

HOW CAN I BE A BLESSING

BY PASTOR LARS JAENSCH (AUGUST, 30TH 2026) / WWW.FCGKIEL.DE

Sometimes we encounter figures in the Bible who shine briefly, leave a deep impression, and are gone in the next moment. Melchizedek is just such a figure. His brief encounter with the exhausted Abraham in the dust of the Canaanite desert seems at first glance like an inconspicuous side note, yet it proves to be one of the most profound keys to our own faith life. In a world shaped by pressure to perform, constant availability, and the struggle for recognition, even in spiritual ministry many people reach the limits of their strength. How can our faith remain a bubbling fountain of life instead of ending in exhaustion or routine? Together, we look at the secret of Melchizedek—and how Jesus Christ fulfills this picture. It is about the power of "bread and wine" for the exhausted, the foundation of an unshakeable identity in God, and the secret of a ministry that does not feed on its own exertion, but from divine fullness. May the following reflection open your eyes anew to who you are in Christ, and encourage you to meet others as a bearer of hope, healing, and blessing.

ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK

I invite you today to mentally follow me into the Canaanite desert and become a witness there to a rather mysterious, but also very holy encounter. We meet Abraham and Melchizedek there. Today we are focusing on Melchizedek, a fascinating but often overlooked biblical figure. He suddenly appears in the Old Testament like a comet on the horizon, shines briefly and brightly—and disappears again. You can read his short but very succinct story in Genesis 14:17-20; Melchizedek is then only mentioned again in Psalm 110:4, and in the New Testament his story is picked up once more in Hebrews 6:20-7:22. Let us read a short passage from it:

***Hebrews 7:1-3:** This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after defeating several kings in a great battle, Melchizedek came out to meet him. (He brought bread and wine with him—as Genesis 14 adds) and blessed him. Then Abraham took a tenth part of everything he had captured and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means 'king of righteousness,' and king of Salem means 'king of peace.' Otherwise, nothing is shared about him: No father is mentioned, no mother, no genealogy, no beginning and no end to his life. Thus he resembles the Son of God and remains, so to speak, a priest forever and ever.*

This text reveals the deepest secret of every truly spiritual ministry. It shows us the foundation on which our faith life and our ministry in the church must rest in order to avoid burnout, overestimating ourselves, or a monotonous routine. Instead, they are meant to become an enduring source of life and blessing for those around us.

To explore this secret, let us allow the scene from Genesis 14—to which the Letter to the Hebrews refers here—to play out before your inner eye, and dive a little into the story of the events described here! Abraham returns exhausted from a hard battle. He fought to free his nephew Lot and his family. Although he was victorious, he truly did not look like a shining hero. Quite the opposite. Sweaty, bleeding, and covered in desert dirt, he leans on a staff and trembles with exhaustion. The noise of weapons and the cries of battle are likely still ringing shrilly in his ears. After the battle, when the adrenaline drops, a deep inner emptiness often sets in. Abraham is physically, mentally, and spiritually completely drained.

Just as he is still standing in the middle of the desert dust, not in a palace and far from his destination, someone approaches him. It is Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of the highest God, who specifically set out on his way and now comes toward Abraham. And what does he have with him?

Genesis 14:18-19 (NKJV) *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth!' Melchizedek, it says here, brought out bread and wine. The wording sounds as if he were providing for Abraham's entire army. He brings sustenance. He brings refreshment. He brings blessings.*

Melchizedek, as it says here, brought out bread and wine. The wording sounds as though he were supplying Abraham's entire army. He brings nourishment. He brings refreshment. He brings blessing.

I find this to be a truly touching picture for us, but also for the people living out on the streets of our city. Just like Abraham, we often stand in battles and challenges that demand a great deal of our strength. Daily work life challenges us with constant pressure to prove ourselves or the fear of losing our job. Caring for sick parents, raising children, and keeping the family together—all of this can be quite challenging at times. And then there are the quiet, invisible battles: fears, disappointments, worries, or trials. With all of this in tow, people do not come to church to have even more burdens placed upon them. They are not looking for a moral rulebook telling them what else they ought to do. Rather, they come exhausted, dusty, and hungry.

Our very first and most important task as Christians is therefore to turn toward people in the name of the highest God, to pursue them, meet them, and offer them bread and wine! We are servants of the Most High, bringing the gospel of God's grace to the exhausted on God's behalf.

The bread symbolizes that which truly nourishes our soul: the Word of God, the pure, true, powerful truth. **The wine**, in turn, stands for the joy of the Holy Spirit, the renewal of our heart, as well as the peace and freshness of a life drawing from the overflowing streams of God. So when you serve others, always bring bread and wine in this sense: blessing and encouragement! Be a person who enables others to encounter God, gives them comfort, and grants them courage.

AN AWARENESS OF IDENTITY, DIGNITY, AND VALUE

Where, however, can we ourselves find the energy to permanently be such bearers of blessing and selflessly serve people without burning out from exhaustion? The answer is provided to us by the Letter to the Hebrews as it highlights a remarkable characteristic of Melchizedek:

Hebrews 7:3 *Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God...*

In the Old Testament, the ministry and authority of a priest depended strictly on his genealogy. To serve as a priest, one had to be a Levite and be able to prove that Aaron was a direct ancestor. One's own identity was therefore tied strongly to origin and human recognition. Melchizedek, however, could not present such human validation. His priesthood was not based on tradition, genealogy, or human approval. He actually could not have been a priest, yet he was called and appointed by God Himself.

Melchizedek, who was fully aware of his dignity, his worth, and his divine calling, needed no human recognition, no pat on the back. He neither had to flatter Abraham—the patriarch of Israel—nor did he have to fear him. Nor did he need to elevate himself over him or treat him condescendingly. Instead, he blessed Abraham with a relaxed, serene naturalness!

Melchizedek is a picture of Jesus Christ (see Psalm 110:4) and His eternal priesthood, as the Letter to the Hebrews emphasizes no less than six times (Hebrews 6:20, 7:3, 7:11, 7:15, 7:17, and 7:21). Seldom does the Bible emphasize something so frequently; therefore, it must be of extremely high importance. Let us take a look at Jesus' self-understanding and His attitude when serving people. One of the most striking examples of this is certainly found in John 13. Jesus is sitting with His disciples at the Last

Supper. It is the night before His crucifixion. If ever a person had reason to be self-absorbed, it was Jesus in this hour. Yet John writes:

John 13:3–4 *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.*

Jesus' actions were shaped by a very specific awareness. Jesus knew about His mission and His authority, His origin, and His future. He was fully aware of His dignity. And what does He do here in this awareness? Does He erect a throne? Does He demand submission? No, quite the opposite! In verse 5 it says:

John 13:5 *After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.*

Whoever is secure in their identity "in Christ," and thus knows their dignity, their worth, and their calling, can—just like Jesus—humbly go to their knees to serve others without the fear of losing face, dignity, or worth. This self-understanding and this deeply internalized awareness decisively determine whether we live and serve with the joy of the redeemed or with the depression of slaves. In our lives, faith lives, and ministry, we frequently encounter two dangers that can certainly bring us down.

The desire to please everyone: We seek human recognition, praise, and validation. This is normal, we need it—and it really feels good. But where we make ourselves dependent on such validation and are out only for praise or likes, fear of man gains the upper hand, and we stop truly serving God.

The fear of criticism or rejection: Of course, no one wants to be constantly criticized or rejected. But if we hide behind roles, ministry, or positions to avoid criticism and hurt, we build inner walls, distance ourselves, and risk loneliness and isolation.

Both dangers have the same root: A lack of awareness of our identity in Christ. But when you know who you are in Jesus—that you are a beloved, redeemed child of the Most High God, that your name is written in the Book of Life, then you are free! Then you can wash the feet of others without taking a chip off your crown. In this way, your heart remains joyful and balanced over the long haul, and you bring glory to God.

Our ministry is not a "for Jesus," but a "with Jesus" and ultimately the natural result of a deep, personal relationship with God. Spend time with the Master! Let Him wash your feet daily and remind you of your identity as a beloved child of God. In this way, you will live and serve with a calm, loving, and royal dignity while drawing from God's fullness.

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

Let us now take a look at Abraham, the second person in our story. How does he react to this surprising encounter with Melchizedek? First, he accepts the blessing with a grateful heart, refreshes himself, and hungrily enjoys the bread and thirstily the wine. But then he does something truly remarkable:

Hebrews 7:2 *To him Abraham gave a tenth of everything he had taken as plunder.*

Abraham gave the priest Melchizedek a significant portion of the spoils before taking anything for himself or distributing further shares among his men. What moved Abraham to do this? It was not a legal obligation—the law given by Moses did not even exist yet, as Hebrews 7:5–6 makes clear. Abraham's action was simply the spontaneous, emotional, and at the same time spiritual response of a grateful and overflowing heart! For Abraham recognized very clearly that God Most High had preserved

him and granted him victory, not his own strength, tactical skill, or sword. The tithe was therefore simply Abraham's "thank you!" to God. And in this way, he honored God—in Melchizedek.

The question now facing us is: How do we react when God places pastors and leaders alongside us in the church? The answer is simple: likewise with gratitude and appreciation! In Hebrews 7:7, we read a statement intended to explain Abraham's behavior, but which might sound a bit alien to us today:

Hebrews 7:7 *No one will dispute that the one who blesses (= Melchizedek) is superior to the one who is blessed (= Abraham).*

Admittedly, the idea that someone "stands above another" sounds a bit strange in our modern day. But before you turn away in outrage: This does not mean that leaders and pastors are more valuable or better than others. Nor do they have the right—referring to this scripture passage—to place themselves self-righteously and domineeringly over others, to consider themselves superior, and to treat others arrogantly from above. Rather, in their spiritual mission, they encounter us in the name of God to serve us, lead us, and bless us. By showing them the respect and reverence due to them, we are actually honoring God Himself (and the reverse is also true). This can happen in many ways. Here are just a few examples:

Prayer: Leaders rely on the prayers of the congregation to carry out their duties effectively. Honor Jesus by supporting your leaders through constant prayer.

Thanks: Leaders are only human too and occasionally need encouragement. An honest and sincere "thank you!" does them good and honors God.

Recognition: Furthermore, God is also honored when we recognize and respect leadership positions and actually allow ourselves to be led, which is a particular challenge when one holds a different opinion. The Letter to the Ephesians states that these individuals are God's gifts to the church (see Ephesians 4:8-12).

In brief summary, this means: When spiritual ministry occurs in the awareness of divine identity—humbly, worthily, with bread and wine; and when the congregation meets this ministry with gratitude and support, receives it, and values it, then God Himself is glorified! As a pastor and leader of a church, I can write this truth so candidly and openly precisely because I myself have no cause for complaint in this area, and thus am not trying to give an indirect "subtle hint."

GOD'S ROYAL PRIESTS

Let us return once more to Melchizedek. His priesthood—reflecting as it does Jesus—also serves as a model for our ministry and leadership. Jesus once said to His disciples: "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). The general priesthood in the New Testament is not limited to a specific stage, a specific office, or reserved only for very special privileged persons! This becomes beautifully clear when we read the following verses:

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

Every single member of the body of the church is invited by God to share in His work in this time and world, called as a "royal priest" and sent to the people in their neighborhood and city. We are—as God has decided—all quite officially ambassadors or "sent in Christ's stead," as 2 Corinthians 5:20 puts it. "In Christ's stead" means that we now carry on the exact same mission that Jesus Christ had on this earth:

Luke 4:18–19 *'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'*

So when you return to your daily life tomorrow morning—be it to the office, the workbench, the university, school, supermarket, or neighborhood—you will meet people there who resemble the hungry and thirsty Abraham after the battle. People who are exhausted from the battle of life, wounded, tired, empty, and looking for meaning. You can bless these people! You can offer them "bread and wine":

- by giving them some of your precious time and lending an open ear to their worries;
- by helping them practically right where there is a need;
- by giving them a smile, being an encourager, and speaking positive words of hope where others only gossip, complain, mock, whine, or lament.
- And sometimes you can also bless people simply by holding them comfortingly in your arms, weeping and staying silent with them, because a hasty answer would only hurt.
- Above all, however, you can be a real blessing to people by praying for them in secret and declaring the promises of God over them in Jesus' name.

When we live this way—firmly rooted in our dignity as royal children and ready to meet people in service—then the church becomes a place of refuge. A place where people find healing and God is made great. But perhaps today you feel more like Abraham: tired, dusty, and exhausted from the battle of everyday life. Then remember that in Jesus you have a "High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses," as Hebrews 4:15 says, and Hebrews 7 adds:

Hebrews 7:24–26 *But Christ lives forever; his priesthood will never be taken over by another. And because Jesus Christ lives forever and intercedes for us before God, he will also save once and for all those who come to God through him. He alone is the High Priest we need!*

He does not only approach Abraham; He approaches you too. He offers you His bread and His wine. He washes your feet and speaks lovingly over your life what He also said over Jesus:

Matthew 12:18 *'Behold! My Servant (My friend, My child) whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!'*

Let these words sink deep into your inner self; they are "bread and wine" to us from God. And then let us live together out of this fullness. Let us receive His blessing and serve one another in humility, that is, in the knowledge of our dignity and standing before God. Then, as a church, we will be an unceasing stream of bread, wine, and hope in this world.