



GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
AT CASTLEWOODS

ORDER OF WORSHIP
December 10th, 2023

MORNING WORSHIP

Thomas Winn — Elder/Pastor

The Prelude Prepare your heart for worship

The Call to Worship Chris Kimbrell

Hymn "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

The Prayer of Confession and Praise Jason Price

Hymn "Once in Royal David's City"

Hymn "Away in a Manger"

The Reading of the Word — *Isaiah 52:13-Isaiah 53:12*

Hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

The Interlude Instrumentalists

The Sermon — *"Our Great High Priest" (Hebrews 4:14-16)* Prashant Thakkar

A Time of Reflection Upon the Word Preached

Hymn "Good Christian Men, Rejoice"

The Benediction Prashant Thakkar

The Postlude

EVENING WORSHIP

The Prelude Prepare your heart for worship

Hymn "The First Noel"

Hymn "We Three Kings"

Prayer

The Sermon — *"I am the True Vine" (John 15:1-11)* Seth Lirette

Hymn "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

The Benediction

The Postlude



COMMENTARY

1.] What kind of high priest Christ is (v. 14): Seeing we have such a high priest; that is, First, A great high priest, much greater than Aaron, or any of the priests of his order. The high priests under the law were accounted great and venerable person; but they were but faint types and shadows of Christ. The greatness of our high priest is set forth, 1. By his having passed into the heavens. The high priest under the law, once a year, went out of the people's sight within the veil, into the holiest of all, where were the sacred signals of the presence of God; but Christ once for all has passed into the heavens, to take the government of all upon him, to send the Spirit to prepare a place for his people, and to make intercession for them. Christ executed one part of his priesthood on earth, in dying for us; the other he executes in heaven, by pleading the cause, and presenting the offerings, of his people. 2. The greatness of Christ is set forth by his name, Jesus—a physician and a Saviour, and one of a divine nature, the Son of God by eternal generation; and therefore having divine perfection, able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him. Secondly, He is not only a great, but a gracious high priest, merciful, compassionate, and sympathizing with his people: We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, v. 15. Though he is so great, and so far above us, yet he is very kind, and tenderly concerned for us. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities in such a manner as none else can be; for he was himself tried with all the afflictions and troubles that are incident to our nature in its fallen state: and this not only that he might be able to satisfy for us, but to sympathize with us. But then, Thirdly, He is a sinless high priest: He was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin. He was tempted by Satan, but he came off without sin. We seldom meet with temptations but they give us some shock. We are apt to give back, though we do not yield; but our great high priest came off clear in his encounter with the devil, who could neither find any sin in him nor fix any stain upon him. He was tried severely by the Father. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; and yet he sinned not, either in thought, word, or deed. He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled; and such a high priest became us.

Having thus told us what a one our high priest is, the apostle proceeds to show us, [2.] How we should demean ourselves towards him. First, Let us hold fast our profession of faith in him, v. 14. Let us never deny him, never be ashamed of him before men. Let us hold fast the enlightening doctrines of Christianity in our heads, the enlivening principles of it in our hearts, the open profession of it in our lips, and our practical and universal subjection to it in our lives. Observe here, 1. We ought to be possessed of the doctrines, principles, and practice, of the Christian life. 2. When we are so, we may be in danger of losing our hold, from the corruption of our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the allurements

of this evil world. 3. The excellency of the high priest of our profession would make our apostasy from him most heinous and inexcusable; it would be the greatest folly and the basest ingratitude. 4. Christians must not only set our well, but they must hold out: those who endure to the end will be saved, and none but they. Secondly, We should encourage ourselves, by the excellency of our high priest, to come boldly to the throne of grace, v. 16. Here observe, 1. There is a throne of grace set up, a way of worship instituted, in which God may with honour meet poor sinners, and treat with them, and they may with hope draw nigh to him, repenting and believing. God might have set up a tribunal of strict and inexorable justice, dispensing death, the wages of sin, to all who were convened before it; but he has chosen to set up a throne of grace. A throne speaks authority, and bespeaks awe and reverence. A throne of grace speaks great encouragement even to the chief of sinners. There grace reigns, and acts with sovereign freedom, power, and bounty. 2. It is our duty and interest to be often found before this throne of grace, waiting on the Lord in all the duties of his worship, private and public. It is good for us to be there. 3. Our business and errand at the throne of grace should be that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Mercy and grace are the things we want, mercy to pardon all our sins and grace to purify our souls. 4. Besides the daily dependence we have upon God for present supplies, there are some seasons in which we shall most sensibly need the mercy and grace of God, and we should lay up prayers against such seasons—times of temptation, either by adversity or prosperity, and especially a dying time: we should every day put up a petition for mercy in our last day. The Lord grant unto us that we may find mercy of the Lord at that day, 2 Tim. 1:18. 5. In all our approaches to this throne of grace for mercy, we should come with a humble freedom and boldness, with a liberty of spirit and a liberty of speech; we should ask in faith, nothing doubting; we should come with a Spirit of adoption, as children to a reconciled God and Father. We are indeed to come with reverence and godly fear; but not with terror and amazement; not as if we were dragged before the tribunal of justice, but kindly invited to the mercy-seat, where grace reigns, and loves to exert and exalt itself towards us. 6. The office of Christ, as being our high priest, and such a high priest, should be the ground of our confidence in all our approaches to the throne of grace. Had we not a Mediator, we could have no boldness in coming to God; for we are guilty and polluted creatures. All we do is polluted; we cannot go into the presence of God alone; we must either go in the hand of a Mediator or our hearts and our hopes will fail us. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. He is our Advocate, and, while he pleads for his people, he pleads with the price in his hand, by which he purchased all that our souls want or can desire.



RESPONSIBILITIES

Today's Nursery Volunteers

December 10th
<i>Morning</i> Katie Crocker, Ashley Lirette, and Mary Hunter Sharp
<i>Evening/Afternoon</i> Bunny Finch and Wendy Winn
<i>Wednesday - December 13th</i> Laurie Price and Katherine Ranck

Today's Sound Operator - Richard Jackson



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The Children's Choir will meet this afternoon at 5:15 pm.

SCRIPTURE AND CAROL SERVICE

Our Scripture and Carol Service will be Sunday, December 17th, at 6 pm with a fellowship after. Please share and invite friends and family for this special time of worship.

SENIOR ADULT CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Senior Adult Christmas Party will be Tuesday, December 19th at 5:30 pm at the church. Sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. See Lawanda if you need more information.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

We will go out Christmas Caroling on Wednesday, December 20th at 5:30 pm with a fellowship to follow. Be sure to sign the fellowship list to bring refreshments.

CHRISTMAS MAILBOX/LOTTIE MOON OFFERING

We will once again be passing out your Christmas cards to the congregation. In lieu of purchasing stamps to mail these cards we ask for you to make a donation to Lottie Moon (please specify on your check memo or Venmo note). Please place your Christmas cards in the basket in the church office by December 20th.

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

On November 26th, a series of sermons will be on the incarnation of Christ. These sermons will continue through December 24th. May God use these sermons to encourage us to worship Him more faithfully, especially during this time of year when we are confronted with much worldliness. May we “by the mercies of God present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2.

