

Hebrews: No Turning Back

Week 3: Jesus, Our Great High Priest

Main Scripture: Hebrews 4:14–5:10

Introduction

The role of the high priest is a major theme throughout Hebrews. Under the Old Covenant, the high priest represented the people before God. He offered gifts and sacrifices for sin and served as a mediator between God and His people.

But those priests were imperfect people. They struggled with weakness and sin themselves, and their service was temporary. When one priest died, another had to take his place.

Jesus is different.

Jesus is our **great High Priest**. He is a priest forever. He does not serve because of His ancestry, but because of “the power of an indestructible life” (Hebrews 7:16). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus became the source of eternal salvation and the perfect mediator between us and God.

The original readers of Hebrews were facing opposition and persecution because of their faith. Some were beginning to shrink back, and some had walked away altogether. Hebrews points them back to Jesus and gives them a reason to persevere: **we have a great High Priest**.

Read **Hebrews 4:14–16**.

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”

Hebrews 4:14

1. He gives you unlimited access to God.

Under the Old Covenant, access to God's presence was severely limited. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people. He alone could enter, and he could do so only once a year.

When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain separating the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom. The barrier was removed. Jesus died, rose again, ascended to heaven, and now sits in the presence of God.

Unlike an earthly high priest who entered God's presence once a year, **Jesus remains there forever.**

Because Jesus is our High Priest, we no longer need another person to give us access to God. Jesus Himself has made the way. We can come into God's presence at any time.

No pastor, priest, or spiritual leader has better access to God than another believer. Our access does not depend upon our position, credentials, or goodness. It depends entirely upon Jesus.

Discuss:

- How does knowing you have direct access to God change the way you think about prayer?
- Are there times when you hesitate to approach God? Why?
- When you face opposition, temptation, or difficulty, is turning to God your first response or your last resort?
- What would it look like to live this week with a greater awareness that you can enter God's presence at any time?

2. He sympathizes with you.

Read **Hebrews 4:15**.

Jesus does not merely give us access to God. He understands what we are going through.

Because Jesus became fully human, He experienced temptation, suffering, rejection, and opposition. He knows what it is like to face tremendous pressure and still remain faithful to God.

Jesus was “tempted in every way, just as we are,” yet He was without sin.

This doesn't mean Jesus experienced every exact circumstance we experience. It means He fully understands the pressure of temptation and what it costs to remain faithful. He faced temptation in the wilderness. He experienced suffering and anguish as He approached the cross. Yet He remained obedient.

When we are struggling, we are not approaching a Savior who is distant from our experience. **Jesus understands.**

Discuss:

- Why is it important to know that Jesus understands our weaknesses?
- How can shame cause us to pull away from God when we need Him most?
- What temptations or pressures make it difficult for you to remain faithful?
- How can Jesus' faithfulness encourage you when obedience becomes difficult?

3. He bids us to ask for help.

Read **Hebrews 4:16**.

Because Jesus has given us access to God and because He understands our weakness, we are invited to:

“Approach God's throne of grace with confidence.”

This confidence is not arrogance. It is the freedom to come before God honestly and openly.

Prayer does not require perfectly arranged words. Sometimes we don't know exactly what we need. Sometimes all we can pray is, “**God, You know this situation. Help me.**”

And God welcomes that prayer.

When we approach His throne, we find **mercy and grace**. God's disposition toward His children is not one of frustration or shame. He welcomes us into His presence and gives us the grace we need in our time of need.

When temptation is strong, when faithfulness is difficult, or when you are tempted to shrink back, don't run away from God. **Ask Him for help.**

Discuss:

- What keeps us from asking God for help?
- What does it mean to approach God's throne “with confidence”?
- How does understanding God's mercy change the way we respond when we fail?
- Is there something in your life right now where your prayer simply needs to be, “God, help me”?

Jesus, Our Perfect Sacrifice

The high priests of the Old Covenant offered sacrifices on behalf of the people. But Jesus did something no other high priest could do.

He offered Himself.

Through His body and blood, Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for our sins. His sacrifice does not need to be repeated. Through faith in Him, we receive forgiveness and eternal life.

This is why the Lord's Supper connects so naturally with Jesus as our great High Priest. The bread and the cup remind us of the body and blood of Christ and point us back to what He accomplished for us on the cross.

As we remember His sacrifice, we can examine our hearts, repent where necessary, express our gratitude, and once again **fix our thoughts on Jesus**.

Personal Reflection

Where are you tempted to shrink back in your faith?

Where do you need strength to remain faithful?

Remember who your High Priest is:

He gives you unlimited access to God.

He sympathizes with you.

He bids us to ask for help.

Jesus has already made the way into God's presence. He understands what you are going through, and He invites you to come to Him for the mercy and grace you need.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us Jesus as our great High Priest. Thank You that through Him we have access to Your presence. When we struggle, remind us that Jesus understands our weakness and invites us to come to You for help. Give us the grace we need to remain faithful when we face temptation, opposition, or suffering. Thank You for the perfect sacrifice Jesus made for us through His body and blood. Help us hold firmly to the faith we profess and walk confidently in the gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.