

SERMON NOTES: PREPARING FOR THE WORD THAT WALKS 2: UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICES
(1 November 2015)

SCRIPTURE

Malachi 1:6-2:9

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to the confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

For every high priest taken from men is appointed in service to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he is also subject to weakness. Because of this, he must make a sin offering for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honour on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, the Messiah did not exalt Himself to become a high priest, but the One who said to Him, You are My Son; today I have become Your Father, also said in another passage, You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

1 Peter 1:19

...but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.

1 Peter 2:5

...you yourselves, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

KEY POINTS

- + The role of the priests was to mediate between God and man, to be agents of justice and blessing
- + The priests were failing in their role, allowing the people to be half-hearted in their worship before God; God hates religious hypocrisy
- + God must maintain both justice/holiness and mercy/love; He does this through Jesus:
- + Jesus is both the Great High Priest (mediator between God and man), and the Unblemished Sacrifice (perfect offering to atone for sin)
- + We are called to be priests under Jesus

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- + The first part of this week's reading from Malachi talks about failing to bring God the honour He is due, presenting half-hearted worship. In what ways does the Church today bring half-hearted worship before God? Are there ways that you personally have been bringing God the metaphorical crippled animal?
- + Read the Hebrews 4:14-5:6 verses. Reflect on what it means for Jesus to be High Priest that mediates between you and God.
- + How can you be—as the priests were called to be—an agent of justice and blessing at Red Church?
- + Do you lean more toward justice or love? If the cross is the intersection of the two, how does this help you to take up the role of a priest under Jesus?