

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 15TH–16TH, 2025 // HEBREWS

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

Chapter 4 talks about Jesus as our High Priest: our leader, example, and mediator to God the Father. This chapter explains some of the functions of our High Priest.

- Like OT Priests, Jesus **represents us** before God, **serves the people** of God, and **made a sacrifice for our sins**.

ALSO, GENTLE AND GRACIOUS

When God chose a high priest to spiritually lead Israel, He chose men who were firm in the faith, but also gentle and gracious with others.

- Aaron, Moses' brother and first high priest of Israel, was a godly man who had faults and could sympathize with people because of their shared humanity.

DEFINITELY NOT A PERFECT MAN

Aaron was in charge when Moses went up to receive the 10 C's. Moses came back to find that Aaron had buckled and let people worship a golden calf in place of God.

- Aaron could understand weakness because he was weak, but we needed a perfect Savior to effectively deal with sin.

SYMPATHETIC, BUT ALSO STRONG

Because Christ was human, He shared commonality with us. But, unlike human leaders, Jesus was also God and had no faults or sins. Jesus was tempted, tested, and mistreated, but never failed.

- **Jesus is not just gentle with us; He is able to lead, fix, and heal us.**

WHEN FAITH GETS POLITICAL

God would typically select a high priest through a prophet, but as time went on, it became political, and that prompted disasters like Saul (1 Samuel 13) and Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26).

- **When politics, selfish ambition, and our preferences over God's get into the church, we distort what should be holy.**

SIMILAR TO MELCHIZEDEK

Melchizedek is a mysterious King who briefly showed up and was honored by Abe in Genesis 14. Some think he was a **Theophany**, others believe he was just a foreshadowing of Jesus.

- Hebrews 7:3 says he had no parents and is a priest forever. Literal or not, the point is he was a righteous king.

MOST PEOPLE WANT TO BE PROPERLY LED

The Jews had not had an exemplary king or high priest in generations. Their politicians and spiritual leaders were power-hungry and sought to be served, not to serve.

- The comparison of Melchizedek to Jesus shows their longing for wise, godly leadership.

THE CALLING OF GOD

V. 5 quotes Psalm 2 and confirms that Christ is appointed by God to be our Savior. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus showed that this was a divine plan.

- Jesus did not jockey for position, nor did He deny the task God had for Him. Christ humbled Himself and followed God's will.

THE FAR SUPERIOR LEADER

Unlike any other leader trusted by God, Jesus' priesthood would last forever, be righteous like Melchizedek, and would reconcile humanity to God.

- **Jesus defied expectations. He did not come as a military leader, crafty politician, or gaudy king. He came to be a servant.**

QUALIFICATIONS (HEBREWS 5:7–10)

"LOUD CRIES AND TEARS"

Because of the mental and physical anguish of the crucifixion, Jesus can identify with humanity's problems and weaknesses. Jesus prayed to the Father in His time of trouble and was **"heard because of His reverence."**

- **God also hears us if we will be humble and acknowledge we need Jesus!**

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).

- Jesus **put His wants aside to let the will of God work in and through Him**. Jesus was heard because He submitted His desires to the desires of the Father.

VERSE 8 IS TOUGH

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

- Philippians 2:7 says **Jesus "emptied Himself by assuming the form of a servant,"** possibly surrendering some attributes on Earth.

ANOTHER VIEW ON VERSE 8

Some suggest Jesus did not surrender omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, but chose not to use them without consultation with the Father (Mark 13:32).

- It boils down to divine mystery. At this time, we cannot comprehend everything about the Trinity and Jesus' ministry.

PERFECTION WAS PERFECTED (V. 9)

Christ has always been perfect. Verse 9 is referring to the completion of Jesus' mission to redeem mankind and become "High Priest."

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

SALVATION THROUGH OBEDIENCE

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

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

ANOTHER COMPARISON TO MELCHIZEDEK

The author reminds us again that Jesus is similar to (or might even be) the righteous High Priest, Melchizedek.

- The author then 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.

MATURATION (HEBREWS 5:11–14)

IT IS ONLY HARD IF WE MAKE IT THAT WAY

The author takes direct aim at the readers' ignorance and lackluster faith because they are "too lazy to understand."

- This isn't attacking their intelligence but their apathy. **Even the most base individuals can have saving knowledge and a basic understanding of the Word.**

SELFISHNESS PROHIBITS MATURATION

Jeremiah 6:10 says, "The word of the Lord has become contemptible to them—they find no pleasure in it."

This refers to **people who have no desire to know the Truth because it might encroach on their lifestyle.**

- **Narcissism reverses Jesus' principle that the first are to be last** (Matthew 20:16).

NARCISSISM BREEDS A LACK OF DEPTH

"You ought to be teachers, [but] you need someone to teach you" digs at the reader and tries to pull them up to the standard they are called to live at (v. 12).

- Selfishness creates **spiritual arrested development** because many "Christians" do not know the basic tenets of their faith.

WE ARE EITHER MATURING OR DECLINING

In our relationship with Jesus, we are either growing toward Him or regressing away from Him, 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."**

WE HAVE TO EAT IN ORDER TO GROW

We are to spiritually mature (1 Corinthians 13:11). The metaphor of milk vs. meat points to the obvious malnourishment adults will have if their diet does not match their age.

- **If narcissism is a sickness, immaturity and a disinterest in learning the truth are the greatest symptoms.**

CHOOSING TO SHARPEN OUR ABILITIES

We must choose to train ourselves to "eat meat" and distinguish good from evil.

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

WE ARE ALSO CALLED TO HELP OTHERS GROW

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

- Jesus saves and positively changes us. **We're to share the Good News about the work of Jesus so our families, friends, and neighbors can experience it as well.**

A SAVIOR TO HELP THE PEOPLE

- Jesus loves us, represents us before God, serves His people, and has made the ultimate sacrifice so we could not only be saved, but changed more into His image.
- Jesus is greater than a politician, military leader, or decadent king. **He is the Creator God who is deeply in love with His creation.**

AN ERA OF ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

- A recurring problem with people is we forget God and others and become selfish. **Self-centeredness breeds apathy to anything that requires personal sacrifice.**
- When we think primarily about ourselves, we slide into spiritual arrested development because **faith cannot grow in selfish soil.**

CHOOSING TO MATURE

- Salvation is not by our effort, but we must choose to follow Jesus to be saved.
- Similarly, **if we are to grow in maturity we must plant seeds, water the soil, and trust that God will give the increase** (1 Corinthians 3). Simply put, **maturity in all aspects of life is a conscious choice.**

ARE WE SPIRITUALLY MATURING?

- Growth comes via **desire and intentional conversation (prayer), study (Bible), and relationships that sharpen us (church community)**. Are we doing these basics?
- Are we choosing to be closer to godly things/principles and further from temptations and destructive/evil things?

SOME BENEFITS OF MATURATION

- When we spiritually mature, we gain **wisdom** and **discernment**, become **empathetic** and **caring**, and enjoy the **security, love, and peace** that only come from the Creator.
- **Maturation is birthed in selflessness**. In that sacrifice, **we become more Christlike and that directly impacts those around us.**