

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 6

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight in our study of the book of Hebrews we are returning to Hebrews 5:5-10 and within these verses we are looking at how Jesus met the qualifications to be our Great High Priest. In Hebrews 5:1-4 the writer pointed to high priests of the Old Testament and 3 qualifications which they were required to meet.

1. **He had to be appointed by God.**
2. **He had to be able to feel compassion for those he offered sacrifices for.**
3. **He had to offer sacrifices for sinful man.**

The Hebrews who received this letter knew the qualifications of the high priest but in their mind they would have questioned if Jesus qualified. The writer had presented Jesus as the Great High Priest in Hebrews 4:14-16 and because of this presentation there would have been questions in the mind of the readers. So the writer sets out to answer the questions. Now last week we started into this section and we were able to see how Jesus was chosen by the Father and that Jesus was not of the priesthood of Aaron. Instead Jesus was a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Let us get to the outline that we started into last week.

I. Jesus, the Qualified High Priest

Part 2

A. Jesus was appointed by the Father

Notice Hebrews 5:5-6

Here in verses 5 the writer quotes from Psalm 2 and then in verse 6 he quotes from Psalm 110. It is in verses 6 that the writer shakes the minds of the Hebrew readers. He reminds them of a priesthood that existed long before the priesthood of Aaron. It was the priesthood of Melchisedec. Last week I took you to Genesis where we meet Melchisedec for as he comes out to meet Abraham.

Genesis 14:14-18

¹⁴ *And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.*

¹⁵ *And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.*

¹⁶ *And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.*

¹⁷ *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.*

¹⁸ *And Melchizedek **king of Salem** brought forth bread and wine: and **he was the priest** of the most high God.*

This verse tells us that Melchisedec was:

1. **A king.**
2. **A priest.**

The fact that he was a king made his priesthood superior to Aaron's because while Aaron was a priest he was never a king. Jesus then being a Priest after the order of Melchisedec makes His Priesthood superior to Aaron's. Jesus also is Prophet, Priest, and King.

So the statement about Jesus being a Priest after the order of Melchisedec would have stirred the minds of the Hebrew believers. But the writer will wait until chapter 7 to dive deep into this subject.

The question then remains, "How could Jesus, the Son of God identify with the common man who is a sinner?" That brings us to the next point.

B. Jesus could sympathize with sinners.

Notice Hebrews 5:7

Here in this verse the writer tells us that while Jesus was here on the earth He experienced the pressures which we feel in our everyday lives. Last week we looked what Jesus went through in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He was crucified. As we step back into this tonight I want to take you back there again because there is much more to see. Now remember that it is the writer's desire to show that Jesus can identify with you and I who have felt the pressures of temptation and the everyday pressures of life. This is really a picture of something the writer had presented in chapter 4.

Hebrews 4:15

¹⁵ *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the **feeling** of our **infirmities**; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

There are 2 words here that are very important. The word "**feeling**" here means "**to sympathize with**" and the word "**infirmities**" means "**weaknesses**". The idea here is that we have a Great High Priest who is able to sympathize with us when we are pressured with temptation and we are struggling with our weaknesses. Here is the account from Matthew.

Matthew 26:38-44

³⁸ *Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

³⁹ *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.***

⁴⁰ *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

⁴¹ *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

⁴² *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.***

⁴³ *And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.*

⁴⁴ *And he left them, and went away again, **and prayed the third time, saying the same words.***

Then in Luke there is even more details.

Luke 22:42-44

⁴² *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

⁴³ *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

⁴⁴ *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

Now let us notice Hebrews 5:7 again.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that in the Garden that night Jesus not only prayed but He also cried with "strong crying". The pressure that He felt that night was very intense. Now last week I told you that in the Garden His pressure was far beyond anything we have ever

known. There was much happening that night but one of His battles was with Satan as Satan attempted to pull Him from the will of the Father. But He endured the pressure and therefore He is able to sympathize with us. You see He experienced much more pressure than we have ever know because before the temptation would ever get to this point with us we would take the easy way out which would be to give in to the temptation. He did not and so He knows far greater pressure than we will ever know.

But that raises another question in my mind, "Can He sympathize with us in the shame of failure?" The answer is, "YES". But someone would object because Jesus never sinned and therefore He could not possibly know our shame in the midst of failure." Let me show you some verses.

2 Corinthians 5:21

*²¹ **For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***

Here in this verse Paul tells us that Jesus was made sin for us. In other word Jesus became the SIN-BEARER for us. He was sinless in His own life and when He went to the cross He took upon Himself our sins.

Isaiah 53:6

*⁶ **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

When Jesus hung upon the cross all of our sins were placed upon Him because God required that every sin had to be paid for. But that was not all that He experienced.

Isaiah 53:3-4

*³ **He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.***

*⁴ **Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.***

Here in Isaiah 53:4 we have the details of what happened when Jesus was on the cross. Isaiah tells us that He borne our GRIEFS and carried our SORROWS. The word "griefs" refers to sickness and disease. When Jesus died on the cross He experienced every illness that we would ever face in our lives. Because sickness is caused by sin so when He took our sins He also took our sickness and disease. The word "sorrows" refers to the emotional and

the mental effects of sin. This would have included all depressions and all of our SHAME that comes as a result of sin in our lives.

So getting back to Hebrews 5 again we can see that He can identify with us in the pressures of life and even in the midst of our failures because He took upon Himself our sin and all of its effects.

Therefore He meets the requirement of being able to sympathize with the common man even more so than the high priests of the Old Testament.

Now there is something else in Hebrews 5:7 that I want you to see.

Notice Hebrews 5:7 again.

Jesus prayed to the ONE who was able to save Him "out of death" and He was heard because He FEARED. I want to just consider the word "feared" because there is a very powerful thought within this.

There is no indication in God's Word that Jesus had a fear of death and that He ever prayed to be saved from dying on the cross. He Himself had said that He had come into the world to go to the cross.

John 12:24-27

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

²⁵ He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

²⁶ If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

*²⁷ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: **but for this cause came I unto this hour.***

Jesus had come to die so that from His death there would be "much fruit" (people saved). But what about the prayers of Jesus in the Garden were they not prayers asking the Father to keep Him from dying on the cross? They could not have been since He said He had come to die. So what did our Lord pray for when He prayed out of fear to the One who was able to save Him and what is the fear that the writer of Hebrews is speaking of? We really need to grasp this!

The prayers that He offered from the Garden and from the cross were prayers to be freed not from physical death but from SPIRITUAL DEATH. Remember one of His prayers from the cross?

Mark 15:34

³⁴ *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Let me show you one of His prayers from Psalm 22.

Psalm 22:21a

²¹ *Save me from the lion's mouth:*

The lion was considered the most powerful and the most violent enemy. Here it is likened to eternal death or eternal separation from God.

In the time on the cross Jesus experienced what we would have experienced for all eternity if we were to die unsaved. He was separated from the Father which is exactly what hell will be for those who die without Jesus Christ. It will be eternal separation from God.

So in the Garden as He prays for the cup to pass from Him it is not a prayer to escape physical death but it is a prayer to not be separated from the Father. The suffering of the nails and the scourging would be nothing compared to the separation from the Father.

But there is more here. The word "fear" refers to a "reverent fear". In other words Jesus never once lost His faith in the Father. He never once did not trust the Father with what was before Him. When He prayed He prayed in a way that He was willing to submit to whatever the father had for Him to do. Let me show you that prayer from the Garden again.

Matthew 26:39

³⁹ *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Conclusion:

We can clearly see the reverence within His prayer and the writer of James tells us the Father heard Him because of this reverence. So how did the Father answer Him?

Luke 22:42-44

⁴² *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

⁴³ *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

The Father strengthened Him.

Let me leave you with 2 valuable lessons.

1. **God often does not take away that which we face but He gives strength to get through it.**
2. **If the Son of God feared separation from the Father how much more should we? The greatest concern of man should be to be sure He is saved!**