a priest forever. But we have a priest forever in Jesus. We forever have someone who intercedes for us, that prays for us, that seeks to encourage us. Someone that makes us righteous. Someone that makes us in a right relationship with God. We have someone in Jesus who will forever do that for us. And as you know, at this point, the book of Hebrews was written to Jews who had become Christians. And they're struggling now to live as Christians. They want to go back to their Judaism. And Israel, the nation of Jews, at this point in time when the letter of Hebrews was written, they could trace a line of succession from their present day all the way back to Aaron, who was the first priest of Israel. They could go back in time, priest after priest, and get all the way back to Aaron. And so to them, the priesthood was forever.

They thought that this priesthood would be around forever. But even with that stability they had across thousands of years, today it's come to an end. There's no earthly priest that Israel has. And also, all along the way, each and every one of these priests died. Each and every one of these priests was unable to continue in his priests was unable to continue to represent the people, was unable to continue to do his work because all of them were sinners. All of them would die.
And we're really now coming to the heart of the book of Hebrews. From really chapters 5 all the way through 10, we're looking at the priesthood of Jesus. We're looking at Jesus as the priest who represents his people. And what we see is we get various angles, and what we see is that Jesus is greater than the priesthood. Jesus is over the Old Testament priesthood. Jesus is over everything in the book of Hebrews. And what we see is that Jesus is over every high priest who has ever served in that office.
Jesus is better than the priest because Jesus is a priest forever. And we'll be in chapter 5 tonight, and we will cover this text in three points. Number one being sinful priests. Sinful priests in verses 1 through 4. And I'll read chapter 5 verses 1 through 4 for us to start. It says, For every high priest

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chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relationship to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. We see in verses 1 through 4, sinful priests. What was the function of a priest? What did a priest actually do? And if you read the law that God gave for the priests, what we see is they were actually butchers. Okay? Anyone ever been to the butcher before or taken anything to the butcher? Yeah, so they just like kind of carve up this animal for you. So you can, and they'll give it back to you, and it's like hamburgers or steak or whatever you want.
[6:28] That's pretty much what a priest was. You would bring an animal to them that was a sacrifice for your sin, and they would kill it and offer it to God as a sacrifice. And they were doing this all day long, every day, offering sacrifices on behalf of the people. And so it says that they were to act on behalf of men in relationship to God to offer gifts and sacrifices. This is what every single priest would do, but notice, how does someone become a priest? First line of verse 1, for every high priest chosen from among men. In order to be the priest, you had to be a man. God could not have chosen an angel to be a priest. This priest had to be from among his own people. This priest had to understand who his people were. This priest had to be able to relate to them personally. And his function was to connect them to God, was to serve God in place of the people, to offer up gifts and sacrifices, both for their sins and for their just offerings they were making to the Lord. And in verse 2, it says, he can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward. And so the priest was also a teacher. He was to instruct in the law of the Lord. He would stand up and teach. He would go from house to house and explain the Bible to these people. And so he was to be able to deal gently with them. And it says specifically, with the ignorant and the wayward. And so as you read through the Old Testament, there's something that comes up and it says that you can offer a sacrifice for an unintentional sin. An unintentional sin. And this is language that describes really sinning kind of out of ignorance. And we've all done this. We sin, we rebel against God, and later we come to our senses and realize what we've done. That wasn't necessarily like an intentional rebellion against the Lord, but you come to realize that you were sinning out of your ignorance. And so the priest is able to deal gently with the ignorant and also the wayward.

Those who are walking away from the Lord, who are sinning a lot and are seeking to be made right with the Lord, those ignorant and wayward. The priest is able to deal gently with them. He's able to be patient with them. And why is it that he's able to be patient? Why is it that he's able to be gentle and kind to them? Since he himself is beset with weakness? The high priest can be patient with people and gentle and kind to them because he himself is a sinner. He himself knows what it's like to struggle against sin. And so when people come to him offering their sacrifices to God, he is not making fun of them.
He's not turning them away. He knows what it's like to be a sinner. He can deal tenderly and gently with them because he shares in their sinfulness. He understands their struggle.
In verse 3, because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. Every high priest that Israel had was also a sinner. And because they were sinful, what did the high priest have to do before he could offer sacrifices for someone else? He had to make an atonement for his own sins. He had to get right with the Lord himself. He had to offer sacrifice that covered his sins before he offered sacrifice for others as well. If you've flown an airplane and you listen to the safety instructions, which I always do because I'm terrified of a plane crash, you know, I always go in like confident and then they're like, in the event of a plane crash, and I'm like, what would I actually do? I better listen to this. And so they'll say, you know, in case of loss of pressure in the cabin, an air mask will drop down in front of you. And that's just a nice way of saying like, if this door flies off, hypothetically, that never happens.
But an air mask will drop down in front of you. And what do they say? Always secure your mask before turning to help others. Okay? Because you get, you know, someone sitting next to you that doesn't know what they're doing or they were asleep. You're like trying to get their mask on and you can't and then you both pass out and it's not good. So get your mask on before you start helping others. And that's really what the priest would do. Before he's able to offer sacrifice for someone else, he has to atone for his own sins. He has to make a sacrifice for sins that he himself has committed before he can minister on behalf of others. And so he's obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins, just as he does for those of the people. And how do you become high priest again? In

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verse one, you were chosen from among men, so you had to be a man of the people of Israel. But verse four explains it more clearly. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. The high priest wasn't like a volunteer position. You didn't just put your name in to become high priest. You weren't like, hey, friends, vote for me. I'm running for high priest this year.
[12:12] You were chosen by God. You were set aside by God himself. And so the way to become high priest was to be chosen by God. No one takes this honor on himself. The Lord alone chose the high priest. No one voted for them. They were not elected. They were chosen by God. And this is how Aaron, the first priest, was chosen.

God simply said, Aaron will serve as a priest. And so these are, this is a description of the sinful priest. But we get a look in verses five through 10 at the sinless priest. The sinless priest.
And so just as Aaron was called and chosen by God, this sinless priest that the author's been talking about was also chosen by God. If you remember at the end of chapter four, Jesus is called the great high priest because he was tempted like we are. And so he can be tender and gentle towards us, but he was without sin. He was sinless. And he was chosen as Aaron was. Verse five, so also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, you are my son.
Today I have begotten you. As he says also in another place, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Okay, so Jesus was chosen just like Aaron was. He did not exalt himself. He did not seek to become in, he did not seek to come into this position of honor and prestige. Jesus did not appoint himself.
He was chosen by God. And this quote, this first quote he gives, you are my son. Today I have begotten you is from Psalm two. And we've already seen this back in Psalm one or in chapter one. And the author was saying that this Psalm is talking about Jesus being the king. This is about Jesus being the son of God who reigned on the throne of Israel. But now the author is saying that this text is actually about Jesus becoming a priest. Jesus is our king priest. He serves as both king, the ruler, and he's also the priest, the one who makes us right before God, the one who offers sacrifice for us.
[14:43] In verse six, as he also says in another place, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. This is a quote from Psalm 110, verse four specifically. The Psalms have been quoted from already as well in chapter one. But the immediate question we have is who in the world is Melchizedek?

Like what a weird name. Anyone know any Melchizedeks? Melchies? No one? Zedek? No? Okay. Yeah, I didn't think so. So who is Melchizedek? He appears only two times in the entire Old Testament. In Genesis 14 and in Psalm 110. And this is all it's talked about in Psalm 110 is just you're a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. So if we look back at Genesis 14, Abraham, who was, you know, the father of the Jewish nation, the first Jew really, he was also a warrior. Like someone, this army came in and stole some people, stole some stuff, and he's like, you know what? We're gonna chase them down. And it's like, Abraham, that's an entire army. He's like, yeah, we got them. We got them. Gets all their stuff back.
And as he's coming back, he meets this guy named Melchizedek. And Melchizedek is called the king of Salem, which means the king of peace. Genesis 14 also describes this king as a priest of the most high God. And so Melchizedek, with all of the mystery and all of the questions we have that surround him, is a king and a priest. And his name means my king is righteousness.
He's the king of Salem, the king of peace. He's also a priest of the most high God. And how is it that he's a priest? Is he a descendant of Aaron? Aaron hasn't been born yet.
And so Melchizedek is this guy that we don't know much about. The author of Hebrews will explain more of who he is later on, but he serves as both a king and a priest. And so when Psalm 110 speaks of Jesus and says, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, you are a priest not from Aaron's line, but like Melchizedek was. You serve as both king and priest. And it's talking about Christ and says, you are a priest forever. How can someone be a priest forever? Previously, all the priests had an expiration date on them. All of them would die and not be able to serve as priest any longer.
[17:23] And so how is it that Jesus is able to be a priest forever? And it's because of his resurrection. He has experienced death, but he has risen to never die again. He died, but he lives forevermore.

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He died, but he rose again so as to never taste death and to be a priest to us unendingly. In verse 7, we get a look at who Jesus was before his death and resurrection. He dies on the cross, paying for the sins of his people. He's the sacrifice. He rises again and then prays for us being the priest as well as the sacrifice. In verse 7, I'll read through verse 10. It says, in the days of his flesh, so when Jesus was here on earth, Jesus offered up prayers, and supplications with loud cries and tears to him, that's to God, who was able to save him from death.
And Jesus was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. So during his life on earth, we get this picture of Jesus offering up prayers. What was it the priest did? He offered up sacrifices and gifts on behalf of the people. When Jesus was on earth, he was offering up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears. Throughout his earthly life, he was acquainted with suffering and crying.
He knew what pain was. He knows what it's like to suffer. And in Isaiah 53, it talks about Christ and says, he is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And so if you're suffering, if you're hurting, Jesus knows what that's like. Jesus knows what it's like to cry out in pain to God. Jesus knows what it's like to be completely dependent on God for your next breath. And I think the author of Hebrews is giving us a description of his entire time on earth, his entire life.

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