

Text: Heb. 7:26-28

Title: "The perfections of our High Priest"

Time: 6/7/2015 pm

Place: NBBC

Introduction: I was speaking to a man about Christ this past week, who told me that for some time he had seen many false professions of faith in the lives of others. When it comes to Christianity, he has seen his fair share of hypocrites. It warmed my heart to hear him say that he had found something different from that at our church. He found the testimonies of believers in our church genuine and Christ-like, and that has made a wonderful impression on him.

But while I thanked him for that complement, what I wanted him to understand was that there really is only one person who reflects the perfections of Christianity, and that is Christ Himself. As our High Priest, he never plays the hypocrite; He is perfect in every way.

Our author has been encouraging Hebrew believers to not be hypocrites, to not go back on their profession and betray the Lord. He encourages them to continue on in the Christian faith, in spite of the difficulty, by causing them to remember the perfections of their High Priest. So often the Christian life is more difficult because we see the imperfections of fellow Christians all around us. But none of us have an excuse to quit on the Lord, because He is a perfect High Priest.

The title of the message this evening is "The perfections of our High Priest," and I want us to spend some time thinking about these and being encouraged by His perfection to continue to strive to please Him and be faithful to His work

in and through our lives. I will make three simple points about these perfections tonight.

I. Our High Priest has a perfect sinless character (v. 26).

1. He is holy. Rev. 15:4, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." God's holiness is the reason people should fear Him and glorify His name. Rev. 16:5, "And I heard the angel of the waters saying, 'Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things.'" *Holy One* is the angel's name for God. The psalmist called Christ that when he promised, "Thou wilt not allow thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27; 13:35). The Holy One and corruption simply do not mix – not even physical corruption after death; this verse is about His resurrection.

Application: We as His people should desire to be holy, not corrupt. When we pray, we are supposed to lift up holy hands (1 Tim. 2:8). "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18); "The effectual, fervent prayers of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Local church leadership should be examples of holy living that reflect the influence of the character of our High Priest on our lives: "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Tit. 1:8). Holiness is one of the perfections of the character of our High Priest.

2. He is harmless. There is a childlike quality to this description of our Lord. The word is used only one other time in the New Testament, where it describes people who can be taken advantage of as though they were unsuspecting children (Rom. 16:18, "For they that are such serve not our

Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the *simple*.”) *Simple* there and *harmless* here are the same word in Greek. There is a kind of precious innocence to childhood. Jesus had that as a child. Luke 2:52, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man,” but He never lost that childlike innocence. It was that humble meekness that caused the Savior to allow Himself to be crucified for us.

Application: We need to aspire to be harmless like our Lord. We should have a humble child-like innocence about us. Matt. 10:16, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” This means that we pick our battles wisely, and we are willing to be ill-treated without a reaction in like-kind if that is the Lord’s will for us.

3. He is undefiled. This is a word that recognizes the potential Christ had for being stained by the world around Him. He resisted those stains. He stayed undefiled as our perfect High Priest. He lived in the world, but He was never defiled by the temptations of the world to sin. His was a pure religion and undefiled before the Father. He helped widows and orphans and He kept Himself unspotted from the world (Jam. 1:27).

Application: We should want to be undefiled, and we should recognize the potential we have for defilement. Heb. 13:4, “Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” The world wants us to be defiled sexually. Heb. 12:15, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” A root of bitterness can defile

many in a church family. The Lord never allowed that to happen in His life. He is our perfect High Priest.

4. He is separate from sinners. Jesus lived among sinners, but He was not a sinner Himself. He was numbered with the transgressors, but it was to save them from their transgressions. Those transgressors killed Him as one numbered among them. Were He not separate from sinners, He could not have done them much good.

Application: We need to be separate from sinners in order to do them some good as ministers of the gospel (2 Cor. 5:17-21). See also 6:14-7:1.

5. He is made higher than the heavens. That phrase revisits the beginning of this epistle (Heb. 1:3-4, "the Majesty on high"). *Higher than the heavens* is glory. It is power. It is brightness. It is inheritance. It is an excellent name. It is Sonship.

Application: We bear that name and are members of that heavenly kingdom. Phil. 3:20, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Col. 3:2, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." We are dead to the things that are below. They no long hold our affection. We are at home in heaven, not hear on earth.

Transition: Our royal High Priest has a perfect sinless character. We are His priesthood, and we need to be like Him to point men to Him.

II. Our High Priest offered a perfect sinless sacrifice (v. 27).

Illustration: There are some things that we should do every day. Our dentist would say, "Brush your teeth every day."

Application: Well, it turns out that there is something that our perfect High Priest has to do every day — atonement. Were we to wake up to the day that our perfect High Priest forgot to take care of that responsibility, we would be forever doomed. He ever lives to make intercession for us (v. 25). He cares for our atonement every day.

The high priest of Israel had to care for his nation's atonement once a year on the Day of Atonement. When he did so, he had to offer first for his own sins and then for the sin of the people. Christ's daily atonement for us is different from that in three ways. First, He atones for our sin every day, not just once a year. Second, He never has to atone first for His own sin, because He is sinless. And third, He atones for our sin on the basis of His once-for-all sacrifice of Himself. He is the High Priest who became the Lamb.

A good high priest would serve out of love for his people. But think of the love of this High Priest. He died out of love on the altar of Calvary for the sins of His people. This He did once for all. Heb. 9:12, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 10:10, "By the which will [a reference to the ratification of the New Covenant] we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Simply put, there is nothing more to do. The work of our eternal salvation is finished and complete. Heb. 1:3, "when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." We can rest in the rest of His finished work in our behalf.

Transition: So Christianity is about perfection not hypocrisy. We have a perfect High Priest. He is perfect in His sinless character, and He offered a perfect sinless sacrifice. Let's close with a look at a third aspect of his perfection.

III. Our High Priest is a perfect sinless fit for us (v. 26a, 28).

Application: The best of humanity, the God-ordained priesthood of Israel, were a bunch of weak and hypocritical sinners (v. 28). If they were weak and sinful, that means you and I are too. And yet, this High Priest is a perfect fit for the likes of us.

God sent His Son into the world to become a perfected High Priest that could save the sinner. He had to go low enough—to become one of us and go through all we go through. He had to die for our sins. And He had to ascend for us as God's risen Son and our Mediator. He did it all. He continues that perfect work today. He is a perfect fit for us. He can present us to God faultless. He can save us from our sins.

Conclusion: I have a nice white shirt still in its package on my dresser that my poor wife bought for me about month ago. She wants me to try it on to see if it fits, but I have just left it on that dresser in my negligence and disinterest. Honestly, that has irritated her a bit, and I can understand why.

But image how God must feel when, having perfected His own Son as a High Priest fit for us, we nevertheless live our lives without Him. Maybe we just don't think He is a very good fit for some of what we want to do or obtain. When we think like that, we are in danger of going back on our profession like these Hebrew believers were.

That approach is Satan's lie; for such a High Priest is indeed fitting for us. He is perfect. He will not let us down. Let's grow in our appreciation of Him, our obedience to Him, and our dependence on Him. If we do so, we will find His care in our lives to be a perfect fit for sinners like us. He will meet our every need.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*