

Hebrews 5

Good morning and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your bibles to Hebrews 5 as we continue our vbv study through this incredible book?

Remember last week we spent all of our time on just 3 verses as we finished chapter 4, which lays the foundation for Jesus being our great high priest. And this is important because the next several chapters all have to do with Jesus fulfilling this role for us.

And in our text this morning, we have one of the most startling verses in all the bible.

We're gonna study all of chapter 5, and the title of this mornings message is Maturing in the Faith

Let's pray

Last week we saw how at the end of chapter 4 we've entered into this topic of the priesthood, and this will go on into chapter 10.

It's important that we do a bit of a review of the OT role of the priesthood to make sure we're grasping the importance of these verses.

Now you'll recall to the Hebrew, the high priest was the person that represented them before God. This was central to the Jewish faith.

The first high priest was Moses' brother Aaron. **SHOW PIC** And in Exodus 38 you can read how Aaron would officiate in his high

priestly garment with his miter that said holiness to the Lord in the front.

And the high priest would have 2 Onyx stones on his shoulders. Each stone had six of the tribes of Israel written. It was symbolic as the priest bore the weight of the tribes of Israel on the breastplate. **CLOSE PIC**

And what the author of Hebrews is so carefully laying out is how all of that was a picture of Christ coming and being our high priest.

There were no chapter breaks when this was originally written, so lets read v14 of chapter 4 through v1

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

A high priest had two primary jobs: representing God to the people by teaching the word of God, and representing the people to God in making atonement for their sins (Leviticus 1–4).

Now remember, the annual Day of Atonement was the only time the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place where the ark of the covenant rested and where God himself resided among His people. **Leviticus 16:17** “**There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.**

The high priest also served as the “supervisor” over all the other priests.

Priests had other functions:

SHOW SLIDE Diagnosing disease (Leviticus 13; 14),
Purifying people after they were cured from their disease (Leviticus 14),
Examining property that was dedicated to God’s service (Leviticus 27),
Inspecting sacrificial animals (Leviticus 22).
Overseeing temple worship (Leviticus 25). **CLOSE SLIDE**

So again there were many priests who carried out these functions, but the chief mediator b/w God and man in the OT was the high priest.

Now we talked about that one day a year, the day of atonement, but God also designated five different kinds of offerings-these are the “gifts and sacrifices” v1 mentions. People would bring these to the priests:

SHOW SLIDES A burnt offering was a voluntary offering by someone who wanted to demonstrate commitment to God (Leviticus 1)

A grain offering was a voluntary offering that accompanied other sacrifices (Leviticus 2)

A fellowship offering was a voluntary offering demonstrating a person's thankfulness for fellowship with God (Leviticus 3)

A sin offering was a mandatory offering that paid for unintentional sins or helped cleanse an unclean person (Leviticus 4–5)

A guilt offering was made to atone for unintentional sins against another person (Leviticus 5:14–6:7)

CLOSE SLIDE

So why do we care about this? 2 reasons.

1st it's a reminder that every sin required a penalty and a sacrifice in order for the worshiper to receive forgiveness.

2nd No one could offer a sacrifice without the aid of a priest as a mediator.

2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Priests for man came from man because God wanted priests with compassion. God cares for the ignorant, and wayward, and weak. And effective priests shared God's empathy.

This is why angels don't qualify as priests. Angels never tire, or hunger, or sleep. I'm sure when angels see me cave in, or when they see me blow it, it baffles them. I'm sure it boggles the mind of angels that God holds judgment at bay and shows us mercy.

But in becoming a man, Jesus became acquainted with human weakness. He got tired, hungry, thirsty.

Some of you shed a lot of tears in 2025. Jesus knows-He cried too.

The bible tells us that Jesus experienced the whole gamut of human emotions - and is able to empathize. He's been where you're at.

Jesus supplies the peace and power we desperately need. This is what makes Jesus the perfect priest compared to the OT high priests!

And now in v3 we see one of the biggest differences b/w the OT high priest and Jesus as our high priest

3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. Once a year the Jewish High Priest offered a sacrifice to cover the nation's sins, but first he sacrificed "for himself." His own sin was dealt with before he could atone for others.

We'll see in Chapter 7 the only sinless priest was our High Priest, Jesus Christ. He was the one perfect priest between God and man.

So even though Jesus never sinned, as the high priest bore the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, our Lord Jesus bore the shame of our sin. On the cross, our sin was thrust on Jesus' innocent shoulders. **2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Even though Jesus never sinned, He knows sin's horrific consequences. This is why He cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me." Jesus understands sin infinitely better than we do. Which is why when we do sin, when we miss the mark and fall short, we should run to Him, the one who understands us.

4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. A priest had to be a man, but not just any man. He had to be a man appointed by God. And in the OT God chose priests from the tribe of Levi, and the family of Aaron.

As you study the OT, whenever someone tried to fill the role of a priest who didn't have the right credentials, God's punishment was swift and severe. Priests were always God-appointed.

As was Jesus! Even God's own Son didn't assume the role of priest. He was appointed by the Father in heaven. Verse 5 tells us,

5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him:

“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.” Here the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 2:7, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.”

At first the application of Ps 2 to the priesthood seems a little strange. What does Jesus’ birth have to do with God appointing Him as High Priest?

But when you compare Scripture with Scripture you learn more... In Acts 13 Paul applies Psalm 2:7 not to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, but to Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus was “begotten,” or began a new and glorified life when He rose from the dead, and ascended to the Father’s right hand!

At that point God appointed Jesus High Priest in the heavenly Temple. And today, Jesus ministers there as God’s chosen intermediary - to intercede for us. **1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

6 As He also says in another place:

“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek”;^[fn] During His earthly ministry Jesus never wore a priestly garment, or offered a

Levitical sacrifice, or ministered as a priest in the Temple at Jerusalem. Jesus was a priest, but not the OT kind. Jesus was a different type of priest entirely, of the heavenly order of Melchizedek.

Levitical priests were temporary and earthly. Jesus is an eternal and heavenly priest. As Psalm 110 reads, "You are a priest forever." When we get to Chapter 7 we'll learn about the priesthood of Melchizedek and what it teaches about Jesus' character and credentials.

But back to the humanity of a priest, the author writes of Jesus,

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, This refers to Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [fn]

Notice as Jesus prayed that night, His prayers were heard. We know Jesus' heart was heavy as He entered the garden. The name "Gethsemane" means "olive press" and Jesus was under great pressure.

Olive story?

His agony wasn't just the next day's cross. Imagine, the pain Jesus' own disciples will cause Him. One will betray Him. One will deny Him. All will forsake Him.

In going to the cross Jesus is being asked to die for traitors and turncoats, so-called friends, about to stab Him in the back.

Which reminds us that oftentimes, obedience to God requires us to put our feelings aside.

Which leads us to v8, one of the most incredible verses in all of the bible...

8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Jesus is a model for us in our suffering.

In His humanity, Jesus continuously made the choice to follow the will of God. Jesus chose to obey, even though obedience led to suffering and death.

Because Jesus obeyed perfectly, even under the greatest of trials, He can help us obey, no matter how difficult obedience may be.

The reality is that like Jesus, believers often learn obedience through our suffering.

V8 reminds us that suffering was used to teach Jesus. If suffering was good enough to teach the Son of God, we must never despise suffering as a tool of instruction in our life.

The Bible never teaches that strong faith will keep a Christian from all suffering. As Christians we're appointed to affliction [1 Thessalonians 3:3](#) that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

It's through many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God [Acts 14:22](#) strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Our present suffering is the prelude to glorification [Romans 8:17](#) [16](#) The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17](#) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Never forget our Savior suffered, and bled and died. Why would we ever think the Christian walk and following Jesus would be easy?

I don't know what 2026 has in store, but I do know this. I'm sure there will be some measure of suffering involved. And when we're faced with that suffering, we can take comfort that not only is Jesus with you, we can become more like Him through it.

[Romans 5:1](#) Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have[fn] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2](#) through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3](#) And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces

perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, This could've been the pilot episode of Undercover Boss. **SHOW PIC** You've seen the TV show where the boss dresses incognito and works a grunt level job in his own company. **CLOSE PIC**

Today, we can be certain when instruction comes from Jesus, it's not coming from a God who is oblivious to our situation. Jesus' commands come with a purpose, and with His help they can be accomplished.

And notice the implications of v9. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation. Only Jesus can author your eternal salvation. This is why Jesus said in **John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

There are no other roads to God. It is only faith in Christ Jesus that will allow a person to spend eternity in heaven. If a person denies Jesus, then they are choosing to spend an eternity in hell
10-11

10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” we'll discuss Mel in a couple of weeks 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. Often the problem in churches is a dull

preacher, or dull sermon - and it's the pastors like me that bear responsibility. Whenever I teach at Bible colleges I exhort the future pastors-'the bible is alive, don't make it dead!'

But at other times the problem is dull hearing - and that's when it's church attendees that are responsible. This term "dull" in verse 11 means "sluggish in the ears." And today's churches are full of believers with a serious hearing problem.

The Hebrews problem wasn't dull teaching, but dull listening. The author had so many wonderful truths He hoped to share with His readers. He says in verse 11 he has much to say of the priestly ministry of Jesus.

But the author can't go into it because his readers aren't ready. Deep truths would've been wasted on people so hard of hearing.

And it makes me wonder what insights God has waiting for us, but He refuses to reveal them, until we hear what He's already said!

There are those who say, "I'm just not getting anything out of Bible study, and my prayer life is flatlined." Why does that happen? It could very well be because they are like those Hebrews who are dull of hearing.

See God spoke to them-a week, a month, or a year ago concerning something they were to do, but they ignored it.

Think about it, why would God keep speaking new things to them if they refused to do those things He already made clear to them?

It's a loving Father who says, "Brian, I'm going to make it real simple. When you do step one, I'll take you to step two. When you do what I ask, when you incorporate what I show you-then I'll take you farther down the road."

God is not going to heap instruction and insight upon us if we're only going to ignore what He's already told us."

Here's the question for all of us. What is the last thing God told you to do? Have you done it?

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. The "first principles," is literally the ABCs of Christianity. These believers still hadn't learned the biblical basics.

SHOW PIC It's foolish to teach little kids the proper way to run a jet sweep in football when they can't even hold onto a ball. You've got to learn the basics before you can move on to deeper stuff.

CLOSE PIC

Some of the Hebrews had so much instruction in the faith that they should've been teachers by this point. But their spiritual growth and maturity had not measured up to the depth of teaching they'd received.

... 12 you have come to need milk and not solid food Milk is for babies. It may be cute to see an infant with a bottle in its mouth, but it's absolutely disgusting to see a grown man walking around sucking on a baby bottle.

And it's equally disturbing to watch a person who's been a Christian for years still struggling in the basics b/c they're dull of hearing.

13-14 as we close

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Here's how to mature spiritually-from milk to meat. It takes more than adding spiritual calories or knowledge. To build strong faith you have to exercise what you know. We grow spiritually "by reason of use." Christian maturity comes by applying and using what we learn.

Several years ago I saw an NBC News article entitled, "Big Baby Boom: Supersize Deliveries Have Doctors Worried." Over the last few decades there's been a spike in the birth of big babies.

SHOW PICS A Pennsylvania woman birthed a 13 pound 12 ounce little girl. A German baby weighed in at 13.5 pounds, a whopper. A British mom delivered "little George," who weighed 15 pounds, 7 ounces. They returned his infant clothes, and brought him home in PJs meant for a 6 month old. **CLOSE PICS**

Today, hospitals are seeing a rash of big babies, but so are churches!

We've got bloated believers who only know milk. They may know a lot, but they rarely apply what they know, and turn it into muscle.

We all need to grow up in Christ and mature in faith, and we do that by applying God's truths and being obedient to His instructions.

I don't know what 2026 has in store. Like you I have a lot of guesses, but I don't really know. But I do know this. The heart of Jesus Christ, and God the Father, and the HS is for each and every one of us to grow in our Christian maturity.

You know a lot of people make NY resolutions, but studies show 9% meet them. Hey is our goal to grow in Christ? I pray it is! Let's not be spiritual babies. Let's experience all God has for us by being fully obedient to Him!