



Sermon-Based Study Guide
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Sermon Title: One Significant Difference

Sermon Text: Hebrews 7.20-28
Related Texts: Acts 1.1-9; Romans 8.28-39

I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

Who is someone you have found to be dependable as a friend or mentor in your life?
What made them so dependable?

II. Introduction

Throughout Chapter 7, the author of Hebrews has been building the case for Jesus being unlike any other high priest. The writer first draws upon Melchizedek as a priest to whom even Abraham paid tribute and as a means of describing the honor due to Jesus. Then the author contrasts the older covenant with a new covenant that must be enacted because of the appearance of a new high priest. In verses 20-28 we see the preacher continuing to focus on Jesus' uniqueness by citing one more significant difference.

III. Study the Text – Hebrews 7.20-28

- 1) According to verses 20-22, what sets Jesus apart from ordinary high priests? How does this significant difference guarantee a "better covenant?"
- 2) Verses 23-25 point to another significant difference between Jesus and the high priests who served in the tabernacle and subsequently in the temple in Jerusalem. Take a look at Acts 1.1-9 where Luke records the events around Jesus' resurrection and ascension. What difference does Jesus' resurrection and ascension make? What does the permanence of Jesus' priesthood make possible for us?
- 3) Look again at verse 25. Jesus' activity in this present moment is serving in a priestly role on our behalf. What, according to this verse, is Jesus doing as our high priest? Turn to Romans 8.28-39. As you read through these verses reflect on the things Jesus, your high priest, is doing right now on your behalf.

Note: I have always valued this passage from Romans. It continues to help me see that God is at work in my life as I seek to be centered in and relate to Jesus Christ. God is carrying out a work of transformation in me having predestined, or planned in advance, that as a follower of Jesus, I would be conformed to his character. I have been justified by faith in Jesus. Justified means to be placed in a right standing or acquitted of all offenses against God. And I have been glorified, that is, established as a recipient of God's glorious love and as one who will be able to give God glory (attribute worth) forever.

Two other amazing things are promised in this passage. Jesus is now at the right hand of God the Father and continues to intercede for me. I have an advocate. I do not need to fear condemnation. I am "on God's mind" always. And finally, nothing can ever separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. I hope you experience these dimensions of God's love and present activity in your life.

- 4) Turn again to Hebrews 7.26-28. What other two things, according to these verses, sets Jesus apart from an ordinary human priest?
- 5) As you look at verse 27 one significant thing about Jesus stands out - he does not need to offer sacrifices for his own sins and he has offered the sacrifice - himself - once for all sins. How do you respond to this? How significant is it to you to know Jesus gave himself as a "once for all" sacrifice on your behalf?
- 6) Verse 28 presents another significant difference between Jesus and ordinary high priests - he "has been made perfect." We have seen this term used before - Hebrews 2.10 and 5.9. To be made "perfect" means to be made "complete". Jesus was made the complete and "once for all" sacrifice through his suffering and obedience to the Father (5.9). What is your response to this significant and unique self-sacrifice of Jesus?

IV. Theological Reflection

In a world like ours in which we find a plurality of religions and a tendency toward relativism that insists "your truth is true for you and my truth is true for me," a claim that insists Jesus is completely unique, unlike any other, and God's only provision for human beings to be established in a relationship with God is nearly intolerable. However, this is exactly what the Bible states. Jesus is the unique high priest who alone is the "once for all" sacrifice through whom we are reconciled to God. Numerous questions are raised by this such as "what about people who never hear of Jesus?" or "would God condemn someone who is raised in a non-Christian religion?" or "aren't all religions pointing to the same God?" We can address these questions and wrestle with them. More importantly, we can do what we can to help our loved ones and friends gain a clear understanding of Jesus, and in doing so, enable them to enjoy the amazing wonder of living a justified and glorified life - now and forever.

V. Apply It – Reflect and Respond

- 1) Take some time to reflect on Jesus who is presently serving as your high priest. What is your response to this? What could you do as part of your daily routine in order to be more aware of what Jesus is doing for you?
- 2) Look again at Romans 8.28-39. How do verses 35-39 encourage you knowing that there will be times of difficulty, spiritual dryness, uncertainty, threat, and inevitably death?
- 3) Please pray for yourself and for the Good Shepherd congregation to be willing to invite others to come and learn about Jesus and to be bold about the blessing of knowing God through Jesus. It's a message our world is desperate to hear.