

Hebrews 5

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Tape #8210
Pastor Chuck Smith

All right, let's go to Hebrews, chapter five. Now in the fourth chapter, at the end of the chapter, he is speaking of Jesus being our High Priest. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that has passed into heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.

The religion of Judaism is rich in tradition and in culture. Many of those who were following the tradition and seeking to obey the law, came to a faith and a knowledge in Jesus Christ. But some of them were gradually being drawn back, because of the deep roots of tradition into the temple worship again. They were turning back to Judaism, turning back to the law because of the richness of tradition, it had that kind of an appeal.

And so in the second chapter the author said, let's take the more earnest heed to the things, which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them, because some of them were drifting away from the truth in Jesus.

One of the things that brought great comfort and assurance was the fact that you could bring a sacrifice to the priests for your sin offering. You could lay your hand on the head of the animal and you could confess on it your sin. The priest in turn would slay it and take the blood, put it in a basin and put it on the mercy seat. The sacrifice would be burned in the fire. And it was a very moving experience and a very dramatic kind of an experience because you realize, that animal is suffering and dying for my sin! But as the result of it taking my sin and dying in my place, I can now fellowship with God. And so it was the High Priest that took the offering before the Lord, the sin offering, to help restore your fellowship with God. And it was a very moving experience and a very dramatic experience and very powerful.

And so some of the people who had accepted Jesus, were being drawn back, into even offering sacrifices for sin again. Now, he'll tell us when we once come to the knowledge of truth in Jesus, there remains no more sacrifice for sin. You can't go back to the old way. The blood of goats and bulls, he said, can never put away sin. All they could do at the best, was to cover sin. But the fact that they had to be offered, over and over again, showed the incompleteness of the sacrifice.

So he is seeking to point out to us that we have a Great High Priest. Now the high priest would go into the holy of holies once a year to offer the sacrifices for the sins of the nation. And that was the Day of Atonement, when God's forgiveness, given in a broad sense to the nation, in the forgiveness of sin. The holy of holies, we are told and will be told, a little later on, in the Book of Hebrews, was a model of heaven. The cherubim about the mercy seat was an earthly model of what is in reality in heaven, the mercy seat of God surrounded by the cherubim as described in Ezekiel chapters one and ten, and in Revelation, chapter four. And so the earthly tabernacle or temple was only a model of heavenly things. So we have a Great High Priest that didn't go into the holy of holies, but He has entered into heaven for us! And so we can now, through Him, come boldly unto the throne of grace to obtain mercy.

Now he gives in chapter five, continuing with the thought of the Great High Priest, *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:* And so this was the ministry of the high priest. He had to be taken from among men. He was ordained for men to be a mediator between man and God. Sinful man cannot approach a Holy God. That's just the way it is.

Even the high priest, when on that Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, would come into the holy of holies, he would not enter it until he had first offered many sacrifices, including sacrifices for his own sin. And after much cleansing, many sacrifices, he would then come with the sacrifice of the goat that had been slain, to offer that before the mercy seat, within the holy of holies. And so, because man could not directly approach

God, he was ordained for man to approach God, for them. He was the go between, the mediator, between sinful man and a righteous God. He would offer both gifts and sacrifices for their sins.

²*Who can have compassion on the ignorant.* Now it was necessary and these are the requirements of the high priest. He had to be compassionate, who can have compassion on the ignorant. The Old Testament Law had the sacrifices that had to be made for various offenses. And even the sins of ignorance had to be atoned for. And so this man had to have a, and the word compassion is good, but it doesn't, well the Greek word really cannot be translated into English. It is an empathy. It is a sympathetic understanding. It's all of these. He has to be able to really have true compassion or empathy towards the sinner, towards those who were guilty and bringing their offerings to be offered to the Lord.

He had to have compassion on the ignorant, *and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.* All of us are compassed with infirmity, weaknesses. None of us are perfect. And many times, when we get judgmental, I believe that the Lord reveals something of our own character and nature that is really out of kilter, so that we will not be so judgmental, so that we can have compassion, rather than judgmental attitude toward people who have sinned.

We are so quick to, you know, rise in righteous indignation, over someone else's sin. Our sins look so horrible when someone else is committing them. And we can get very indignant, you know.

It's like David, after this horrible sin with Bathsheeba and the subsequent setting her husband up for being killed. And the prophet Nathan came to David and said, David there is a man in your kingdom. He is very wealthy. I mean he has everything that you could ever want. And next door to him there lived this poor man. All he had was one little ewe lamb. And it was like a child. It was the only thing he had. It would eat at his table. It would sleep in the room at night. And the rich man had company come. And he ordered his servants to go next door and, by force, take that one little lamb that the man owned and kill it and roast it for his company. David was indignant! He said to Nathan the prophet. That man shall surely be put to death! Nathan said, David, you're the man! You see, he just changed the circumstances a little bit. And David saw his sin and condemned himself.

Now Paul tells us that if a brother be overtaken in a fault, you that are Spiritual, restore him in a spirit of weakness. Considering yourselves, lest you also be tempted.

So the high priest was not perfect. He was just a man like all of the rest of us and thus, capable of having understanding and compassion upon those who had sinned in ignorance or those who were out of the way, out of God's path. And so he was able to help them, because he too, was compassed with weaknesses.

³*And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.* In other words, he not only had to offer sin offerings for the people, he had to offer sin offerings for himself. He was guilty. He was a sinner. He knew what it was to be a sinner. He had to offer sacrifices for himself as well as for the people.

And then we read, ⁴*And no man taketh this honour (office) unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* It's not something that you self-appoint. It's not a self appointment. You don't set yourself up as the high priest. It takes a calling and being ordained by God, for the office. You don't just take that honor on yourself. You have to be called of God.

⁵*So also,* Now that's the earthly high priest. These were the requirements. This was his ministry. This is what he did.

So turning now from the high priest in Judaism, he turns to Jesus Christ. So also *Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest;* It wasn't something that He pushed Himself into. But it was an honor that was bestowed unto Him by the Father.

but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. ⁶*As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* So, the Son of God, but the Lord said to Him, You are a priest forever. He is appointed by God, ordained by God. He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

Now as we continue through Hebrews, the author is going to give us many more contrasts between the earthly high priest and Jesus as our Great High Priest. In the seventh chapter, he is going to elaborate and as

he says here, he has a lot more to say on this. So in the seventh chapter, he tells us a lot more about this, that is, likening Jesus until Melchisedec and the priest hood of Melchisedec.

So Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.

Now the Jewish high priest was after the order of Aaron, a member of the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi was appointed as the priestly tribe for the nation. And Aaron and his descendents inherited the task of high priest. But Jesus is of a different order, not the Aaronic order of priesthood, but after the order of Melchisedec.

⁷*Who in the days of his flesh, (That is Jesus.) 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;* A rather puzzling passage. It is no doubt a reference to the experience that Jesus had in the garden of Gethsemane, when as He was praying, His sweat became as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground. Being in agony, He was praying. Tears, strong crying, unto Him who was able to save Him from death. And you remember the thrice repeated prayer. Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me!

Now, the thing that is puzzling here is that it says and was heard. In other words, the Father heard His prayer. Now it has caused J. Vernon McGee in his commentary on this passage to declare that it was his opinion that Satan was trying to kill Jesus in the garden. And so Jesus was praying that Satan would not be able to kill Him there, but that He could go on to the cross in order that He might pay the price for redemption.

We know that Satan knew that Jesus came to give His life on the cross as a ransom for sin. Satan can read the Old Testament just as well as you can, and probably understands it better than we do! And he knew the prophesies of the Messiah, that He was to be crucified, high and lifted up. (Isaiah 52). And knowing this, was endeavoring actually to keep Jesus from the cross.

You remember when Jesus was with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi, and He said, whom do men say that I am? And they gave to Jesus the various opinions that people had. Some say, they think that You're John the Baptist, come back from the dead. Some think that You are Elijah. Some think You're the other prophets. But Jesus said, but who do you say that I am. Peter said, well, You're the Messiah, the Son of the living God! Jesus answered, blessed are you, Simon bar-Jonah (son of Jonah) because flesh and blood did not reveal this unto you, but My Father, which is in heaven. And I say unto you that you are Peter and upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And from that time, Jesus began to say to His disciples, now I'm going to be turned over to the Gentiles. And they are going to crucify Me and kill Me, but I will rise again the third day. And Peter began to rebuke Him. You remember, he said, Lord, be that far from Thee! And Jesus turned and said to Peter, get thee behind Me, Satan. For you offend Me because You cannot discern between that which comes from God and that which comes from man. Jesus recognized that that cry of Peter, when He talked of the cross, the cry literally was, spare Thyself! And God recognized that as the cry of hell!

And so J. Vernon McGee believes that Jesus was actually praying that Satan wouldn't kill Him there in the garden. Now J. Vernon McGee is an interesting character. And I don't really agree with him on this particular point, but I will say concerning J. Vernon McGee that he is a tremendous Bible teacher. He was a marvelous man of God. He did a lot to restore people to the study of the Word and how I thank God for him! But as I was with him in Hawaii and he introduced me to the people there. He said this young man also teaches the Bible and God has done a wonderful work in his ministry. We don't agree on everything, but I respect his right to be wrong. Well, in this case, I respect McGee's right to be wrong.

Jesus was indeed praying in the garden, that the cup might pass from Him. The Father heard His prayer, in as much as He revered the Father. The Father heard His prayer, but then, you remember, that wasn't the end of the prayer. The prayer was, nevertheless, not what I will, but Thy will be done. That was the whole prayer.

That is why in the very next verse, we read, ⁸*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;* In, not My will but Thy will be done, He submitted Himself to the will of the Father, which was the cross. And in expressing, "Let this cup pass", He is expressing His own desire at this moment, but yet the overriding issue was, "Not My will but Your will be done."

The Father heard His prayer. He heard His cries. He heard His pleading. But He also heard the submission to obedience.

And that is why Paul said, that though He was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He emptied Himself and came in the form and likeness of man. He came in the form of a servant and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross! He was obedient unto death!

And so He learned obedience through the things that He suffered there on the cross, as He suffered for our sins. He was learning the importance of obedience to the will of the Father. Even so we need to realize the importance of obedience. And we learn oftentimes, among many things, obedience through suffering.

God uses suffering as a tool to teach us important lessons for life. There are things that we learn through suffering that we cannot learn any other way. There is character that is developed through suffering that cannot be developed any other way. And so as Peter said, if any of you suffer according to the will of God, you should just commit the keeping of your souls unto Him as unto a wise Creator. And so we learn commitment. We learn trust. We learn faith. We learn patience. We learn hope through suffering.

And so though He were a Son, the Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. ⁹*And being made perfect.* That is complete. And through the suffering, back in chapter two, verse ten, it speaks about His being made perfect through suffering. For it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

So coming back to that thought from chapter two, verse ten, he had been made perfect, or being made perfect, *he became the author of eternal salvation*. The Bible tells us or Hebrews will tell us also that He is the author and the finisher of our faith. Salvation is of the Lord. He is the author of salvation. He is the one who has provided salvation. It's His plan of redemption. And He is the author of eternal salvation.

unto all them that obey him; The obedience, those who are obedient, receive eternal salvation.

¹⁰*Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.* He is called of God, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Again, a repetition, it takes us back to Psalm 110, where He has sworn, and by the decree, shall not turn back. Thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

As I said in chapter seven, he is going to elaborate on this. And so we won't elaborate tonight. We'll wait until we get to chapter seven and then we will go back into Genesis chapter fourteen. We'll look at this man, Melchisedec. Then we will pick up, of course in chapter seven, it will give us some very interesting arguments, concerning the fact that a priest after the order of Melchisedec, is higher than a priest after the order of Levi. And he'll make that comparison when we get to chapter seven. So we'll put that on hold for two weeks. And two weeks from tonight, we'll elaborate on that one.

Now Paul said, ¹¹*Of whom (that is Melchisedec) we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.* I have a lot of things that I would like to say to you about this, Paul would say. I'm not saying that to you. I mean, Paul is saying that to those he is writing to.

There are a lot of things I'd to say or utter, but you are dull of hearing. ¹²*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* ¹³*For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.* They hadn't really developed. And of course there was this again, admixture of law and faith. It kept them in a state of spiritual infancy, because they were still looking to their own works to be accepted by God and looking to their own works for a righteous standing before God.

So I have a lot of things that I'd like to talk to you about these things, Paul is saying. And yet you are dull of hearing. So it's hard to speak to you about these things. The time has come that you really ought to be teaching, but you still have need to be taught. You still have need of milk and you're not able to take strong meat.

They made fun of Isaiah in his day and of his teaching methods. They said, concerning Isaiah, chapter 28, who shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Those that are weaned from milk and drawn from the breast. His teaching is so simple, little babies. He ought to be teaching

kindergarten, because his teaching is line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little. And it was in a sneering way that they said this of Isaiah.

Jesus in Matthew 11:25, said at that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Ye oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and You've revealed them unto babes.

And then in Mark ten, verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, will not enter therein.

But then, Paul had a similar rebuke to this to the Corinthians. He said, I, brethren could not speak unto you as unto Spiritual but as unto carnal even as to babes in Christ. For I have fed you with milk and not with meat. For up until now you were not able to bear it and neither are you yet able.

It is sad that many people go to church all of their lives, but never develop beyond infancy state in their Spiritual growth. They remain infants. Paul calls them babes in Christ. They never grow up. They never mature. And the reason is, the lack of the kind of food by which you've grown. The Bible is Spiritual food. We dealt with that two weeks ago.

Jesus said the Word that I speak. They are Spirit and they are life. And the Word of God is alive. It's powerful. It's sharper than a two edged sword. It is able to discern between the soul and the spirit. And the Word of God feeds your spirit.

And people are dull of hearing, many times, of the Word of God. They don't want to get in and just really study the Word of God. How I thank God for you people here. Your hunger for the Word of God and your love for the Word of God. And the fact that we can go through the whole Bible and just find it an exciting experience to study the Word and by it, growing together in our knowledge and understanding of the Lord and the things of the Lord.

So he is sort of rebuking them for the fact that they haven't really matured in the Spiritual walk. In the last verse, he said, but strong meat belongs to those that are mature, those that have grown up.

Now the purpose of the church is to bring you into Spiritual maturity. In Ephesians, chapter four, as Paul is talking about the church, he said, and when he (Jesus) ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting or the maturing of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying or building up of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. For the building up of the body of Christ, for until you come into a full maturity, and that's really the purpose of the church.

It is to bring you into full maturity in your walk with the Lord. It isn't to entertain you. It isn't to provide an exciting and entertaining program and all. It's really to bring you into maturity, Spiritual maturity.

There are churches that seek to attract people and entertain people, but the people remain in that infant state. They still are on the bottle. They never get to the meat and thus they never grow beyond the infancy state. They never mature. And thus, was the case with the Hebrews that he is writing to.

¹⁴*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.* Strong meat belongs to those who are fully mature, the same Greek word, here. Full aged is fully matured or perfect, complete. , *even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* By the use of the Word of God, our senses are able to discern good from evil.

So chapter six will take up at this very point that we are stopping tonight. The thought is continued on into chapter six. And it's interesting how that these chapters sort of bridge from one from another. You notice how that the end of chapter four, he's talking about the Great High Priesthood of Jesus. And then he moves into chapter five continuing in the subject of the priesthood.

Now he is talking about growing up, maturing spiritually, in your knowledge and in your understanding. And he'll take that up in chapter six. He'll continue this very subject and of really growing up in your knowledge of the Word of God. Leaving those first principles, the basic primary things and going on into full maturity. And really that's our desire. That we might become fully mature in the things of God, in the things of the Spirit and in the Word of God. Growing up and becoming mature.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. And for the opportunity, Lord, of gathering and studying Your Word. Help us that we might grow. Lord, it is our desire that we not just continually be bottle fed, but that we might mature and we might be able, Lord, to begin digest some of the meat of the Word of God. And Lord, we thank You for the hunger that You've given to us to know You. And Lord, we realize that we can only know You through Your Word and the revelation of Your Self. So we give Lord, ourselves to You, to study, to show ourselves approved, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing, discerning between good and evil. In Jesus' name. Amen.