



The Gospel Project – Sermon Outline

Title: The Day the Priests Dropped Dead

Text: Leviticus 8-10, Hebrews 4, 1 Peter 2

Connection to Unit Theme: God is holy, just, and jealous. We must learn to love and fear Him for these powerfully personal attributes, understanding them through the gospel as we adopt them as our own attributes through Jesus.

Introduction Idea

Parents must teach their children from a very early age not to play with fire. Children must learn that all sources of fire are dangerous and potentially deadly. But just because fire can be unsafe doesn't mean that it is always bad. Fire is a very helpful asset to humanity as it warms our houses, cooks our food, and does other essential things. The point of every parent's lesson is not to do away with fire, but to teach a healthy fear and respect for its power. In the same way, God's holiness, justice, and jealousy are beneficial as well as dangerous. In Leviticus 8-10, two priests played with fire and God's holiness, resulting in their death.

Sermon Division I – The holiness of God is beneficial to believers (Lev. 8-9)

Leviticus 8 is the beginning of a time of celebration for the nation of Israel. Up to this point God has chosen them as His people, freed them from Egyptian slavery, and taught them how to be His kingdom citizens (Ex 25-40). Here, God commands Moses to ceremonially set apart the sons of Aaron for the holy priesthood. Moses did so by having them washed, changed into new clothes, anointed with oil, and with blood sacrifices on the bronze altar. On the eighth day, the excitement, anticipation, and expectation heightened. If they had done everything right, the glory of the Lord would fall and consume these final sacrifices made on behalf of the priests, sinners before God like all the other Israelites. Sure enough, the glory of the Lord fell as fire from heaven and consumed the sacrifices. The people responded with shouts, falling on their faces (Lev 9:22-24).

Application: Appreciate the holiness of God. In the Old Testament, The people of God had to go through great lengths to experience acceptance from His holiness. Today, God has accepted us through the gospel of Jesus and His holiness. As you read the Old Testament, thank God for the New Covenant that He has provided through Jesus. Jesus has fulfilled the Old Covenant so that we can enjoy life in the New Covenant.



Sermon Division II – The holiness of God is dangerous to disobeyers (Lev. 10)

Notice what happens next directly after the ceremonial consecration of the priests. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, made fire mixed with incense in their priestly pans. But something went very wrong. Moses writes that their fire offering was unauthorized worship before God. It could be that Nadab and Abihu unlawfully entered into the Holy of Holies. Perhaps they were drunk when making this fire before the Lord. Or, it could simply be that God didn't command them to make the fire at that time. Whatever the reason, it was unauthorized worship. The Lord consumed the two priests, just as He had previously consumed the sacrifices offered on their behalf. Their father, Aaron, was stunned, but he "held his peace" (10:3).

Application: Although God views Christians through the gospel, never lose a healthy fear of the holiness, justice, and jealousy of God for His own glory. Never take God's grace for granted, as He continues to hate sin and disciplines Christians who disobey.

Sermon Division III – The holiness of Jesus is accounted to believers (Heb. 4:14-16)

We cannot play around with worshiping our holy God. He takes it seriously, and so must we. We must not offer Him worship in any unauthorized way, as He not only hates it but pours out His wrath against it. We must only offer worship to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus isn't only the Son of God, but also our High Priest. He only offered one sacrifice and one offering to God - His own body. It was such a pleasing offering to God that it was the last one He required. Now, everyone that believes in the High Priest Jesus is fully forgiven by God. If Jesus is our High Priest, and we as Christians are in Christ, then we are priests to God. We are His chosen servants, authorized to draw near to Him and provide spiritual care for God's people.

Application: If you are a priest to God through our High Priest, Jesus, you have full access to God's throne. You are authorized and called to minister to God's people. You are responsible to make your body as a living sacrifice to God through the sacrifice of Jesus. This week, do your own word study in the New Testament on the priesthood of the believer.

Conclusion Idea

As members of the church, we are like stones being built up to make God's temple. We are to be a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ (1 Pet 2:5). In God's temple, every stone is important. In our churches, we are only as healthy and powerful as our weakest members. Every believer within our churches is a priest to God. Each of us must be striving to draw near to God, love one another, and minister to those in our community. How do we do this? Through Jesus Christ alone, our great High Priest.