



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Jesus: The True Priest
Speaker: Sherin Swift, Pastor of Connections & Equipping
Scripture: Hebrews 7:26 – 8:2

²⁶ For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other^[a] high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

8 Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent^[b] that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up. *(NRSV)*

Sermon Outline:

When we hear the word “priest”, we can have a certain type of image, idea or experience that may come to mind, whether positive or negative. Because of these negative images and experiences, the word “priest” can be a pretty loaded and complicated word for us today. We are invited to set these feelings aside so that we can see what was happening in the world when Jesus came onto the scene in the Bible.

The priests in the Old Testament were a select group of people set aside by birth who were given a very specific responsibilities in the church. The priests functioned as mediators between God and his people because of the rift that existed between God and humanity. The priests were entrusted to be the mediators so that we could still have a relationship with God.

The critical problem that the whole narrative of the Bible is centered around:

1. God loves humans and wants to be with us,
2. Sin makes a direct relationship impossible.

The priesthood is one of the answers to these opposing truths.

The priests are mediators, serving across the gap between humanity and God,
becoming **symbols of God's reconciling love.**

The priests are a sign that God is present with his people and priests created spaces where the people could experience God's presence and love.

That's how great God's love is –
in spite of the fact that most people will reject him, **God continues to reach out to us.**

We see over and over again in the Bible the ways that priests did not live up to all that was expected of them.

Jesus comes not only as one perfectly qualified to offer a sacrifice on behalf of the people,
but he also comes as the most perfect sacrifice.

God is not distant, nor is he is not an abstract construct and there are tangible ways we can interact with him. Jesus is the final high priest and the final sacrifice. Jesus recreates that proximity to God that the rift caused and because of this, God's presence can now dwell with us. Jesus came and closed the gap that needed to be closed.

Why does this matter to us today?

1. God chooses you. Will you choose God?
2. We are the priesthood now, with the Holy Spirit dwelling within is. Will you help others connect with God?

We have the chance to carry God's presence throughout the world – in our families, our workplaces and our neighborhoods. We get the opportunity to be the mediators who show others a tangible and real experience of God's love and God's presence.

Don't underestimate the power of God that is within you. Don't sell yourself short! Your life is valuable and can impact those around you by the power of God that is within you.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Sherin Swift, Pastor of Connections & Equipping, continues our 3-week series entitled, *Jesus: Prophet, Priest and King*. Pastor Sherin explores Jesus as the True Priest and what means to understand Jesus' ministry as a Priest.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin did you grow knowing what a priest was? Did you receive negative or positive messages when it comes to priests? Or did you not hear any messages regarding priests growing up in your family? How did what you hear then shape how you think about priests today? Journal about this and offer your thoughts up to God in your time of prayer.
3. How do you feel when you hear that G chooses you? Are you able to hear these words and know that you are his beloved? God's hand is extended to you. If you don't already know God or have a relationship with God, will you choose him? All you need to do is open up your arms to receive his love.
4. How do you feel when you hear that you are the priesthood of God, where the Holy Spirit dwells in? Offer your thoughts on this up to God. Are you willing to help others who do not know this connect with God? How can you collaborate with God so that you can help others connect with God in a tangible way?