

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Think of a historic moment when folks outside the church were saying, "Where was God in this moment?" Without Christ, it is understandable why folks can only see that moment. How could the same moment be viewed through the lens of the Big Idea?

2. Refer to Hebrews 7:20-21. How is Jesus' priesthood unique in comparison to that of priests from Israel's history? How is Jesus' authority affirmed? Did God need to make an oath to affirm Jesus' authority? What does that say about our Father in heaven regarding how he views his people? (Hebrews 4:15-16) What does this say about Jesus' role in our lives today?

3. Refer to Hebrews 7:23-24. How is Jesus' term in the office of High Priest unique to him among Israel's high priests? Why is this critical to living the Christian life?

4. Refer to Hebrews 7:26. Jesus is distinguished from the Old Testament in five ways. List them. (Refer to Hebrews 7:27) How is the sacrifice of Jesus unique to him among the high priests? (Refer to Hebrews 7:25) What is the significance of this sacrifice for believers in Jesus? (see also the quotation by Peter O'Brien) What are three verb tenses are used to describe the saving work of Jesus?

5. Refer to Hebrews 7:25. Jesus in his office as High Priest is constantly working. From the second part of this verse what is he doing? The word "intercession" that is used here means: to go to or meet a person, especially for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication. How can this encourage the struggler, or the discouraged?

6. In the Old Testament, a priest had two primary roles: to bring the people to God and to bring God to the people. Recall a time when Pastor Bill baptized a baby. What is unique about how Pastor Bill applies the water? In light of this visual image, what is meant by "the torrential downpour of grace" (Refer to 2 Corinthians 9:8). How can this bring encouragement today, tomorrow, next week and next year?

Praise to Jesus - Praise Jesus that you have a living Savior who intercedes for you and who brings you to God and brings God to you.

Repentance through Jesus - Repent of ways that you have doubted or forgotten that Jesus loves you so much that he is willing to unleash the powers of heaven to help you endure life here on this earth. Repent for the times you have turned to temporal things to help you persevere when only the abounding grace of God could really help.

Consecration for Jesus - Rededicate yourself to fixing your eyes on Jesus your high priest and to walking with Gospel faithfulness and confidence knowing that He lives to make intercession for you.

"But why do human beings even need to make oaths and vows? It is because of sin. Scripture says that 'all mankind are liars' (Ps 116:11), not because people tell nothing except lies but because we are all prone to twist the truth and to look for wiggle room when it comes time to fulfill our promises. Thus, we swear oaths to assure others of our trustworthiness."
- R.C. Sproul

"Pastoral discipleship from the pulpit for you through the week.
Each of our pastors has designed content with you in mind."

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

1. Make sure to read and/or discuss Hebrews 7:1-19 with your family as background for today's passage (Hebrews 7:20-28). This passage was covered at the Maundy Thursday service.

- a. The author of Hebrews brings up Melchizedek in order to draw a distinction between the priesthood of Jesus and the priesthood of Aaron. Melchizedek's story is found in Genesis 14 and then he is mentioned in Psalm 110. Not much else is known about him. The important takeaway is that Jesus' priesthood is said to be in the order of Melchizedek because it is permanent unlike the priesthood of Aaron.
- b. Make sure to point our Hebrews 7:16 to your children since we read that Jesus has "an indestructible life." This is an important Easter connection since we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter and are reminded that our Savior and Great High Priest is alive forevermore.
- c. Also point out Hebrews 7:19 that mentions "the better hope" that we have in Jesus because of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

2. In today's passage, the author continues the comparison of Jesus as the Great High Priest and the priests of the Old Covenant. Ask your children to point out the differences that are mentioned in Hebrews 7:20-28. Make sure you talk about how verse 24 mentions that Jesus' priesthood is permanent unlike the Old Covenant priests. Also verse 25 mentions that Jesus is able to "save to the uttermost" unlike the Old Covenant priests. Verses 26-28 mention that Jesus is sinless and perfect. These verses also point out that Jesus' sacrifice is "once and for all." (7:27)

3. Read Hebrews 7:25 and ask your children what it means that Jesus "always lives to make intercession".

- a. Ask your children how it feels to know that Jesus prays for us to God the Father. This is a good time for you to share your personal reaction to this wonderful truth about Jesus' present work for believers.

4. Hebrews 7:19 and 7:25 both mention drawing near to God. This is one of the best results of the salvation that we have through Jesus. Make sure to talk with your children about how and why this is only available because of Jesus' victory that first Easter.

- a. Take time to "draw near to God" through a family prayer time.

Big Idea

Because no second in history ticks by without Jesus' intercession for us, the failures, needs, and desires of your life today will get up close and personal with the Father through the Son...so expect nothing less than a torrential downpour of grace by the Spirit.

Outline

1. The Authority of Jesus Priesthood

2. The Permanence of Jesus' Priesthood

3. The Uniqueness of Jesus' Priesthood

4. The Purpose of Jesus' Priesthood

5. The Torrential Downpour of Grace

"Christianity is radically different from every other religion and every other solution to life in this world. All other philosophies or religion have one thing in common: they rely on performance, the work, or the power of man...what sets Christianity apart is a living savior, who not only puts away our sin forever but sends us power from heaven."
- Richard Phillips

"Since He Lives"

Hebrews 7:20-28 ESV

20 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, **21** but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" **22** This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. **23** The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, **24** but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. **25** Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost[a] those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. **26** For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. **27** He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. **28** For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Historical Context

Jesus is superior to the Old Testament high priests. They were high priests in the order of Aaron, and it was impossible for Jesus to belong to that order because in his humanity he was descended from Judah, not Aaron. So, what did God do? He established another priesthood, this one after Melchizedek, the mysterious figure who appears in Genesis 14 as a "priest of God Most High" (Gen. 14:18). Melchizedek receives a tithe from Abraham and then disappears until Psalm 110. Old Testament priests became such "on the basis of a legal requirement" (Heb. 7:16), but Christ became one by God's oath: "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 17; cf. Ps. 110:4). Aaronic priests died and were succeeded in office by their sons. But Christ is a priest in the order of Melchizedek and as such needs no successor because he is a priest "by the power of an indestructible life," seen in his resurrection from the dead (Heb. 7:16). Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

Justification – is a past declaration that we are now in a right relationship with God.

Glorification – is future work by which will be made perfect in Jesus Christ.

Sanctification – is a present process by which the Spirit is making us more like Jesus.

FOR STUDENTS

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Pastor Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. Do you feel that you read the Old Testament as if it is really about Christ? How does this passage help you to do that better?

2. Do you ever struggle with doubts about whether the work of Jesus is really able to save you? How does this passage provide reassurance?

3. In what ways do you still struggle with keeping God's law only on an external basis? How does this passage help you?

4. How does the new covenant actually make us (perhaps unexpectedly) better law-keepers? What does that say about the role of grace in our lives?

5. How does God's persistent pursuit of his wayward people encourage you today?

**Selected questions borrowed and adapted from Hebrews for You by Michael J. Kruger and Hebrews: How Jesus speaks into everything by John D. Barry.*

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

1. Some commentators believe that the audience being addressed in the Book of Hebrews may have thought that they needed angels to gain them access to God. But Jesus is the perfect high priest who represents us before God, and we need no other go-between. Be assured that you need no earthly priest, or saint, or even angelic being to be your intercessor. In Jesus Christ, you have perfect intercession and direct access to God.

2. Can you think of anything in this world that is a surety or a definite guarantee? Contrary to what some would claim, there is nothing that comes with a perfect guarantee. However, when it comes to Jesus offering us his salvation through his sacrifice, this is the one and only thing you can find anywhere that is an absolute “guarantee” (verse 22).

3. This passage assures us that Jesus Christ is “able to save completely [to the uttermost], those who come to God through him” (verse 25). Let me encourage you, and please hear this good news: no matter who you are, or what you have done, Christ can save you completely and eternally. No one is beyond his love, and no sin is too great, for Christ to save you. And there is nothing you would ever need to do to supplement this salvation. It’s yours, free of charge, permanently assured by Christ.

4. How is your prayer life lately? Our passage speaks of how Christ always intercedes for us and always meets our needs (verses 25-26). Why wouldn’t we turn to him in prayer; and why would we turn anywhere else? So, pray to him, and know that he will always hear you, even if you don’t know what or how to pray. He, along with the Holy Spirit, takes our feeble prayers, cleans them, ennobles them, and then presents them to the Father. He knows how to pray perfectly for us. Pray to the one who always stands ready to hear and intercede for us.

Like Christina. But even more so...we need something to fix our gaze upon...we need a home to pull us forward...and according to Hebrews, that is Jesus Christ...like the home on the hill in the painting, Jesus is the pinnacle of God’s plan of redemption...so considering this painting and background, here these words afresh from Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, church, let’s begin this journey in Hebrews together...which is not disconnected from our humanity and our struggles...for we to live in Christina’s world...a world of suffering, pain, and hardship...but we are in a relationship with the savior, Jesus, who has overcome the world...and because of His supremacy, calls us to fix our eyes on Him in order that we might persevere in faith. -Tremper Longman, EBC, 23-25

About the artwork

Andrew Wyeth is perhaps the most famous American artist of the 20th century. He, along with John Singer Sargent, are the only two American artists invited into the Academy of Fine Art in Paris, France. President Kennedy awarded Wyeth the presidential medal of freedom, the only visual artist to receive such an award. He was also awarded presidential medals from George H Bush and George W Bush.

His art is connected to his humanity. He was a man that experienced loss and grief in this broken and fallen world and often expressed his pain in visual form through art.

His most famous work, and the one that best expresses his struggle with pain and grief, is a painting called Christina's World (1948). Christina is a friend of Wyeth and had a disease that left her unable to walk. Instead of choosing a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl using her arms. The painting is a picture of her struggle...but it is also a picture of her hope...in the painting her hands are gripped to the ground portraying her daily suffering, yet her body is leaning towards the farmhouse, which was her home. Life was a struggle, but her gaze and hope were on her home, which kept her moving forward and not giving up.

The book of Hebrews has a very similar theme...the writer expresses the hope and gaze of home in the person and work of Jesus Christ...the struggle to give up or turn back was very real for the audience...most scholars believe the original audience was Jewish Christians who were facing persecution...it would have been a struggle for them to keep moving forward in the profession of Jesus Christ because with that profession came pain and hardship.

ADDITIONAL NOTES



What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day.

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together through the Book of Hebrews. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948 ;

Perseverance by Promise ***A Study of the Sermon to the Hebrews***

April 17, 2022
Hebrews 7:20-28 ESV