

Sunday, May 24, 2009

Sermon Based Discussion

Sermon Title: Building Your Life on Jesus' Humanity

Pastor Enoch Liao

Sermon Series: *Building Your Life on Jesus (Part 3)*; Sermon Text: *Hebrews 4:10-5:15*

INTRODUCTION

Many people believe Jesus was a real historic figure. Some also believe Jesus is God. Christians have historically believed Jesus is both God and man. But it seems precious few Christians know why it is so important that Jesus was fully human. Do you know how to apply the truth that Jesus is human? What difference does it make? Have you ever found strength, hope, or comfort from the humanity of Jesus? Whether you are a Christian or not, this is a vitally important topic. So please read on!

One of Jesus' offices in the Bible is that of a priest. A priest was one who acted on behalf of others. In the Bible, priests "stood in the gap" between humanity and God. They would offer sacrifices for sinners. They would sympathize and encourage sinners as they dealt with sin. The writer of Hebrews and Psalms states that Jesus is a "great high priest." In this session, we will see how Jesus' humanity enables him to fulfill the ultimate role of our great high priest.

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. You may or may not have attended religious services when you were younger. In any case, how did you view members of the clergy when you were younger?
2. Priests in the time of the New Testament were highly regarded and considered "holy men." They may not have been considered the most sympathetic of people. Who might be more commonly considered more sympathetic: a "holy" person, or a person who has struggled and failed a lot in life.

INTO THE BIBLE (Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10)

3. What is the connection between how sympathetic we view God with how much we would turn to God when we struggle or fail?
4. How does Jesus' sinless humanity make him more sympathetic towards us who are sinners?
5. In Hebrews 5:1-6, the writer of Hebrews describes several qualities of priests. List out any that you find in the passage.
6. How does Jesus surpass the usual High Priest as describe above?
7. In 5:7-10, how does the writer describe the way Jesus represented men before God?

GOING DEEPER

The writer describes Jesus as the source of eternal salvation for those who obey him (5:9-10). That means that for those who really have faith in Jesus as demonstrated by obedience, it's not their good works that save them, but Jesus. Thus, as Augustine writes in his *Confessions*, "For us, he was to thee both Priest and Sacrifice, and Priest because he was the Sacrifice." And this act of priestly service is possible only because Jesus is not only God, but also has a human nature.

Honestly, how much did you think about Jesus' humanity before? When people are discouraged they often want to think about Jesus as a mighty God or loving Savior. But here, we see that we can find much strength, encouragement, and hope in times of temptation by thinking about Jesus as *human*. Jesus is fully God, that's correct. But the Bible also teaches that when Jesus came into this world, he also became fully human.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

When you pray about your temptations, remind yourself that Jesus was tempted just like you, but that he had the power to overcome. Rehearse those truths in your prayers and be encouraged and strengthened by them.

If you are worshipping Jesus, build into your worship and prayers the crucial office Jesus has as the great high priest who offers a sacrifice to God on behalf of sinners who trust in Him.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"... let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:14b-16, NIV)

Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

¹Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

⁴No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him,

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father." ⁶And he says in another place,
"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."

⁷During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.