

## I. Review

- A. The book of Hebrews opens with a great exhortation through most of Chapter 2 for us to not neglect such a great salvation of inheriting all God has promised concerning His desire to bring us into the promised land of restoration and eternal life. God, out of His great love and desire for us to inherit salvation, positioned God the Son to become our faithful and merciful high priest. (Heb. 2:1-3, 2:17-18)

**“Therefore in all things He to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:17-18)**

- B. In our last session we wrapped up the writer's commentary, exhortations, and applications concerning Jesus as our faithful “great high priest”. The progression was as follows....
1. Heb 3 - The writer focuses upon and proves Jesus’s unfailing and unrelenting faithfulness as our high priest to bring us into the fullness of salvation. The writer leans heavily upon the exodus story as a literal and prophetic picture of the faithfulness of God and the corresponding need for God's people to believe upon His faithfulness to bring them into the promised land. (Heb. 3:2-12)
  2. The writer encourages us to remain faithful to the One who is always faithful to us. God desires for us to enter His rest through having faith or believing in His faithfulness to bring us into the promised salvation by leaning fully upon His grace and mercy. (Heb. 3:2,5-6)
  3. Heb. 4 - We enter into God's rest by believing or having faith concerning His faithfulness to us as the captain and great high priest to cause us to inherit salvation. We are exhorted to not harden our hearts and enter into the disobedience of unbelief concerning inheriting salvation through attempting to obtain it through our own strength or works. (Heb. 3:9-11)
- C. At this point in the letter, the writer has wrapped up his exhortations and applications concerning Jesus as the faithful high priest. Now they move on to giving us explorations and applications of Jesus as our merciful high priest.

## II. Verse-By-Verse (Heb. 5:1-14)

- A. In our last session, we were introduced to the dissertation of Jesus as our merciful high priest. God is merciful and compassionate by nature. However, in the incarnation, God the Son took God's mercy and compassion to unfathomable depths through experiencing the weakness of the human frame in a world subject to sin and death. Now, God the Son, through His role as the great High Priest of our salvation, has been positioned to “sympathize with our weaknesses”. (Heb. 4:15-16)
- B. The writer now introduces the theme of Jesus as a merciful high priest through the order of Melchizedek rather than the order of Aaron. The author has much to say about this great reality. However, here in this specific portion of the letter, the writer is focused upon the fact that even though Jesus is in a different order than Aaron, He still functions in like sympathy, compassion, and purpose as the Aaronic order.
  - 1. The High Priest to offer sacrifices for sins- The High Priest is appointed by God to offer appropriate sacrifices and offerings to atone for the sins of the people, thus maintaining the relational covenant that sin separates.
  - 2. The High Priest must be able to sympathize - One of the qualifications to be appointed High Priest is the ability to sympathize with the weaknesses of humanity. I believe that the effectiveness of the sacrifice being offered is related to the sincerity of the sacrifice in light of the sympathy for the need to be set free from the separating power of sin and death. (“my God, my God”) (Ex. 28:4-30)
  - 3. The High Priest offers for himself and the people - The High Priest offering for sin is both on his behalf and on the behalf of the people of God to be set free or delivered from death. The author points out that Jesus’ cry for God to receive an offering of Himself for the sins of the people, and deliverance from death for Himself and the people, was heard and accepted. This is proven through His resurrection and ascension. (Lev. 6:1-16; Mat. 26:36-39; Lk 22:42-44)

4. They can only be effective as High Priest if God appoints them - The proof and severity of this truth is proven through the examples in scripture of those who attempted to function in high priestly roles without being appointed sovereignly by God. (Num. 3:40-41, 16:1-8; Lev. 21:1-8; 1 Sam. 13:11-14; 2 Chron. 26:16)
  5. God the Father appointed God the Son as High Priest - The Father upholds the requirements of being appointed sovereignly by declaring that He has appointed God the Son as the eternal or unchanging great High Priest for the people of God. Without this divine appointment, Jesus' sacrifice would be ineffective and illegitimate. (Ps. 2:7, 110:4)
  6. Function of Aaronic Priesthood, but in the order of Melchizedek - The writer declares that Jesus, in his appointment as the eternal high priest on behalf of the people of God, performs all the legal functions of the Aaronic priesthood but is in or of a different order. The word translated "order" speaks of the giving of a position in accordance with the individual's unique characters and qualities. Jesus, because of His surpassing nature and character, is given far more authority and scope to His identity and function as High Priest than that of the order of Aaronic priesthood.
- C. Hindered by Immaturity - The writer now sadly must stop midway into expounding upon the greatness of the mercy of our High Priest to exhort the reader to press beyond immaturity into maturity in their quest for understanding. The writer deeply longs for the readers to comprehend the depths of the beauty of their great high priest but is concerned that they will not be able to because of their immature level of understanding.
1. For by this time - Even though we are not expected to mature overnight, we are expected to mature over time. These believers had not been stunted in their growth, but rather regressed, having grown dull of hearing through the tests of perseverance over time through the mundane and the pull of this spirit of this age.
  2. Able to teach - We are all expected to grow in our understanding of the knowledge of God to the point that we are able to disciple or instruct others. There is "by this time" for all of us where we understand the knowledge of God enough to instruct others in it.

3. Milk to solid food - Once again, this is a very tragic reality for the receivers of this letter. These believers were once so solid in their faith and understanding of the truth that they victoriously endured persecution and suffering far beyond what any of us have ever experienced. Now, they have drifted and grown dull to the point that they have to be taught again the very basic principles of salvation through Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:2)
4. By reason of use - The writer now lays out how they had grown dull and actually regressed in their faith. They had stopped engaging personally in the scriptures (word of righteousness) and discerning through the Spirit the application of those scriptures to their lives. This practice or discipline is our escort into the knowledge of God unto relational love, not just our way forward in doctrinal maturity. The pain of the writer is that he is unable to take them deeper into the glory and beauty of Jesus because they are not mature enough to handle it. (Pro. 28:9)
  - a. They are Babes - The original Greek strongly states this phrase to mean they were adults who have become babies. Here are some discernable signs that we have become or are babes in our faith.
    - Tossed to and fro - Babies in the faith are easily swayed by every wind or message that seems to be powerful and unable to discern whether the message is biblically sound or speaks rightly about Jesus. (Eph. 4:14-16)
    - Glorification and allegiance to ministries - Babies in faith cling to one or two ministries and leaders within the body, with an unhealthy view and allegiance, thus causing them to stay immature in Christ. (1 Cor. 3:1-4)
    - Unable to discern or use spiritual gifts in love for the edification of others - Babies in faith are more focused or have a greater priority upon having their spiritual gifts recognized and using their spiritual gifts with power than they are upon seeing the body edified by all the gifts. (1 Cor. 14:20-26)
    - They do not have a foundation in the elementary principles of Christ - The writer lists six elementary principles (Heb. 6:1-2)

