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THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 5:1-10

Introduction: Jesus as the Model for Our Ministry

I. The High Priest Had to be Human

- A. In the OT, the high priest had to be human: "chosen from among men" (v.1)
 - o Why human? Because priests were "appointed to act on behalf of men"
 - o Thus it takes a human to represent a human before God
- B. Christ Meets This Requirement: "in the days of his flesh" (v.7)
 - o The author uses the very particular word (*σαρκὸς*) which means "flesh" or physical body; same word as John 1:14: "the word became flesh and dwelt among us"
 - o Thus Jesus didn't just "seem" to be human, but was really a human like us
 - Refutes ancient heresy of "Docetism" (idea that Jesus only appeared to be human)
- C. Ministry Lesson: The Power of Presence
 - o Key point: being physically present helps us relate to those we minister to

II. The High Priest Had to Experience Weakness

- A. In the OT, the high priest had to experience a fallen world "beset with weakness" (v.2)
 - o This allowed the high priest to "deal gently with the ignorant and wayward" (v.2)
 - o Unfortunately, for all high priests this also included their sin: "he is obligated to sacrifice for his own sins just as he does those of his people" (v.3)
- B. Christ meets this requirement: He experienced severe suffering (v.7-9)
 - o "Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears" (v.7a)
 - What is this a possible reference to?
 - Do you realize that Jesus suffered greatly while on earth?
 - o "Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears" (v.7a)

- o "He was heard because of his reverence" (v.7b)
 - "reverence"=posture of trust and submission
 - What would it look like to suffer in a posture of submission to God?
- o "He learned obedience through what he suffered...being made perfect" (v.8-9)
 - How could Jesus be "made" perfect if he was already perfect as the Son of God?
- o "[As a result] He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (v.9)
 - Christ's obedience in the face of suffering made him the ultimate high priest

C. Ministry Lesson: The School of Suffering

- o Key Question: How Does Suffering Make Us More Effective in Our Ministries?
 - C.S. Lewis: "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."
- o Can you think of scriptural examples where suffering was a preparation for ministry?

III. A High Priest Had to Be Called

- A. In the OT, the high priest was not self-appointed
 - o "And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God" (v.4)
 - o "Ordination": when someone is officially recognized and set apart as called by God
- B. Jesus meets this requirement
 - o "So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him" (v.5)
 - o The author cites Psalm 2:7 and 110:4, classic OT texts about God's appointment of Jesus
- C. Ministry Lesson: Humble Thyself
 - o What are signs that our ministry has become about our own glory?
 - o Key phrase: "humble confidence"



Discussion Groups

1. How are you encouraged today by the fact that Jesus took on human flesh and suffered with us?

2. How have you seen suffering help you minister more effectively in your own life? In the lives of others?

3. In what ways can we exhibit humility in our ministries? If humility is the mark of a healthy ministry, then how does that help us search for the best church or ministry to commit to?
