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# Better

A Study of Hebrews • Lesson 4

## Hebrews 4:14-5:14 - “Better High Priest”

The author of Hebrews continues to challenge the early Christians on everything that they hold dear - Jesus is better than the prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, and He is the better high priest. The high priest held a special place of honor in society. He was at the highest strata of the social structure—a special designation. He did not just “hang out” with people because he was removed from everyday life.

Hebrews 4:14-16 “Since then” is another way of saying “Therefore”

The robe of Christ’s righteousness is given to us when we are laid bare before Him. He covers our nakedness.

Temple language: To offer sacrifice, the High priest passed through the outer court to the inner court- especially on the Day of Atonement. We have a Great High Priest who has passed through the Heavens. The temple on earth was only a shadow of the Heavens. Jesus has gone where no other high priest has gone before. Jesus - both human and divine--Our confession: Jesus Christ is Lord

Jesus can sympathize in our weakness. To sympathize means:

- To identify with
- To ache for
- To feel compassion for
- To feel pity with
- To yearn over
- To grieve for
- To sorrow for

When Jesus sympathizes with us it means He has fixed His eyes on us- we are seen and heard

In His humanity He understood physical weakness, fatigue, hunger, thirst, grief, sorrow, exhaustion - but He also understood spiritual temptation. Think of how He was tempted in the wilderness- spiritual temptations that were magnified by physical weakness. Hebrews 4:12. He responded with the Word of God and without sinning.

Think about this—Jesus was tempted in every way just as we are- yet was without sin. So He lacked that “thing” in us that sometimes decides that giving into a temptation would be a good decision. Jesus knows every outcome to every decision and choice. He knows what it means to disobey the Father. We’re sometimes willing to try it but He never is—yet—in His humanity—He can relate to the experience. One lie of the enemy is that some single temptation is too hard or that we have some special category of temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13 is an exhortation that is also a comfort that tells us that there are no extenuating circumstances—Jesus says, “I’m familiar with that and it’s absolutely common—nothing new.” We do not live in

the scariest time ever. Our challenges are NOT more difficult than those of previous generations. We are not excused from accountability. The good news is that a common presentation of sin means there is also a common escape from it. For 33 years, Jesus Christ was tempted just as we are yet He never gave in—not with His actions, not with His words, and not with His thoughts - not once did Jesus disobey the Father.

4:16 Therefore we can draw near with confidence—no need to clean up first- He can identify

Temple furniture: the throne is the mercy seat- on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies

We draw near to receive mercy and grace.

- Mercy is forgiveness – removal of the penalty we deserve
- Grace- what we don't deserve—the abundant life

## Hebrews Chapter 5

Hebrews 5:1-4 This is a picture of an actual high priest—Aaron. This position was chosen by God—not earned (could not be attained through self effort) or elected (not attained via politics) - it was not accomplished through his own qualifications.

The high priest deals gently with ignorant and wayward people

1 Peter 2:9 We are a royal priesthood. Do you know any ignorant or wayward people? Either believers or unbelievers - Do you deal gently? Remember:

- Your own weakness
- You were chosen by God, not according to your own merits

Hebrews 5:5-6 The author is quoting Psalm 2:7-9 and Psalm 110:4. Melchizedek was the King of Salem (peace) of Jerusalem and the Priest to the Most High God. He is compared to Jesus. More info to come on him.

Hebrews 5:7-10 Jesus is a Son and High Priest forever

Matthew 26:36-46 Jesus offered up prayers with loud cries and tears and was heard because of His reverence, but the Father said no. Yet Jesus said, not my will but yours be done. He was heard. He was delivered from death in the Resurrection.

The Son learned obedience through suffering. This does not mean that God didn't know or understand suffering. He is omniscient. He did not need to learn anything, including the human experience. Yet, in His humanity He learned to walk, talk, fish, be a carpenter, and He learned obedience through suffering/temptation. He fully knew the human experience. He was even tempted to not take up the cross—the entire reason for the incarnation- but the way of escape was to submit to the Father's will.

Hebrews 5:9-10 He is associated with Melchizedek as eternal High Priest

## How have YOU learned obedience through suffering?

Example: Lactose intolerance has some unpleasant effects. So, if you have this, you might have learned this and thus choose to avoid dairy.

We all have a sin intolerance. Sin has some unpleasant effects. It will ultimately cause nothing but sorrow for both believers and unbelievers—but for especially for the believer: major spiritual indigestion. It is only alleviated through obedience to the will of God. Some suffering comes not through disobedience but maybe via persecution? (Also through other means because we live in a fallen world)

Do we value obedience? We must strive for holiness. Are you willing for holiness to be formed by difficulty to draw you close to Him? Consider it joy, brothers... James 1:2-4. We all learn obedience through the consequences of sin or through other sufferings. He uses it for good.

Hebrews 5:11 Warning #3 (beginning of it, will continue to flesh this out in Chapter 6)—warning against apostasy

Hebrews 5:11-14 Note that these were young believers. They likely heard the Gospel either directly from the apostles or from those who heard from the apostles. So, how mature could they possibly be at this point? Yet the author still expects them to be further along in their spiritual walks than they are, at least beyond the basics of the faith (milk) and moving on to meat. He says they are unskilled in the word of righteousness. *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.* —2 Tim 2:15

Simple faith is not all there is—this is the milk—we need meat—solid food. In the life of an infant, when the child begins to eat solid food, they start to sleep through the night—they “enter into their rest.” We are the same. As we partake of the meat, we too, enter into our rest- becoming more like Jesus. Why would we be content with foundational things? The deeper things are your inheritance. The treasures lie in the storehouses. The shadow was in the Old Testament and built the foundation of the New Testament reality, which is far better.

Discernment is the ability to distinguish between good and evil. It is the ability to tell the difference between things, it is insight and wisdom which is promised to us. It is perceptiveness. It is the maturity to figure out the best choice. It is not the same as knowledge, which is Not promised to us. Knowledge is not for the mature. Knowledge says, “Just tell me what to do” while Discernment considers all things based on all you have learned and makes an informed and wise choice. Discernment chooses the narrow path of holiness and rest.

The Word is living and active. It divides wise from unwise. Hold everything up to the Word. Ask: Does this allow me to look more like Jesus? Will it prevent me from looking like Jesus? Can you tell? Trust God!

When tragedy strikes there are those who come to fix issues, clean house, those who prepare meals, those who start prayer chains but there are some who just sit with you in the darkest hours and identify with you. They offer the ministry of presence. They don't offer solutions or tell you to examine yourself for sin. They are simply with you in your suffering.

Jesus sits with us. He bears with us in our weakness. He understands. He has compassion so that we might approach the Throne of grace with confidence. Jesus doesn't gain from being present with us—we do. It is an overflow of His great kindness. He is indeed God with us. Always.

*Behold the Lamb of God* - Andrew Peterson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFEK68ncZ7o>