

Title: The Great High Priest

Text: Hebrews 4:14-5:10

INTRODUCTION:

—Have you ever wronged someone or they've wronged you, and you've *NOT* dealt with it and overtime it's caused you to believe lies either about yourself or about the other person to which it broke your relationship or at least damaged it? Harboring sin has a way of distorting reality and creating resentment.

Heb. 3:12-15 *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, "TODAY, if you hear HIS voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."* —**Hardened hearts are the result of harboring sin!** Hardened hearts happen in a relationship when we either hold onto our sin *and/or* hold the sins of others against them. It is sinful to both not seek forgiveness and to not *extend* forgiveness, and this breeds a hard heart. —**Harboring sin causes deception, and that deception destroys relationships and leads you away from Christ** (objectifies all parties involved)! THEREFORE, as long as there is an opportunity *TODAY*, go and confess your faults and *ASK* forgiveness or *EXTEND* forgiveness (remedy for a soft heart)!

—In relationship with Christ, we are *never* the victim but *always* the offender and so we should always be quick to run to Christ and seek His forgiveness, but the more we hold onto our sin and not seek His forgiveness, deception creeps in and changes our perception about Christ. —**How we view Christ determines how we approach Him.** Harboring sin distorts an accurate view of Jesus, making him out to be severely disappointed with us, ashamed of us, ready to punish us for our failure...making Him seem so unapproachable. BUT is this an accurate view of Christ that we find in scripture?

MOVEMENT 1:

—**Heb. 4:14** *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.* —A priest in the OT was a mediator between God and Man. Think of a Priest as one appointed by God as a spiritual father who points people towards the heavenly Father who gives them life! —Jesus is not your ordinary high priest! What makes Him different? Role of High Priest

—(**For sake of Time**) Read. Hebrews 9 on your own which sets up the contrast between the High Priests in the OT and Jesus as Great High Priest. Main Differences: 1) **Jesus offered a better sacrifice!** 1a) He freely offered himself—human blood to cover human sin. 1b) a sacrifice that actually redeemed for all eternity—once for all. 2) **Jesus entered into the true Holy of Holies—Heaven and not a replica in the Temple.**

—(skip ahead...we'll come back) **Heb. 5:1-6** *For every high priest chosen from among men is APPOINTED to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. 3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."* More on Jesus as Great High Priest:

1) **He's more personal.** 2) **He's divinely appointed as God's son!** 3) **He's sinless.** 4) **He's from a better Priesthood** than the levitical priesthood (more on that when we look at Melchizedek in Ch. 7).

—**Heb. 5:7-10** *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who OBEY him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.*

—The point being made to the recipients of this letter, who seem to be deceived by their sin and pursuing the idea that there's salvation outside of Christ, is that Christ is indeed the greatest hope and only salvation! **Stop looking for a better gospel, a better salvation, a better savior!!** Jesus is the Great High Priest; He's the son of God. Exalted! Sitting at the right hand of God. He is a Royal High Priest.

—As Christians, we can allow sin to take a stronghold in our lives and deceptively influence us to where we begin to distort Christ and reject Him as our only hope, and in turn reach out to far lesser forms of salvation

that make big promises and only provide dead ends. And yet when we rely on our own wisdom and strength to save us, a vice to make us feel in control, we only find lonely corruption and emptiness.

—You must see Christ, your High Priest accurately: —**He's not ashamed of you!** *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers... (Heb.2:10-11)* —**He doesn't condemn you!** *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God (Jn. 3:18).* —**He's not eager to punish you!** *As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel (Ez. 33:11)?* —**He's approachable!** *"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light (Mt. 11:28-30)!*

—**Heb. 4:15-16** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

—Have you ever come across a person you just can't relate to? (Oregon Ducks losing LOL)

—Share about the importance of empathy: —Tucker in a wheel chair paralyzed, meeting a 3 year old boy paralyzed in a wheel chair. —Taking care of my mom, as she battled her last fight against cancer (constant throw up, colostomy bag, helping out of bed, changing her clothes, pills in the middle of the night). —Friends my age would do their best to understand, but many couldn't. —I found comfort in those who did because they had walked the journey (understood my feelings, the difficulties, the confusion, the pain). It made them much more approachable. —We are much more vulnerable towards those who understand our hurts, pains, and situations. (The old high priests were not personally involved in the lives of all those for whom they made the sacrifices for—a major disconnect).

—Jesus is a high priest who gets us (loneliness, abandonment, betrayal, abuse, hungry, marginalized, misunderstood, rejected, weak). **He gets us! BUT His "getting us" doesn't give us an excuse to stay in our crap** and live in disobedience. He doesn't excuse our sin; it wouldn't be loving! —I've empathized with people and "get" where they're at, which allows authenticity and trust to build, but I also know where they'll go if they remain there, and so I call them out in gracious love to **live in faithful obedience to Him.** —**Draw near to the throne of grace with confidence**, and receive two things: 1) Mercy (withheld what we deserve—rejecting Christ—who is life—is choosing condemnation and death), and 2) Grace (receiving what we don't deserve—life and forgiveness). —The prodigal son headed home and was met by a receptive dad, and so head home, too!

—At the same time, **Christians, be approachable by others, as Christ has been approachable for us.** Don't shame and guilt people, but empathize with others in truth and love that you might be a catalyst for them to receive Christ and His mercy and grace!

CONCLUSION:

—Jesus, our Great High Priest, is the *only* hope of salvation, therefore today confess Him as your salvation! This is an agreement that Christ is God's messenger and High Priest (Heb. 3:1), that He is the very Son of God who saves you from death to life (Heb. 4:14-16) now and forevermore. —This confession is public. This confession is daily. **This confession is far more than an intellectual belief but it's a confession that takes shape through obedience to Christ—a loyalty and allegiance expressed in word and life!**