

What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Key Takeaways:

1. God is holy and we are not, and we need someone to bridge that gap. Jesus is that bridge.
2. Jesus qualifies as our great high priest because he was fully human, appointed by God, tempted in every way yet without sin, and completed the work of redemption through suffering and obedience.
3. Because Jesus is our great high priest, we can approach God boldly -- not with fear of rejection, but with confidence that we will receive mercy and grace.
4. Sin is serious. The sacrificial system existed to teach that forgiveness is costly, that the punishment for sin is death, and that there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood.
5. Approaching God in prayer, worship, and study of his word is not an obligation or a chore -- it is the greatest privilege available to us.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of a time you felt like you were somewhere you did not belong? How did that feeling affect you?
2. Before this message, how familiar were you with the role of the high priest in the Old Testament? What stood out to you most from the background explanation?
3. The high priest had to balance confronting sin with dealing gently with those who had gone astray. We may feel this tension between how we want to be treated when we sin versus how we want others to be treated when they sin against us. How do you personally experience that tension?
4. Hebrews 4:15 describes Jesus as one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. Why is it significant that Jesus experienced temptation and suffering rather than simply observing it from a distance?
5. The veil in the temple separated the people from the presence of God. When Jesus died, that veil was torn in two. What does that moment communicate about what changed in our relationship with God?

6. The recipients of Hebrews were considering returning to a religious system that had actually been corrupted by human ambition and politics -- yet it still felt more familiar and safe than following Jesus. In what ways do people today return to familiar patterns or habits rather than pressing forward in faith? Have you experienced this yourself?
7. There is a difference between sinning out of ignorance and knowingly continuing in sin without concern. How do you think about that distinction in your own life? What makes deliberate, unrepentant sin particularly serious in light of what Christ did?
8. God defines what sin is -- not culture, not personal preference, and not us. How does that truth challenge the way our culture tends to think about right and wrong? How does it challenge you personally?
9. Hebrews 4:16 calls believers to approach God's throne with boldness so that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need. What does it look like practically to approach God with that kind of boldness? What gets in the way of doing that?
10. We have a tendency to treat time with God as an obligation -- something to check off a list rather than a genuine privilege. Can you relate to that? What has helped you, or what do you think could help you, experience time with God as a joy rather than a duty?

Practical Applications:

1. Reflect on the seriousness of sin. Set aside time this week to honestly examine an area of your life where you may have grown comfortable with sin. Ask God to show you how seriously that area matters, and bring it to him in prayer.
2. Approach the throne with boldness. Rather than waiting until you feel spiritually "put together," come to God this week exactly as you are -- with your struggles, your complaints, your needs, and your gratitude. Practice the kind of bold, honest access that Jesus made possible.
3. Memorize or meditate on Hebrews 4:15-16. Sit with the truth that Jesus sympathizes with your weakness and that you are welcome at his throne. Let that reality shape how you approach God throughout the week.
4. Identify what makes time with God feel like a chore. Write down one or two honest reasons you sometimes avoid or rush through prayer and Scripture. Bring those reasons to your group or to a trusted friend and talk through them together.
5. Invite accountability. If there is a pattern of sin in your life that you have been avoiding addressing, ask someone in your group to walk alongside you in it. The high priest dealt gently with those who were going astray -- your community can do the same.