



Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide

Week of 10/24/21

Warm Up

If you haven't thought about a service project for your group yet, this week might be a great opportunity to bring up the conversation!

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

Jesus set the example of service for us to follow. He came to serve those who were in poverty; the spiritually poor, the relationally poor, and the materially poor. Each one of us can find ourselves in one or more of those categories. It is important to remember that serving another person is not simply meeting their material needs but is engaging them as the whole person that God created. Don't get so immersed in the activities of service that you forget the person(s) you're helping.

Here at Calvary our mission for outreach is to be a trusted partner working toward the total welfare of Adams, Boulder, and Weld Counties, to demonstrate the grace & love of Jesus through good deeds and good news.

As a group pray that God would lead you where He would want you to serve. Choose an opportunity that allows you to be more relational than task oriented.

- Think about the places you already live, work, and go. Does anyone you know have an urgent need that could be met by the group?
- See if any of Calvary's local partnerships have opportunities that interest your group?
- Also, feel free to contact your community outreach staff on each of your campuses for help selecting an opportunity to serve.
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Icebreaker: What innovations or inventions can you think of that were such an improvement that it made what preceded it obsolete?

This is an analogy of the argument in Hebrews 7 that the Levitical priesthood was made obsolete by the "Melchizedekian" priesthood of Jesus. Direct answers to the question

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could be everything from the printing press replacing scribes, the “horseless carriage” replacing horse-drawn carriages, to the smartphone’s rollout around 2007 that in some sense replaced every other kind of phone and camera from the face of the earth! (One key and somewhat ironic difference between the analogy and the priesthood of Jesus is that Jesus’ priesthood was an ancient innovation, meaning that its origin as “the order of Melchizedek” preceded the Levitical priesthood...that it would later replace.)

Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 7

This chapter is difficult but is a key part of the overall argument that Jesus is greater than any other high priest. Read Hebrews 7 as a group, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss together. For context, this chapter assumes that we’re familiar with both Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. It could be helpful to read them, but don’t get too bogged down in the details.

1. In verses 1-4, what traits of Melchizedek and his interaction with Abraham make him worthy of the conclusion of verse 4:

Here are a list of things to include:

- Melchizedek is a king of “Salem,” an early name for the city of Jerusalem. “Salem” likely relates to the Hebrew word for peace, “shalom.”
- Melchizedek is “priest of the Most High God,” which is surprising for Canaan at this time period.
- Abraham gives him a tenth of the spoils.
- Melchizedek’s name can be translated “king of righteousness.”
- Melchizedek shows up in the narrative with no introduction of his ancestry or heritage—a fact leveraged by the author of Hebrews to make a comparison with the Son of God. NT scholar Craig Blomberg explains that “The point is not that Melchizedek had no parents or never died, but that he did not derive his priesthood from ancestral credentials or pass it on to any descendants” (*From Pentecost to Patmos*, p. 424).

2. In verses 5-10, how does the priesthood of Melchizedek compare with the priesthood of “those descendants of Levi”?

The Levitical priests received tithes from their fellow Israelites (i.e., descendants of Abraham), but Melchizedek received a tithe from Abraham himself. Melchizedek blessed Abraham in Genesis 14, and as verse 7 points out, the “superior” does the blessing! It’s also as if the Levites themselves gave the tithe “through” Abraham to Melchizedek. Yes, we are forced to think abstractly here if we’re going to understand the line of argument!

3. Verses 11-14 speak of the limitations of the Levitical priesthood first established in Exodus. In what way is Jesus, as “great high priest,” distinct or set apart from those priests according to these verses?

We could say a lot, but these verses focus on the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood. The OT law was incapable of saving anyone, so a new “law” had to be established with a suitable “new” priest to administer it. Jesus was part of the tribe of

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Judah—the “wrong” tribe for a priest under the former system. These things may seem inconsequential to us, but we should try to imagine how radical it would have been for a group of people who had well-established rules and practices that were also given by God. We might imagine how passionately they could resist the claim that their divinely appointed priesthood was being replaced by another divinely appointed priesthood. We see this tension played out in the Gospels and in Acts, not to mention other parts of the NT.

4. Verses 15-22 culminate with the summary, “This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.” What reasons do you see in these verses, or in the whole chapter up until this point, of why Jesus fits this role?

Jesus is priest, not because of ancestry (like the Levites), but because of his “indestructible life.” Jesus’ hope is better than the hope of the Old Covenant because the law had no power to save, but to condemn. To top it off with a link to last week’s passage (6:13-20), Jesus’ appointment as high priest was even confirmed with an oath, conveyed in Psalm 110.

5. Verses 23-28 summarize essential characteristics or qualities of Jesus that make him unique from any other priest. What are some of these distinct attributes that you find most significant?

We could include that Jesus is eternal; that he is “holy, innocent, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens”; and that he had no need to offer sacrifices for himself. This could be a place to drill down to a deeper level about (for example) Jesus’ innocence. How is that distinct from every other priest?

6. Hebrews 4:15-16 emphasized how Jesus is like us—that he’s able to relate to our weakness. This chapter, though, places an emphasis on how Jesus is different from us and any other human priest. Why are both the similarity of Jesus to us and his difference from us important for his role as priest?

There could be other answers to this, but Jesus’s similarity to us as the one who can “sympathize with our weaknesses” gives us assurance that he knows something of our condition. He understands our frailties. On the other hand, Jesus is unlike us in critical ways so that his intercession on our behalf is not clouded or diminished in any way by his own imperfection or unrighteousness. He is a priest of a different kind, which is what this chapter is underscoring.

Wrap Up

Jesus is a priest unlike any other! He can relate to us, yet Jesus is also all-powerful and able to deliver us. To help celebrate this, you could consider asking group members ahead of time to bring a tangible item before this meeting that represents how God has intervened or provided in their own lives recently. Ask them to be prepared to explain how God has been able to help and understand their situation, and how that item represents God’s ability to act and bless.

- It should be a physical item that members can hold up and talk about.

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- Members should talk about their own experience (not someone else's).

If you're really feeling like celebrating, you could conclude the meeting by playing the song "Yes He Can" by Cain.