

Hebrews 4:14-5:10 (April 29, 2022)

Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Structure of Text:

4:14 Connects to 4:1-13 as a reminder as to how to rest in God is to hold fast to their confession. As Jesus is our High Priest who passed through the Heavens, and is the Son of God (this is a transition into a new section where he will now speak of priesthood)

4:15-16 why is Jesus being a High Priest an encouragement to us

v.5:1-4 What are high priests (especially those in Aaron/Levitical order): what do they do, how do they relate to (weak) people, and how are they call and who do they glorify.

- Compare and Contrast -

v.5-10 Jesus is a high priest who is like those of Aaron's order, but he is unique, because 1) he is the Son of God, and he is in the order of Melchizedek

Hebrews 4:14-16 – Jesus as our High Priest

1. Hebrew 4:13 speaks of striving to enter God's rest. What is this rest and what makes Christian desire it? Jesus is described as a "great high priest," "passed through the heavens," "Son of God." How do these ideas contribute to how Jesus helps us to enter this rest?

a) What is this rest and what makes Christian desire it?

Rest?

This rest is rest in Christ which is "There is surely a "salvation rest," a resting from our works in an effort to earn God's favor, when we come to faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary." As it says in Hebrews 4:9–11:

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience"

Work is currently important to how we live our lives today, in fact, many things in life require hard work for success, and many believe that work is required for salvation. This was true for the Jewish leaders and salvation in this first century, many of them had placed their faith in the works of the law as their hope for salvation. Jesus' salvation is a rest from work because it is not by work that we place our hope to experience God's rest, but faith in Christ, because works of the law will not save us (Rom 3:20)

Leader's notes:

- Rest in work does not mean to do nothing and there can be a failure to enter that rest because of unbelief. (Heb 3:19) They failed to rest their lives on God's promises and receive rest from their enemies by not entering the Promise Land.
- This rest is connected to God's rest in Gen 2:2 and Heb 4:4. As it says on Desiringgod, *"God rested on the seventh day from all his works."* So he sees in this a restful, peaceful, sovereign God who has a rest and a peace and a place of joy where his people can enjoy fellowship with him. He will call it a "Sabbath rest" because on the seventh day, God rested."

Why Christians desire?

Christians desire this rest because they know that by their work they can never be saved. It is Christ who saves them and the person they put their hope in, and not their work. Rest is a benefit of saving faith that Jesus has

taken off the yoke (that is burden laden) of trying to work for our salvation (which we can never actually do), and in him we find rest. (Matt 11:28-30)

b) How do these ideas contribute to how Jesus helps us to enter this rest?

Great High Priest – Without giving away 5:1-3, in general we think of a high priest as 1) acts on behalf of his people and 2) offering sacrifices especially on Day of Atonement. Jesus is our High Priest in the fact he is our great high priest who acts on our behalf, and he makes and is the sacrifice for our sins.

Heavens – Jesus is already in God’s rest and is in God’s presence as high priest. Hence, as we are to striving to enter that rest, Jesus is in that rest. This is to show a guarantee that God’s people will celebrate the Sabbath rest because as they are in Christ our saviour is already there and he advocates on our behalf.

Son of God – no one who isn’t a Christian could confess this and therefore is probably related to the confession of faith that they were to make. This title speaks to Jesus’ divinity, and only those who are his could proclaim this statement. For instance, in Matthew 26:23-24, the Pharisees clearly saw this title to mean he claimed he was divine.

- 2. For us as believers, Jesus is our heavenly high priest, and he is described as one who has “passed through the heavens,” and “the Son of God.” This last point makes Jesus sound like someone who is completely impassable and who wouldn’t understand us and our human situation. How does v.15-16 oppose this idea?**

a) How does v.15-16 oppose this idea?

Jesus is quite personal as our high priest. Even though he is in heaven or the Son of God he is a high priest who sympathizes with helpless people. He is personable, one who has lived through the difficulties of a human life.

Jesus is one that was susceptible to all temptation’s weakness, and frailty of humanity as we are. Though he is one of divine glory, he experienced human humility and humiliation of the Cross. He also faced all the human frailties as we faced them, yet without sin.

- 3. Has there ever been a situation in your own life where you felt that no one could understand you, you lacked confidence in bringing it to God, or made you doubt your faith? Please share that experience. Jesus’ life and work encourages us in two ways in persevering: i) he experienced these things without sinning, and ii) because of Christ, we can draw near the throne of grace with confidence. Explain how these are encouragements in persevering and how these beliefs might help us in the situations you shared.**

a) Has there ever been a situation in your own life where you felt that no one could understand you, you lacked confidence in bringing it to God, or made you doubt your faith?

Looking for: That sometimes we are so stuck in our situation that it feels like no one, including Jesus, could understand us. Perhaps we feel like we’ve done something that God will not hear because of our sin, or something has happened for us to doubt our faith and Jesus won’t answer.

b) Explain how these are encouragements in persevering and how these beliefs might help us in the situations you shared

Notes to leaders: We should hold fast to our confession because Jesus understands our situation and has opened access to God who gives mercy and grace in times of need. The author follows the formula of Heb 4:14 Where he is High Priest and Son of God (part of their confession). How does he work in help us in the role of High Priest and how does he save as the Son of God

- *Jesus sympathizes with us* – this is a “psychological encouragement” (DA Carson) for the people of God as to why they should hold fast to their confession because a) he knows what we are going through and we can take it to him who is able to sympathize with us, b) he also was victorious in this life and we can turn to him and look to deal with our situations without sin as he did
- *Confidently getting near the throne of grace* – this is an encouragement of Jesus being our High Priest of what he has done in our salvation, and how it relates back to our situation. That now that Jesus has removed the barrier between God and man, the barrier that existed in the Old Testament between the mercy seat of God and Israel, we now can come confidently to the mercy seat and receive mercy and grace as needed (not just once a year as in the Old Testament)

Hebrews 5:1-10 – Aaronic/Levitical and Jesus’ Priesthood

4) v.1-4 speaks of how a high priest identifies with those in weakness, especially Levitical/Aaronic priests of Israel. What is the function of a high priest, how does he serve and identify with the people he represents, and who appoints him? From v.5-10, How is Jesus the same as the high priest described in v. 1-4? different?

a) What is the function of a high priest, how does he serve and identify with the people he represents, and who appoints him?

- Chosen from among men
- Appointment is to act on behalf of men in relation to God
- Job: to offer gifts and sacrifices (there are many offerings that the Israelites might have to give, some are offerings of gifts to God, and some are sacrifices)
- Relationship to people: To act on their behalf, to identify with them in their weakness. Yet because they are also weak and sinful, they can relate to them because of their weaknesses, and as they offer sacrifices for sin this is also for their own sin
- This appointment is made by God, as it was for Aaron, Moses’ brother and first priest (Certainly this appointment had to be in the line of Levi as this was God’s appointment. And God can use intermediaries like kings to choose the high priest)

b) From v.5-10, How is Jesus the same as the high priest described in v. 1-4? different?

The same:

- Chosen and appointed by God to act on the behalf of men in relation to God
- Brings Glory to God, and not to exalt himself (John 8:50)
 - o Leader’s note: Jesus does say to glorify him as he glorifies the Father (John 17), but I would say Jesus looks to God the Father to glorify him and not to exalt himself. For more information: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/did-jesus-exalt-himself>
- He has human weakness (Jesus loud cries and tears) and deals gently with people because he too was human

Different:

- Son of God and Priest
- He is part of the order of Melchizedek forever and not part of Aaron’s priestly order (where the Aaronic priesthood is temporal)
- When he paid for sin, he paid for everyone except himself. Jesus did not sin.

- Contrary to humans who are weak, ignorant, wayward, sinful, and cannot be perfect, he learned obedience and was made perfect in his obedience.
- Unlike Aaron's order who continuously made sacrifices for sins, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, and the source of eternal salvation

Leader's Notes:

- There is a word connection between the high priest's offering of gifts and sacrifices and Jesus' offering of prayer and supplications which probably is thinking of his entire ministry as a priest on earth. The connection could be that the gifts and sacrifices are offered for sins, thanksgiving, and devotion are equated to Jesus who offers up prayers for thanksgiving, devotion, and sin
- V.7 How was Jesus saved from death? Here it is clear that was not saved from dying, but from the power of death as Jesus did die but he was raised from the dead (cf. John 12:21-24)
- V.7 What does it mean he was heard because of his reverence? He "was heard" is important because he is suppose to be our "high priest", but the reason why he "was heard" was because of his reverence or godly fear. Reverence has tied to it the recognition of God's sovereignty and submission to God's will (as we see in the account of Abraham and Isaac Gen 22). So he was heard because of his recognition of God's sovereign action and he submitted himself to that will. We see that all throughout the gospels for example John 17:1-5.
- V.8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered? The contrast here is his divine righteousness as being the Son of God and learning obedience (righteousness) through his suffering at the Cross. When it says he "learned" obedience, I think this is similar to say he learned by experiencing it for himself. It is an experiential learning that occurred, one where he knows, not just hypothetically but by personal experience, obedience that made him perfect to be our eernal high priest and saviour.
- V. 9 and being made perfect? "This does not mean that he was once disobedient and then became obedient. It means that Jesus moved from untested obedience into suffering and then through suffering into tested and proven obedience. And this proving himself obedient through suffering was his "being perfected.'" (Desiringgod)

5) Read Gen 14:18-20 and Psalm 110:1-4 on the account of Melchizedek (his name meaning: My King is Righteous) and the description of someone who is of the order of Melchizedek. How is Jesus like and the fulfillment of Melchizedek? How is Jesus the perfect priest (in relationship to us, sin offerings, salvation, etc.,) for us today and how is this greater than Aaron's priesthood?

a) How is Jesus like and the fulfillment of Melchizedek?

- Jesus is king of peace (King of Shalom as it says about Melchizedek)
- Jesus is both king and priest as Melchizedek is
- Jesus is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic blessings which Melchizedek speaks of in Gen 14 account
- A king who rules the world by the authority of God (Psalm 110)
- Part of the line of Kings from David and sits at the right hand of God now (Psalm 110)
- Melchizedek's name means king of righteousness and Jesus learns obedience is is perfect in his obedience which lead to his kingly status as one who sits at the right hand of God right now. (Heb 1:3) This shows he really is the king of righteousness.

b) How is Jesus the perfect priest (in relationship to us, sin offerings, salvation, etc.,) for us today and how this greater than Aaron's priesthood?

- He relates to us in empathy by going through what we have gone
- By being a priest forever, not temporal
- By offering sin and being the sacrifice for that sin

- By being the source of salvation for us to all who obey
- He now allows us near the mercy seat of God with confidence
- Jesus' priesthood is better in everyway. It lasts forever, this priest is perfect, and sympathizes with all of his people, and offers and is the sacrifice we need, and allows us confidence towards the mercy seat which Aaron's priesthood did not

6) What are some reasons from today's bible study that encourage us to hold fast to our faith and to be confident to draw near the throne of grace? How can we incorporate the remembrance of these things in our daily lives?

a) encourage us to hold fast to our faith and to be confident to draw near the throne of grace?

1. Jesus is our high priest and saviour, and he gives us hope as he acts on our behalf and has done the work of salvation that allows us to draw near the mercy seat that was unavailable to Israel in Old Covenant
2. Leaves nothing out of what we can pray for, and we have hope that he will show us mercy and grace while we are in need because he has suffered similar things
3. Jesus was perfect in his weakness, and we can trust him because of his success in this life to guide us
4. Jesus offers and is the sacrifice we need, and we can put our hope in him and not on works of the Law

b) How can we incorporate the remembrance of these things in our daily lives?

Goal: to think of ways to not just know this but to remember. Here are a couple of ways:

1. To always include a remembrance of Jesus' greatness and personability in opening our prayers
2. To pray more confidently and boldly about things that bother us and to trust that Jesus hears them and will show us grace to comfort us
3. To daily remember the confession of faith we have in Christ, by saying it out loud to ourselves and others

We often do not think much of Jesus as our high priest, but as we hopefully learned today, Jesus being our high priest is something precious to us. He is our priest and saviour who understands our temptations, struggles, and human frailties and can relate to us in the deepest of ways. He also saves us by offering and being the sacrifice that we all need and allows us to confidently come to the Mercy Seat of God. Praise be to God for Jesus, who is our priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.