

Jesus Christ, Our Priest

St. Augustine (pictured at right) in his *Confessions* wrote, “Through him you sought us when we were not seeking you, but you sought us that we might begin to seek you.” During the month of December we are reminded how God through his Son, Jesus Christ, sought us in his first coming. The Advent season can be a season of Joy when the one who sought us becomes the Joy of our hearts. Augustine wrote, “Oh, God, to know you is life. To serve You is freedom. To praise you is the soul's joy and delight.” This advent season is a time to fix the eyes of our hearts on the one who set his heart on you in love that he may be our Joy expressed in delight.



Jesus is revealed to us in his person and work. He lived the life we should have lived in holiness, righteousness, and the knowledge of God. His life was and continues to be the work of a prophet, priest, and king. Prophets speak to the people from God. He speaks. Are you listening? Priests go in to God for people. He went in once for all. Are you trusting? Kings rule for the people. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Are you living in his reign? Christ our prophet, priest, and king, offers the triple cure. He is our hope and our comfort. Jesus Christ, the final prophet, the great high priest, and the conquering king. The triple cure is a miraculous cure for the disease of our ignorance, guilt, and pollution. As John Calvin said, “In Christ God has fulfilled what he has promised: that the truth of his promises would be realized in the person of the Son. Believers have found to be true Paul’s saying that ‘all the promises of God find their yea and amen in Christ’ (Institutes, II.ix.2).

Jesus is our final priest. He is revealed to us as one who was chosen by his person and work to represent us to God (Heb.5:1). God appointed and gave us his Son, who was delighted to be and act as our great high priest (Heb.5:4). That delight to be our priest is seen in his willing offering of himself as our gift and sacrifice for sins (Heb.5:1). Jesus is our priest as he lives to make continual intercession for us, blessing us as his own family (Heb.7:25). Jesus is our incomparable high priest forever.

The work of Jesus Christ as the final high priest never ends. He has sat down at the right hand of the Father because his redemptive work at the cross is finished (Heb 11:12). Yet, Jesus Christ continually intercedes for us when we are continually polluted by our sin (1 Jn 2:1-2). He prays that we may be made like him (Jn 17:17). Though he has passed through the heavens, he ever lives to sympathize with our weaknesses and help us by his mercy and grace. This allows us to approach him with confidence finding help in all our needs of help (Heb 4:14-16). While our earthly bodies give way to the dust, we can be assured our great high priest is building us into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ (1 Pt 2:5). He is renovating the heavens and the earth preparing for us to share in his glory (Jn 17:24). And he never forgets us by weariness, but is ever mindful interceding for us in all our struggles so that we will overcome the triad of our misery and destruction, the world, the flesh, and the devil (Heb 2:18). Our great high priest is both the author and the finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2). He is our great high priest and the good shepherd, who even now guards his flock. No one shall ever snatch us from his hand (Jn 10:28-29), and nothing will ever separate us from his love (Rom 8:37-39). In this Advent season look upon him who has done all for your salvation, and who now is enthroned in heaven to intercede for you. He is your Comfort, Joy and Rest.

Kim Riddlebarger writes, “What comfort we derive from the knowledge that he is there as our advocate and friend, pleading our case whenever we sin! It is also important to note...our great high priest not only knows our weakness-and is there to help us when we ask-but in addition he has promised us that he will never give us more than we can bear and that he will always provide us a way of escape (1 Cor 10:13).” He is with us to the end.

Praying for a Movement

Praying for the church is praying for a movement of God by the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have asked our Elders and a group of women to pray for a gospel renewal movement of God at Christ Covenant Church. I try to send an email weekly to our elders and these women encouraging them to pray for this movement of God from a passage of Scripture. If you would like to receive this email each week to be encouraged to pray together with us, please email Cindy Jones cindy@ccotc.org and she will put you on that list and make sure you're encouraged to pray with us.

Please pray with me this week for a gospel renewal movement of God at CCC from Jude verse 2,

May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude makes known to us what it looks like when the gospel of Jesus Christ is effectual in the church. There is a multiplication of mercy, peace, and love. Mercy meets our continual need for his cleansing power from the throne of God where Jesus has sat down to secure its continual supply. Peace with God, ourselves, others and the world in which we live comes to us from the Prince of Peace who has made peace by the blood of the cross. Love comes from God who is, and who continually manifests the fullness of his love to us in his Son at the cross. Pray that we will know and experience the mercy, peace, and love of God as it is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. But don't stop there. Pray for a movement of God in the gospel where his mercy, peace, and love are shared through us as his church. Pray that we will love mercy by showing it. Pray that we will live at peace with all people so far as it depends on us. Pray that we will love our neighbor in patience, kindness, humility, generosity, endurance, forbearance, truth, and gentleness. Pray that the mercy, peace, and love of God in Christ will be multiplied to us as his church and through us as his church for his glory. This is one of the ways we can pray for a gospel renewal movement of God in his church according to his Word.

Parenting by Discipline

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. When the wicked increase, transgression increases, but the righteous will look upon their downfall. Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart. - Proverbs 29:15-17

Parenting from fear leads our children to transgression, wickedness, and shame. We fear hurting our children. We fear damaging their spirits, stunting their emotional maturity, or wounding them, leaving them with calloused scars that never heal. But when our fear does not correct and teach it leaves our children to dwell in their own sinfulness and their downfall.

Parenting from idolatry leads our children to destruction. We desire joy, rest, and honor. Yet, we find that our children's hearts are bound up with the same idolatrous iniquity we find in ourselves. We see them as a hinderance to our joy, rest, and the honor we believe we deserve. So in anger we destroy them to get what we desire. We put them in their place with our firm grasp, angry words, harsh tones, and haunting looks. We pursue our honor, rest, and joy by putting them in their place and crushing their spirits.

Parenting in the wisdom of Jesus leads us out of our fear and idolatry. Jesus is the wisdom of God sent to save us from the destruction of ours and our children's sinful hearts. He came from God like a mother hen stretching out her wing over her little ones to bring them shelter from the wrath to come. He came as the righteous one living the life we should have lived and dying the death we should have died to honor us as sons and daughters, and give us his rest and joy forevermore. Jesus is sent from God as the love of God to cover a multitude of sins and make many to be righteous. When parents follow Jesus by faith taking their children with them, he triumphs over their fear, foolish idolatry, and destruction.

Parenting by faith in Jesus casts out our fears in love to love with correction and teaching. Parents are an extension of the love of God in Christ to our children showing them who he is and what his pleasure is for their lives in him. This requires correction, showing them the destructive way of idolatry and sin. This requires showing them how God sent his Son in their place living their life and dying their death to honor them as his own children of righteousness and giving them the rest and joy their hearts long for. This requires teaching them HIS WAYS revealed in HIS WORD and lived out, not in themselves, but by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ lived out in the knowledge and fullness of the love of God. Looking upon Jesus by faith in our parenting is trusting him to put our fears and idolatry under his feet, to give us himself as the Wisdom we need, and to lead our children to him by faith through his grace to live in paths of righteousness.