

Hebrews Study

Overcoming Weakness Hebrews 4:14-5:10

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” – Hebrews 4:16

Quick, name something you are not good at! People rarely like to talk about their weaknesses. We take 45 pictures of ourselves and post the best one. No one wants to highlight their failures. Are weakness ever portrayed as a good thing? The most important thing is that when we are weak we do have a Savior who can help us and one who understands what it is like to be human.

Jesus the Great High Priest vv. 4:14-5:10

What does “has gone through the heavens” mean?

Just as Aaron or the high priest would disappear into the Holy of Holies, so Jesus has also disappeared after the resurrection.

How can we “hold firmly to the faith we profess?” v. 14

Text

How did Jesus sympathize with our weaknesses? v. 15 But how is Jesus different than us?

He became human, got tired, hungry, etc.

He was tempted also. “yet without sin” v. 15 (See Luke 4:1-13)

How should we draw near to the throne of God?

What is the result when we do this?

We should come with “confidence” v. 16

We will “receive mercy and find grace,” v. 16

What’s the role and primary duty of a high priest? What makes the high priest sympathetic to those he represents?

“to represent them in matters related to God,” v. 1

“to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.” v. 1

Because the high priest is subject to weakness.

For whom does the high priest offer sacrifices for? (v. 3)

His own sins and the sins of the people.

According to verse 4, who chose Israel’s high priests?

God did, not the people.

What two OT passages are quoted in this section?

Psalms 2:7 and Psalm 110:4

“Jesus’ exalted status as high priest might seem to imply that he is far removed from our human experience in a hostile world. But our author anticipates such an objection and asserts that Jesus’ transcendence made no difference to his humanity. In fact, believers have in heaven a high priest with an unequalled capacity for empathizing with them in all their weaknesses, especially the weakness that results in sin.” — Peter O’Brien

“So when we come to pray to the heavenly father, we are not shouting across a great gulf. We are not trying to catch the attention of someone who has little or no concern for us. Verse 16 puts it like this: we are coming to ‘the throne of grace’ (that’s a way of saying (a) that we’re coming to the throne of God and (b) that we must now think of God as the God of grace), and we may and must come boldly and confidently. This isn’t arrogance. Indeed, if we understand who Jesus is, what he’s done and what he’s still doing on our behalf, the real arrogance would be to refuse to accept his offer of standing before the father on our behalf, to imagine that we had to bypass him and try to do it all ourselves.”
- N.T. Wright

How is Jesus like Melchizedek?

Jesus serves as a high priest with His duties.
Melchizedek had an eternal priesthood (See Hebrews 7:3)
Melchizedek was also “king of Salem”, Jesus is also king.

What priestly activities did Jesus take part in on earth according to verse 7?

He offered up prayers and petitions.

What did Jesus’ sufferings teach him? Any different for us?

“Obedience” v. 8

How does it encourage you that Jesus is your high priest?

He’s not just a “far off God” unacquainted with our sufferings.
It shows he cares about us and for us.

There is a literary device where the author “bookends” the main section in the letter which highlights the central part of the letter. (Guthrie, deSilva)

“Melchizedek was the king of Salem (ancient Jerusalem), a city that was then a pagan location called Zion. He first appeared after Abraham’s military victory, meeting him in the Valley of Shaveh, where he brought bread and wine, blessed Abraham, and received a tithe of the battle spoils. His role as a “priest of God Most High” is intriguing, given that Jerusalem was a Canaanite pagan city, which led ancient rabbinical scholars to suggest he might have been Shem, Noah’s son. Significantly, in biblical interpretation, Melchizedek is seen as a type of Christ, representing an eternal, superior priesthood that predates the Levitical order. The New Testament highlights this by noting that Jesus is a priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” with his priesthood considered superior because Melchizedek’s genealogy and death are not recorded, symbolizing an eternal priesthood. Interestingly, in intertestamental literature, Melchizedek was variously interpreted as a historical person, a representation of the Logos, and even an angelic, eschatological figure.”

— Logos Bible Software Summary

“That’s what verse 9 means when it says that Jesus was ‘made complete and perfect’ (it’s just one word in the Greek). It doesn’t mean that he was ‘imperfect’ before in the sense of being sinful, but that he needed to attain the full stature of sonship through experiencing the pain and grief of the father himself over his world gone wrong. He became truly and fully what in his nature he already was.” - N.T. Wright

Hebrews 4:14-16	Hebrews 10:19-23
“Therefore, since we have...” [Echontes] v. 14	Therefore... since we have” [Echontes oun] v. 19
“a great high priest” [archierae megan] v. 14	“a great priest” [hiera megan] v. 21
“Jesus” v. 14	“Jesus” v.19
“the Son of God” v . 14	“over the house of God” v. 21
“let us hold firmly to the faith we profess” [kratomen tes homologias]	“Let us hold... to the hope we profess” [katechomen ten homologian] v. 23
“Let us... approach” [proserchometha] v. 16	“let us draw near” [proserchometha] v. 22
“the throne of grace with confidence” [meta parrieais] v. 16	“we have confidence [parresian] to enter the most holy place” v. 19

Hebrews Study

For the Road

Preparation for Next Week:

Read: *Hebrews 5:11-6:20*

Be Ready to Discuss:

The difference between infant and mature believers, What it means to fall away, What it means to be patient and endure through trials.

Further Study...

Prayer—“Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence...”

Hebrews 4:16 is just one of many areas that teach about prayer. What else does the Bible say about our attitude and habits when it comes to prayer. What can you search and find this week?

What can you learn about Jesus from these verses?

How have you seen your obedience to Christ transform your suffering into spiritual growth?