

December 09, 2018 - Hebrews 4:14-5:5 - Jesus, our Great High Priest

Introduction

New Technologies have changed our lives. We have ridden ourselves of the Old for a New and better future that is our hope. Today we have mobile internet, computers and social media, video conferencing tools, and mobile apps to communicate with anyone around the world. It was not possible in the past. In the past, a letter could take 10 days to reach its destination. But now technologies changed that now you can send an email in seconds. We have some examples like cellular phones, pc, etc. Yes, we have ridden ourselves of the old for the new but God did it best when He gave us Jesus Christ as our great new High Priest to forever replace the earthly priest and all priest. The writer of Hebrews wants to call attention to the specific, unique character of Jesus as our High Priest. He will never leave us or forsake us.

We who have been baptized have professed our love for God and we belong to Christ. We belong to Him--forever. Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer once said, "God's investment in us is so great he could not possibly abandon us. --- **John 10:28-30**

The Evil One wants to defeat us in our Christian lives, and his most effective weapon is discouragement. When you are discouraged, remember God's faithfulness. Remember we have a high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; how God has answered your prayers. Reflect on his suffering and know that he understands and cares because ...

I. He is our sympathetic High Priest (4:14-15).

1. The Christian life can be discouraging because the world in which we live has values and morals far different from ours. Our culture is becoming increasingly hostile toward the Christian faith. We can get so discouraged and even think about giving up. However, we don't have to because we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Jesus is our great high priest because he is not a mere man like Aaron and his descendants. He is the Son of the living God and the God man.

2. Therefore we should hold fast our profession because in Jesus Christ, God gives us all the resources we need to live for Him. Does not Philippians 4:19 express this truth! The idea that Jesus is our High Priest was mentioned before (Hebrews 2:17 and Hebrews 3:1). But now the idea will be developed more extensively. The writer to the Hebrews calls attention to the specific, unique character of Jesus as our High Priest. · No other High Priest was called great. · No other High Priest... passed through the heavens. · No other High Priest is the Son of God.

3. In the Old Testament the high priest was the mediator between God and the Israelites. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), he entered the Holy of Holies. There he sprinkled blood on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant, as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. He performed this task year after year because one sacrifice was never enough.

4. But Jesus, our great high priest, made a once-for-all perfect sacrifice, passed into the

heavens (4:14) and sat down at the right hand of God (1:3). He sat down because He was finished. Since Jesus is the perfect high priest, He is able to sympathize with our every temptation, hurt, weakness and needs because of what we read in (4-15a).

In the New Testament we see that Jesus is the perfect High Priest symbolized by the Old Testament high priest. Jesus also was the one perfect Sacrifice for all time, offered up for all people. He was both the High Priest and the Sacrifice. When Jesus, the Son of God, completed His work on the cross, He went back to heaven. We are called to trust in Him. We can do so knowing this High Priest knows fully what we go through. As a man Himself, He knows our temptations and our weaknesses. In His incarnation, He was one of us; yet He was perfect. He did not sin.

5. He can be trusted; thus, we are encouraged to come before His throne in boldness because He is that perfect High Priest who has stood in our shoes and felt our pain. He knows our temptations and has also made provision for our redemption.

Jesus truly understands us. He knows what it is to be deserted, *lonely*, hurt, betrayed, rejected, abused, and even killed. He experienced it all yet without sin.

Illustration

Dr. Daniel McKay while teaching at a Bible school in Siberia discovered that of the twenty-five students in his class, several had served time in prison in their pre-Christian days. Most of them had been in jail because of drugs and crimes committed while using them. These convicts had repented and become believers, and upon their release they devoted themselves to two things. One was the study of God's Word, and the other was going back into the prisons to preach and counsel inmates confined on similar charges. They knew how to minister to such people because they once had faced the same temptations. Christ knows our hearts and can relate with compassion- he too suffered. He was able to have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way because he himself was subject to weakness. He is not only able to sympathize with us. To dispel discouragement, remember Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest and...

II He is our sustaining High Priest (4:16).

1. Because we have a sympathetic High Priest, we can come boldly unto the throne of grace. This refers to God's throne from which grace flows. The word translated ***boldly*** refers to free and open speech. It means we can confidently pour out our hearts before our sympathetic, understanding Jesus. What happens when we pour out our hearts before the throne of grace?
2. The word grace in this verse doesn't refer to saving grace but to empowering, or sustaining, grace (Acts 4:33). There is an old saying that refers to this kind of grace: "God will never put more on you than He gives you the grace to bear."

III He is our Superior High Priest (5:1-5)

1. The high priest in the Old Testament had a specific task to do. He was chosen to represent his fellow beings before God. Every high priest of Israel was chosen from among men. (5:1). The high priest had an important role vv.2. It was he who took the sacrifices of the people and offered them before God. He pleaded forgiveness for their ignorance and wrong ways. He was like those he represented, however. He too was sinful.

2. God desire His High Priest to be compassionate vv.3, they too were sinners and God made specific commands to help the high priest to minister with compassion. That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as theirs.

In the breastplate of the high priest were set twelve stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel, and on the shoulder straps were stones engraved with the names of the tribes. In this, the people of Israel were always on the *heart* and on the *shoulders* of the high priest (Exodus 28:4-30). The intention was to stir the compassion of the high priest.

3. God has compassion above all human priest, Isaiah gave a wonderful illustration of this in 49:15, 16 - **Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls *are* continually before me. *Today I have begotten You:*** This refers to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. At that time He fully assumed His role as our great High Priest, having been perfected (Hebrews 5:9).

It is easy to see why the priesthood of Jesus was difficult for early Jewish Christians to grasp. Jesus was not from the lineage of Aaron. Jesus neither claimed nor practiced special ministry in the temple. He confronted the religious structure instead of joining it. Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that He was not a priest like Aaron, who had to atone for his own sin first. The resurrection vindicated Jesus as the Father's Holy One (Acts 2:24 and Acts 2:27), who bore the wrath sinners deserved without becoming a sinner Himself.

Conclusion:

Today, we also are prohibited from being our own priest. It is great arrogance to think we can approach God on our own. But it is also great superstition to think we need any priest other than Jesus Christ Himself. God provides Jesus as a mediator and priest, and we must use the priest God provides. Jesus is qualified to be our High Priest.