

Jesus, our greater priest, brings peace through the obedience that leads to the cross.

I. Introduction

- a. Augustine of Hippo, in *Confessions*, wrote: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”
 - i. We feel the restlessness.
 1. We feel it in our minds that won’t slow down.
 2. We feel it in our relationships that don’t quite settle.
 3. We feel it in the weight of our past.
 - a. And if we’re honest—in our relationship with God.
- b. **We are restless.**
 - i. And what we’re really longing for... is peace.
 1. But not the kind of peace we usually think about.
 - a. Not quiet circumstances.
 - b. Not a problem-free life.
 - c. Not the absence of pressure.
 - i. We want something deeper.
- c. **A true and greater peace.**
 - i. And the question we’re asking tonight is simple:
- d. **Where does that kind of peace actually come from?**
 - i. Because if we’re honest...
 1. We’re all looking for it.
 - a. We look for peace in success.
 - b. We look for peace in control.
 - c. We look for peace in fixing, managing, escaping.
 2. And yet true peace, peace that last—**always feels just out of reach.**
- e. The Bible teaches something that runs against how we naturally think—
 - i. **Peace is not created by removing conflict.**
 - ii. **Peace is only possible when righteousness is restored.**
- f. Our problem is not just what’s happening around us... it’s what’s broken within us.
 - i. And until that is made right, peace will always be temporary.
 - ii. And deep down, we know this.
 1. Because no matter how much we try to fix it, manage it, or ignore it—we can’t make ourselves right with God.
 2. Which means if peace is going to exist, someone has to step in.
 - iii. Someone has to deal with what we cannot.
 1. And this is where the idea of a priest comes in.
 2. Because a priest is the one who steps into that gap—between God and people, between brokenness and restoration, between conflict and peace.
 - a. A priest doesn’t just bring calm—a priest mediates peace.

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. - Hebrews 7:1–3 ESV

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- II. Now before we get to Melchizedek, we need to understand something about priests.
 - a. Because in Israel's history, God established a priesthood through the tribe of Levi.
 - i. These priests served in the tabernacle and temple, representing the people before God.
 - 1. And it mattered.
 - a. They stood in the gap.
 - b. They carried the burdens of the people.
 - c. They offered sacrifices for sin.
 - 2. But it had limits.
 - a. It depended on genealogy.
 - b. It ended with death.
 - c. It required repeated sacrifices.
 - 3. It was real—but it was temporary.
 - ii. And this is where Hebrews takes us somewhere surprising.
 - i. It takes us back—before Levi—back to Abraham.
 - 1. Abraham, returning from battle, meets a different kind of priest.
 - a. Melchizedek.
 - ii. And in that moment, something unexpected happens—Abraham gives a tenth of everything.
 - 1. Why? Because he recognizes something greater.
 - a. Hebrews tells us, “The inferior is blessed by the superior.”
 - b. Abraham understands—this priest represents something greater than everything he just accomplished.
 - b. And Hebrews highlights two titles:
 - i. King of Righteousness... and King of Peace.
 - 1. And the order matters.
 - a. Righteousness comes first—peace flows from it.
 - i. Which means peace is not found in what you win...
peace is found in what is made right.
 - ii. And Melchizedek points forward to something greater.
 - 1. A priesthood that is not based on ancestry.
 - 2. A priesthood that does not end.
 - 3. A priesthood that is eternal.
 - ii. And Hebrews tells us—that priesthood belongs to Jesus.
 - i. Because Jesus did not come from Levi.
 - 1. He came from the tribe of Judah—the line of kings.
 - a. Which means His priesthood is not based on genealogy—but on the power of an indestructible life.
 - b. Levitical priests served until they died.
 - c. Every generation had to replace them.
 - ii. But Jesus is different. – He died—and then He rose.
 - 1. And because He rose, death no longer has power over Him.
 - 2. Which means His priesthood never ends.
 - 3. So we are not dealing with a temporary priest trying to help us manage peace.
 - a. We have a living priest who actually secures it.

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III. JESUS IS THE PROMISED PRIEST

- a. Psalm 110 says: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”
 - i. Not temporary.
 - ii. Not inherited.
 - iii. Not limited.
 1. A forever priest.
- b. Which means—We are not dealing with a priest who serves for a season...
 - i. or a priest who eventually fades... or a priest who must be replaced.
 1. We are dealing with a priest who remains.
 - a. A priest who continues.
 - b. A priest who stands—always.
- c. But here’s the tension:
 - i. If Jesus is the King of peace...
 1. **How does He actually bring peace?**
 - ii. Because peace never comes cheaply.
 1. Not in nations.
 2. Not in families.
 3. Not in the human heart.
 - iii. Peace always costs something.
 1. If two nations are at war—peace requires a price.
 2. If a relationship is broken—peace requires something to be absorbed, something to be forgiven, something to be made right.
 3. And even within ourselves—
 - a. The reason we lack peace is not just because life is hard...
 - b. It’s because something is unresolved.
 - i. Something is disordered.
 - ii. Something is not right.
- d. So the question isn’t just: “Does Jesus bring peace?”
 - i. The question is: **How does He secure it?**
- e. Because if peace requires righteousness...
 - i. Then something has to be dealt with.
 - ii. If peace requires restoration...
 - iii. Then something has to be carried.
 - iv. If peace requires reconciliation...
 - v. Then someone has to step into the gap.
- f. And this is where the priest does his work.
 - i. A priest doesn’t just talk about peace.
 - ii. A priest makes peace possible—by dealing with what stands in the way.
- g. So how does Jesus do that?
 - i. How does this forever priest...actually secure peace?
 1. “If peace comes through righteousness... and righteousness must be restored... then this priest doesn’t just teach peace— He has to walk into the place where peace is lost.

IV. And He walks into a garden.”

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- a. Because before there is sacrifice—there is surrender.
 - i. Before peace is secured—obedience is chosen.

V. THE PRIEST SURRENDERS

- a. In Matthew 26, after the last supper, Jesus
 - i. THE KING OF PEACE is UNDER PRESSURE
- b. What we find is Jesus in the garden. Gethsemane
 - i. And this isn't new territory for Him.
 - 1. This was a place He often went
 - a. a place of prayer
 - b. a place of communion with the Father.
- c. But this night is different.
 - i. What was once a place of rest...
has now become a place of decision.
 - 1. Jesus goes deeper into the garden.
 - a. He brings His disciples with Him.
 - ii. Then He takes Peter, James, and John even further.
 - 1. And He says: "Watch with me."
- d. This is striking.
 - i. Not because Jesus needs help—but because He is letting them in.
 - 1. Even here—He is loving them.
 - 2. Even here—He is forming them.
 - 3. Even here—He is inviting them close.
 - ii. And yet... they cannot stay awake.
 - 1. The closest ones to Him
 - a. cannot carry the weight of this moment.
 - iii. And so Jesus goes further.
 - 1. **Alone.**

I. THE WEIGHT OF THE MOMENT

- a. And there, in the garden,
- b. Jesus falls to His knees.
 - i. *"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow... even to death."*
 - ii. This is not weakness.
 - 1. This is the weight of the priestly moment.
 - a. Because what stands before Him...is the cup.

c. THE CUP

- i. Not just death.
- ii. Not just suffering.
 - 1. But the full weight of sin.
 - 2. The full weight of judgment.
 - 3. The full weight of separation.
- iii. As one commentator writes:
 - 1. *"This is not fear of death... but the horror of the One who lives wholly for the Father... now seeing the full wrath of God before Him."*

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II. THE PRIEST AT WORK

- a. And this is where we begin to see it:
 - i. The priest is already at work.
 - 1. Before the cross—
 - 2. before the nails—
 - 3. before the sacrifice—
 - ii. The priest is carrying the burden.
 - 1. He is bringing it before the Father.
 - 2. He is stepping into the gap.
- b. THE MOMENT OF SURRENDER
 - i. And Jesus prays:
 - 1. “Father... if it is possible... let this cup pass from me.”
 - 2. That is real.
 - ii. That is honest.
 - iii. That is the cost in full view.
 - 1. And then:
 - a. “Not my will... but Yours be done.”
 - iv. Before the cross ever happens—The priest offers His will.
 - 1. Obedience over relief.
 - 2. Righteousness over escape.
- c. THE TWO GARDENS
 - i. And this moment reaches all the way back to another garden.
 - 1. In the first garden—Eden—
 - a. Humanity chose its own will.
 - b. And peace was lost.
 - 2. But in this garden—Gethsemane—
 - a. Jesus surrenders His will.
 - i. And peace begins to be restored.
 - ii. One was a garden of loss.
 - iii. This is a garden of reversal.
 - 1. A sacred space
 - a. where a decision is made
 - i. that changes the course of human history.
- d. THE TURN
 - i. And then something happens.
 - 1. Jesus stands.
 - a. And He says: “Rise... let us be going.”
 - i. He doesn’t retreat.
 - ii. He doesn’t delay.
 - iii. He moves forward.
 - 2. Because surrender doesn’t end the mission—It begins it.

III. THE PRIEST BECOMES THE SACRIFICE (BRIEF)

- a. The surrender of Thursday leads to the sacrifice of Friday.
 - i. The cup accepted in the garden will be poured out at the cross.
 - 1. Every priest before Jesus brought a sacrifice.

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- a. Jesus brings Himself.
- ii. And at the cross—Righteousness is restored.
 - 1. And because righteousness is restored—Peace with God becomes possible.
- b. A GREATER PEACE
 - i. This is the peace Jesus brings.
 - 1. Not circumstantial peace.
 - 2. Not temporary calm.
 - ii. But:
 - 1. Peace with God
 - 2. Access to God
 - 3. Rest in God—even in pressure
 - iii. Peace is not fragile.
 - iv. Because peace has a priest.
- c. Every person has their own garden moments.
 - i. Moments of:
 - 1. Fear
 - 2. Pressure
 - 3. Costly obedience
 - 4. Surrender we don't want to make
 - ii. And the question is always the same:
 - 1. Will I choose my will... or trust the Father's?

And here's what we see in the garden—Jesus does not find peace by escaping the moment; He finds peace by surrendering to the Father. “Not my will... but Yours be done.” But we need to be clear—Jesus is not just showing us what to do; He is doing what we could never do. Because the cup in front of Him is not our cup. That is the cup of judgment. That is the cup of wrath. That is the cup we deserve—and He takes it. So that when we come to the Father, we do not drink wrath; we receive peace.

Which means when we come into our own moments of pressure, we are not standing where Jesus stood; we are standing on the other side of what He has already done. And now, because of Him, we can trust the Father—not because the moment is easy, but because peace has already been secured.

So tonight, we don't try to recreate Gethsemane; we come because of it. And here's the question: will you trust the Father right where you are? Not to earn peace—but because, in Jesus, peace has already been made.

Because the garden that was lost... is now being restored. What was once a place of separation is becoming again a place of communion. A place where we walk with God. A place where we are no longer hiding—but restored. And that restoration does not begin with us striving; it begins with Jesus surrendering.