



Sunday, May 5, 2013

Perfect, Permanent Priesthood

Speaker: Scott Masson

Scripture: Hebrews 7:11-28; John 17:20-26

Sermon Notes:

1. The typology of Melchizedek speaks to the power, clarity and authority of Christ's priesthood.
2. Christ Himself upholds the validity of the moral law in Matt. 5:17-19, so we must understand Heb. 7:12 to be speaking of a change in the law with respect to the old priesthood.
3. Jesus is contrasted with the Levitical priesthood in three ways: He is of the tribe of Judah not Levi; His life is not of bodily descent, but from the power of an indestructible life; and Jesus' priesthood was made with an oath (Ps. 110:4).
4. The Levitical priesthood served to instruct us in God's righteous wrath against sin and in our complete inability to atone for our own sin and guilt.
5. We depend on Christ's perfect and permanent priesthood to draw near to God (Heb. 7:19).
6. To enter God's presence we must strive for peace and holiness (Heb. 12:14; 1Pet. 1:15; Lev. 19:2). We become righteous by living according to God's Word and after the example of Christ. However, we cannot do it (Rom. 7:19).
7. We have a heart problem that is so serious (Matt. 15:18) that we need a heart replacement which only God can provide (Ezekiel 36:26).
8. Only God can transform our hearts from the inside out, giving us righteousness that is by faith (Phil. 3:9).
9. We live in a culture of self-righteousness and so we recoil at any hint that we **need** to be righteous.
10. Political correctness itself is a kind of self-righteousness, smugly condemning those who believe in moral absolutes.
11. We all seek approval from someone, and our culture has a phobia of guilt. Though we try to eradicate any sense of shame for our moral failures, our personal guilt is a theological problem that will not go away.
12. The person and covenant law of God is the standard of righteousness in the Bible.
13. The first man and woman were naked and unashamed, because they walked with God and were proud of living in the light of His approval (Gen. 2:25).
14. After their disobedience they knew their shame, and tried to cover up their guilt (Gen. 3:7). Having lost God's approval, the covering symbolizes their perverse attempts to replace His righteousness with self-righteousness.
15. God in His mercy covered them. He had to sacrifice an animal to do so, which already hints at Christ's sacrifice. (Gen. 3:21; John 1:29).
16. The first type of righteousness is self-made: either we continually try to build up approval by our works, or in immoral rebellion we seek self-approval.
17. The second type of righteousness is that which comes "not from the law, but through faith in Christ" (Phil. 3:9). To avoid self-righteousness and rebellion we need to put off our sinful selves daily, and to put on Christ's righteousness.
18. Paul regularly stresses the need to put on Christ as a garment (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14). He is our 'breastplate of righteousness' (Eph. 6: 14).
19. Christ saves us completely since He always makes intercession (Heb. 7:24-25).
20. Trusting in Christ and clothed in His righteousness, we enter into God's presence face to face without shame.

Application Questions:

1. What characteristics set Christ apart as the perfect high priest? What sort of priesthood and perfection is required?
2. Why didn't God send Jesus in the first place instead of instituting the Levitical priesthood?
3. What benefits do we receive from Christ's intercession?
4. What is righteousness and why do we need it?
5. Whose approval are we seeking?
6. What standard of righteousness guides our lives?
7. How can sinners be received without shame in the presence of God?
8. How will knowing Christ's approval change the way you relate to yourself and others this week?