

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 7

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Last week in our study of the book of Hebrews we were in Hebrews 5:1-10. It is in these verses that the writer is supporting what he had recorded in Hebrews 4:14-16. It was in those verses that He spoke of Jesus as "The Great High Priest".

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

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.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Now in order for Jesus to be a High Priest the Hebrews who would have received this letter would have known that He had to first meet the qualifications of a High Priest. That is why we have the section which is currently before us. The writer has pointed to 3 qualifications of an Old Testament High Priest in Hebrews 5:1-4. They were:

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 writer then moves on in Hebrews 5:5-10 to show the Hebrew readers that Jesus met everyone one of the qualifications.

I. Jesus, the Qualified High Priest

Part 3

A. Jesus was appointed by the Father

Notice Hebrews 5:5-6

Here in these verses the writer takes his readers back to the Old Testament again and in 5:5 he quotes from Psalm 2:7 which is a Psalm which speaks of the Messiah and in the

verse he quotes he reminds his readers Jesus is the Son of God. He then quotes Psalm 110:4 where God announced that Jesus was a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

So here is the point the writer is making: Jesus, the very Son of God, begotten of God was also appointed by God to be a High Priest. But He is not a High Priest after the Priesthood of Aaron but He is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. This was a Priesthood that was superior to Aaron's. Aaron was a priest but Melchisedec was a king priest. He is therefore a type of Jesus Christ.

The overall point the writer is making here is that Jesus did not glorify Himself to be a High Priest but He was chosen and appointed by God.

B. Jesus could sympathize with sinners.

Notice Hebrews 5:7

Here in this verse the writer no doubt points to the pinnacle of the suffering of Jesus Christ which took place in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. It was in Gethsemane that Jesus came under great pressure from temptation as He faced the cross. The pressure was so great that it caused the blood to come through the pores of His skin.

Luke 22:44

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.

There is so much for us to learn here in all of this and I want to just recap a few things for you.

1. Jesus knows what it is to feel the pressure of temptation above anything we have ever felt. He endured the temptation and never once gave into sin.

We have never resisted temptation to the point of feeling pressure so great that our blood was squeezed through our skin. We have always taken the easy way out which is to give into the temptation. Therefore when we feel pressure Jesus can sympathize with us because He has felt pressure even greater than what we feel.

2. Jesus felt the very shame that we feel when we give into sin because on the cross He bore our sins and with our sins He experienced the physical and the emotional

effects of our sin. We saw this last week in Isaiah 53 and we can also see it in Hebrews 12.

Hebrews 12:2

² *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, **despising the shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

3. Jesus prayed that the cup of suffering might pass from Him but the Father did not take it away but He strengthened Him for the path before Him.

Hebrews 5:7

⁷ *Who in the days of his flesh, when **he had offered up prayers and supplications** with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, **and was heard** in that he feared;*

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.*

Therefore, when we face a situation where we pray and we ask God to take away the storm but instead He strengthens us for the storm, Jesus knows exactly how we feel.

All of this is to help the readers see that Jesus can sympathize with us, as our High Priest in whatever we face in our journey through this world. But there is more.

Notice Hebrews 5:8

The words of this verse are so rich in spiritual Truth and there is so much here for you and me to learn from.

Now as I look at this verse there is a question that I must ask right away, "What does the writer mean when he tells us that Jesus learned **obedience** by the things which He suffered?"

Let me begin by saying that Jesus was not born DISOBEDIENT and then learned through His suffering to be obedient. That is not what the writer is saying here. Let us keep in

mind the context and that is the writer is on a mission to show the readers that Jesus can sympathize with the common sinner.

Let us first consider the first part of this verse when the writer says, "Though He were a Son". Here the writer is explaining that as the Son of God Jesus was not shown "special privileges" when it came to suffering. Jesus was not sheltered from suffering as the Son of God. This statement was given as an answer to the one who would question Jesus' ability, as the Son of God, to identify with the common sinner.

But how did He learn obedience through suffering?

In heaven, before Jesus became a Man and was born of a virgin, He was completely obedient to the will of the Father. But in heaven there was no suffering nor was there any temptation or any pressure from Satan or temptation.

But when He was born into this world full of sin and darkness it was not long until He began to experience what all of mankind has felt. One of the experiences was in Matthew 4 when he was tempted by Satan. Then there was the account in the Garden of Gethsemane. In all of this Jesus was obedient to the Father and He never once gave into temptation. Now had He been born and had He been protected by the Father from all temptation He still would have been fully obedient. But because the Father did not shelter Him and the Father allowed Him to face the storms and the temptations of this life He learn BY EXPERIENCE what it is to be obedient under the pressures of this sin filled world.

As the Son of God He knew through His omniscience what it was to suffer. But in "the days of His flesh" as is stated in Hebrews 5:7 He learned by EXPERIENCE what it is to suffer and He learned by EXPERIENCE how great the pressures of this life really are, and how difficult (but fully possible) it is to walk in obedience.

This is again what it is that makes Jesus our Great High Priest. This is what makes His Priesthood superior to Aaron's because not only did He feel the pressures and the temptation of this life but under it all He remained obedient to the Father. No other High Priest could claim complete obedience.

Remember 5:3 where the writer was speaking of the Old Testament High Priests?

Hebrews 5:3

³ And by reason hereof he [the Old Testament High Priest] ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

The Old Testament High Priest had to offer sacrifices for their own sins. But Jesus never had to do that because under the GREATEST pressure He never once gave into sin but He learned obedience under the suffering He went through.

Application:

There is an application here that I want you to see.

The Bible never teaches that strong faith will keep a Christian from all suffering. Christians are appointed to affliction.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

³ That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

So one of the purposes of the suffering which we go through is to cause us to draw closer to our Great High Priest who knows what it is to suffer. Let me connect a few verses here to show you something that is absolutely beautiful.

Hebrews 4:15-16

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.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Our Great High Priest has made a way for us to come into the presence of God when we need mercy and grace in a time of need. Therefore we can pray as the Psalmist did in Psalm 61.

Psalm 61:1-4

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

² From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

This is wonderful!!!

Now let us move on in Hebrews 5.

Notice Hebrews 5:9a

Here we see that Jesus was made perfect through the sufferings. This does not mean that He was not perfect before He suffered. It means that He became "complete" to be our Great High Priest through His EXPERIENCES of suffering. Jesus became "PERFECTLY" qualified through His sufferings to be able to sympathize with we who are common sinners living in a world of great pressure and temptation.

Notice Hebrews 5:9 again.

We also see that as the "COMPLETE" High Priest Jesus became the Author of eternal salvation. There was no High Priest of the Old Testament that could provide **eternal** salvation for those he sacrificed for. He could get them forgiveness but it was only temporary because they had to sacrifice year after year. But our Great High Priest has provided ETERNAL salvation. That means it will last FOREVER.

John 10:27-28

²⁷ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

²⁸ *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

Notice Hebrews 5:9 again.

The eternal life is for all who obey Him. The obedience is not a REQUIREMENT to be saved. That is not what the writer is saying.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

⁹ *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

The writer of Hebrews is making it clear to those he is writing to that when we possess eternal life we will live in obedience. Obedience is one of the marks of TRUE salvation.

1 John 2:3-6

³ *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

⁴ *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

⁵ *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

⁶ *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

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Conclusion:

The end of verse 9 was meant to prick the hearts of the Hebrew readers. Remember they were thinking about returning to Judaism because of the pressures they were facing due to their profession of faith. To walk away from this Great High Priest would show they had never been saved at all. True faith is to persevere in the face of the storms and the pressures of life and to hold tight to the Author of ETERNAL salvation.

Application:

How is your perseverance in the midst of the storms of this life?