



Sermon-Based Study Guide
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Sermon Title: Updating Your Resume'

Sermon Text: Hebrews 5.1-10

Related Texts: 1 Peter 2.4-12

I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

What was one of your first jobs? What kind of resume did you have when you were hired for that job?

II. Introduction

In his continuing effort to encourage and exhort the Jewish Christians to be faithful to Jesus Christ, the writer of Hebrews focuses upon the role of Jesus as High Priest. However, Jesus is unlike any ordinary priest. He is the divine Son of God who came from heaven, lived among us, revealed the radiance of God's glory (Hebrews 1.3), suffered, died and subsequently was raised and ascended into heaven. Jesus, the author stresses, is fully divine and fully human. He is the exact representation of God and he knows what it is to be human, tempted, and weak. He is the sympathetic High Priest who carries our prayers to the throne room of heaven where we find mercy and grace. The author continues to describe Jesus as High Priest, a theme that takes center stage in chapters 5 through 9.

III. Study the Text – Hebrews 5.1-10

- 1) We have already touched on verses 1 through 3, but look at them again and list the specific responsibilities of the high priest that are cited in these verses.
- 2) Verse 4 refers to Aaron's call to serve as the High Priest. The Greek term translated "must be called" (by God) is *kathiestati* and means "to make someone to be something." Look at Leviticus 8.1-13. How was Aaron "made to be" the high priest? What were his credentials for being called by God to this role? (See Exodus 4.14-17; 19.20-24; 24.12-14; and particularly notice 32.1-6).

Note: Aaron's resume includes many strengths and fine references. He is an articulate speaker. He is the brother of Moses and from the family of Levi. But his resume also has some things he might be inclined to leave out. For instance, succumbing to the pressure to create a golden calf – an idol for the people to worship – and incurring God's anger. Nevertheless, God called and equipped Aaron to serve as the high priest.

- 3) In verses 5 and 6 in which the writer connects Psalm 2.7 and Psalm 110.4 with God the Father calling Jesus the Son to be a high priest. Jesus' resume includes excellent references and family ties. Now look at verses 7 through 9. What things did Jesus have to experience and do in order to "learn obedience... be made perfect... and become the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him?"

Note: Like Aaron, Jesus was appointed by God the Father to be the high priest. Aaron's resume' may have been impressive but it also included some grievous failures. Jesus' resume is exceptional but in order to step into the role of the high priest (and replace the institutional role of the high priest and temple ritual) he had to learn experientially what it would mean. Jesus learned obedience and reverent submission from the experience of suffering. In Gethsemane the agony of bearing the sin of all humankind became overwhelming and he cried out for escape from it. In order to serve as the high priest who is the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, Jesus had to be "made perfect" or made capable of serving in that role by coming to terms with the fact it means his suffering, his complete obedience, and his willingness to bear the dread of both physical death and unparalleled inner anguish.

- 4) Take a look at 1 Peter 2.4-10. According to verses 4 and 5, what is God doing in the lives of followers of Jesus? What do you think it means to be made into "a holy priesthood?" What roles and responsibilities does this entail for us?
- 5) Verse 10 is slightly enigmatic in its reference to Melchizedek. Look at Genesis 14.18-20 to learn more about him. The writer of Hebrews will come back to the significance of Melchizedek in following chapters.

IV. Theological Reflection

Like Aaron and other priests, followers of Jesus serve in a priestly role – we are truly a holy priesthood. This suggests that we are set apart (that's the basic meaning of the word "holy") and are to be conformed to the character and attitude of Jesus. As a holy priest we serve in these roles: 1) we offer sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, and even our lives, to God, 2) we represent God to others by conveying to them the promises of God's mercy, grace, forgiveness, and of life everlasting, and 3) we intercede for others – praying boldly for family, friends, and others to discover life in relationship with God.

V. Apply It – Reflect and Respond

- 1) What qualities, characteristics, accomplishments, abilities, and experiences are on your life's resume'? How do these things qualify you to serve as a "holy priest?" In other words, how can you and the ways God has been shaping you as a person, be one who stands between God and other people?

- 2) What things do you need to add to your life's resume' in order to be made more "perfect" or "complete"? Perhaps more obedience to the will of God? Perhaps drawing closer to God? Patience? Gentleness? Self-control?
- 3) What you do to better serve as a priest on behalf of your spouse, your children and grandchildren, your Christian brothers and sisters, your friends, co-workers, and others?

Jesus had to learn what the full extent of obedience would mean: he was praying to the one who could save him from death, but though God could have saved him, he did not. The answer to his prayer for rescue was "No". Or rather, the answer was that the prayer itself turned, as prayer often does, into acceptance: "Your will be done."

N. T. Wright