



Bethel Sunrise Sermon Notes – “The Hope of Great Reward”

Speaker: Ps Preston Dobbins

Series: Jesus Is Better

Scriptures: Hebrews 5, Matthew 13:45-46, 1 Peter 2:9, James 4:7

Main Idea

Following Jesus will cost you something, but what He gives in return is infinitely greater. As believers, we are called to live as priests, release unforgiveness, and submit every area of our lives to God because Jesus is our great reward.

Jesus Is Worth the Cost

The original audience of Hebrews faced tremendous pressure for following Christ. Many were being rejected by family, community, and religious systems they had built their lives around.

Following Jesus always requires surrender.

It may cost:

- **Old habits**
- **Unhealthy relationships**
- **Worldly ambitions**
- **Personal comfort**
- **Pride**
- **Control**

Matthew 13:45-46

"The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls..."

When the merchant found the pearl of great value, he sold everything he had to obtain it.

Key Thought:

Jesus is the Pearl of Great Price.

The cost may feel painful in the moment, but when compared to what we gain in Christ, it becomes a cheap cost with an incredible return on investment.

We Are a Royal Priesthood

Hebrews 5

Jesus is our Great High Priest.

But He is also a priest of priests.

1 Peter 2:9

"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood..."

Many believers assume ministry belongs only to pastors.

But revival happens when every believer embraces their priestly calling.

Priests Represent God's Heart

A priest:

- **Extends mercy**
- **Shows compassion**
- **Deals gently with people**
- **Carries God's heart to others**
- **Helps reconcile people to God**

Key Thought:

You don't need a platform to be a priest.

You simply need a willingness to represent Jesus wherever God has placed you.

Stop Living Only for Yourself

One of the greatest obstacles to ministry is self-focus.

Fear, insecurity, and shyness often keep us from seeing the needs around us.

Meanwhile, God is calling us to notice:

- **The lonely**
- **The hurting**
- **The overlooked**
- **The discouraged**

Key Thought:

Priests have eyes for people.

When we stop obsessing over ourselves, we become available to love others the way Christ loves us.

The Danger of Unforgiveness

God has shown us incredible mercy.

Yet many believers struggle to extend that same mercy to others.

Key Thought:

Unforgiveness blocks the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Bitterness and resentment become barriers that keep us from experiencing the freedom God intends.

Who Is Holding Your Life?

Ps Preston shared a sobering reality:

When we refuse to forgive someone, our life is no longer in God's hands.

It's in theirs.

The person who wounded us continues influencing:

- **Our emotions**
- **Our thoughts**
- **Our peace**
- **Our future**

Key Thought:

Forgiveness puts your life back into God's hands.

Forgiveness is not approving what happened.

Forgiveness is releasing the debt and trusting God with justice.

The Engine of God's Ear

Hebrews 5:7

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears... and he was heard because of his reverent submission."

Notice what Scripture says.

Jesus was heard not simply because He cried.

Not simply because He prayed.

Not simply because He felt deeply.

He was heard because of His submission.

Key Thought:

The engine of God's ear is a submitted life.

Many people mistake emotional experiences for spiritual maturity.

But tears alone do not equal surrender.

God is looking for hearts that genuinely say:

"Not my will, but Yours be done."

Submission Is the Path to Victory

Submission is not weakness.

Submission is strength under God's authority.

True surrender means laying down:

- **Your plans**
- **Your expectations**
- **Your relationships**
- **Your ambitions**
- **Your timeline**

Key Thought:

Some of our dreams must die so God's purposes can live.

Many people want God to bless their plans.

Jesus invites us to surrender our plans and embrace His.

Resist the Devil

James 4:7

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Notice the order:

1. **Submit to God.**
2. **Resist the devil.**
3. **The devil flees.**

Key Thought:

Spiritual authority flows from submission.

The greatest weapon against the enemy is a fully surrendered life.

The Hope of Great Reward

Every sacrifice we make for Jesus is worth it.

Why?

Because Jesus Himself is the reward.

He is:

- **Better than comfort**
- **Better than offense**
- **Better than self-will**
- **Better than worldly success**

- **Better than temporary satisfaction**

Key Thought:

There is no sacrifice you make for Jesus that compares to what you gain in Him.

Final Challenge

Take time this week to sit before God and ask:

- **Is there anything I haven't fully surrendered?**
- **Is there someone I need to forgive?**
- **Am I living as a priest?**
- **Have I become too focused on myself?**
- **Am I pursuing my will or God's will?**

Key Thought:

The hope of great reward is found on the other side of surrender.

Next Step

Ps Preston encouraged the church to join together in prayer before service.

Arrive 15 minutes early:

- **8:45 AM Service**
- **10:45 AM Service**

Let's seek God together and pray for what He wants to do in our community.

Discussion Questions

1. **Preston said that following Jesus is going to cost us something. What are some things believers today may have to lay down in order to fully follow Christ, and why is it ultimately worth it?**
2. **Scripture calls us a "royal priesthood." What does it look like to live as a priest in your everyday life, and how has God uniquely wired you to minister to people around you?**
3. **Preston taught that unforgiveness blocks the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Why do you think it's often easier to receive God's mercy than it is to extend mercy to others?**
4. **When you examine your prayer life, what makes it difficult to move from asking God to fulfill your plans toward genuinely praying, "Not my will, but Yours be done"?**
5. **Preston said that the engine of God's ear is a submitted life. What is one specific area of your life—a relationship, ambition, offense, fear, or dream—that you have not fully surrendered to God? What practical step can you take this week to place that area back into His hands?**

Personal Reflection

Hebrews 5:7

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission."

Take two minutes in silence and ask the Lord:

"Is there any area of my life that I have not fully submitted to You?"

Invite Him to reveal any area of unforgiveness, self-will, fear, or control that needs to be surrendered so that you can walk in the freedom and reward He has prepared for you.