

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF HEBREWS

THE PEOPLE'S PRIEST (HEBREWS 5:1-6) JESUS AS OUR "HIGH PRIEST"

Like Priests of the OT, Jesus **represents us** before God, was **selected by God, serves the people** of God, and **made a sacrifice** for the sins of God's people.

LET'S PICK ON AARON FOR A SECOND

Aaron was in charge when Moses went up to receive the Commandments. Moses came back to find that Aaron had buckled and let people worship a golden calf

- This man could understand weakness because his times of weakness, but it took a perfect Savior to effectively deal with humanity's sin

JESUS WAS ALSO "SUBJECT TO WEAKNESS"

Because Christ was both God and man, He could also find commonality with us, but unlike Aaron and other leaders, Jesus had no faults or sins. Jesus was tempted, tested, and mistreated, but never sinned

- **Jesus is gentle with the broken and is able to lead and heal them.**

JESUS HAS COMMONALITY, BUT ALSO SUPERIORITY

He worked, got hungry, was tempted, ridiculed, and suffered on the cross. He sympathizes with our weaknesses, but He stands in contrast because He never fell.

- Priests had to make a sacrifice for their sins before addressing the sins of the people. Jesus had no sin, His sacrifice was **solely for His people**

PRIESTS WERE CHOSEN FOR THEIR ROLE

God, typically through a prophet would select the high priest, but as time went on it became political, and that prompted disasters like Saul (1 Samuel 13) and Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26). Like Aaron, Jesus was chosen by God to spiritually lead His people, but in a different and deeper way.

SIMILAR TO MELCHIZEDEK

Melchizedek is a mysterious King that briefly showed up and was honored in Genesis 14. Some think he was a Theophany, others believe he was foreshadowing Jesus

- Hebrews 7:3 says he has no parents and is a priest forever. If taken literally, it alludes to a theophany. Either way, he was a righteous high priest.

THE COMPARING MELCHIZEDEK TO JESUS SPARKED A LONGING FOR GODLY LEADERSHIP

The recipients of Hebrews hadn't had an exemplary king or high priest in generations. Their spiritual leaders were power-hungry and sought to be served

THE HIGH PRIEST IS CALLED BY GOD (V5)

Psalms 2 confirms that Christ is appointed by God to be our Savior. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus showed this was a plan orchestrated by God

DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER LEADERS/PRIESTS

Unlike Aaron or any other spiritual leader trusted by God, Jesus' priesthood would last forever. It would be righteous and would reconcile humanity to God the Father

- **Jesus broke every expectation.** He didn't come as a military leader, crafty politician, or gaudy king. **He came to humbly serve** His creation.

QUALIFICATIONS (HEBREWS 5:7-10) CHRIST'S ABILITY TO SYMPATHIZE

Because of the "loud cries and tears" of Jesus' mental anguish and physical pain on the cross, Jesus could identify with humanity's weaknesses. Jesus prayed to the Father for deliverance from death and was "heard because of His reverence"

JESUS WAS HEARD BECAUSE HE SUBMITTED

Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup...nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:42). The Son of Man **put His wants aside to let the will of God be completed in and through Him.**

Jesus refused to call angels and take the easy way out. He saw God's will and followed it without flinching.

A TOUGH THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION (V8)

"Though He was God's Son, He learned obedience". Luke 2:52 says He "grew in wisdom..." Jesus shared God the Father's omniscience, so how can He learn?

- Philippians 2:7 says that **Jesus took on the form of servant**, possibly surrendering some attributes at times in His ministry on earth

ANOTHER IDEA ABOUT THIS

Others suggest He didn't surrender His abilities, but chose to not use them independently or without consultation with the Father (Mark 13:32)

- I believe it boils down to divine mystery. **We cannot comprehend everything about the Trinity and Jesus' ministry** while on earth

PERFECTION WAS PERFECTED (V9)

Christ has always been perfect. V9 is referring to the completion of the mission of Jesus to redeem mankind and become our High Priest.

- Jesus brought God's plan of redemption to fulfillment and attained the goals God had for Him. **His obedience through the cross became our source of salvation**

JESUS' SALVATION APPLIES TO THE OBEDIENT

Those who have faith and obey the instruction and example of Christ to receive salvation by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- Salvation is available to all people: rich, poor, educated, simple, influential, and "unimportant."
The One who obeyed made salvation available to all who obey.

THE AUTHOR REMINDS US AGAIN THAT JESUS IS SIMILAR (OR MIGHT EVEN BE) LIKE THE RIGHTEOUS HIGH PRIEST, MELCHIZEDEK.

The author doesn't go into more detail about Mel, instead, he pauses to talk about the problem of the recipient's spiritual maturity. The remainder of this chapter and all of the next is about maturity.

- **Jesus is the perfect Savior because of His sympathy for us, and His example of reverence, obedience, and maturation. We are to emulate these characteristics by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

MATURATION (HEBREWS 5:11-14)

IT'S ONLY DIFFICULT IF WE ALLOW IT TO BE

The author takes direct aim and tells the readers that they struggle to grow in understanding and relationship with Jesus because they're "too lazy to understand"

- This is not attacking their intelligence, but their willingness. **Even the most base individuals can have saving knowledge and basic understanding of the Word**

ONE OF OUR PROBLEMS IS RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

Jeremiah 6:10 says, "The word of the Lord has become contemptible to them – they find no pleasure in it." This refers to people that have no desire to know the Truth because it might encroach on their lifestyle/choices

- **We face a crisis of narcissism in our day.** At some point, we have reversed Jesus' model of the "first and the last"

NARCISSISM HAS BRED SHALLOW FAITH

"...you ought to be teachers, [but] you need someone to teach you..." (v12) is digging at and trying to pull up the reader to the standard that God has called us to live

- Not only had many people failed to grow in their faith and understanding of God, but they had forgotten the basic truths of God's Word.

THERE ARE ONLY 2 DIRECTIONS

In our relationship with Jesus, we are either growing towards Him or regressing backward, and it affects all aspects of life. Theologian Thomas Hewitt said, "If the dark things do not become plain then the plain things will become dark."

THE ANALOGY OF MALNOURISHMENT

The metaphor of drinking milk vs. eating meat points to the obvious malnourishment adults will have if their diet doesn't match their age.

- We are to mature (1 Corinthians 13:11), and if **narcissism is the sickness, immaturity may be the greatest symptom coupled with a disinterest in learning the truth.**

TRAINED TO DISTINGUISH GOOD AND EVIL

The recipients of Hebrews, including us today, must choose to train ourselves to "eat meat" and distinguish good from evil.

- This does not come from a sudden burst of insight, but from diligent use of spiritual resources: **the Church, Bible, prayer time, counseling, books for personal growth, accountability, etc**

WE DILIGENTLY SEEK SO WE CAN DILIGENTLY CHANGE

We choose to mature for our relationship with our Creator. We also make this choice because **our lives affect countless others.**

- Jesus gives us peace, joy, and fulfillment. **We are to share this Good News about the work of Jesus so our families, friends, and neighbors can experience it as well**

MATURITY IS A CHOICE

- Maturity identifies good and evil
- Maturity is wise enough to avoid evil and gravitate towards good
- Maturity learns proper theology and applies it
- Maturity has a strong work ethic and stamina
- Maturity relentlessly pursues truth regardless of possible offense