

***Jesus Is a Better Priest - Hebrews 4:14-5:10***  
**Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

**Notes from the Sermon**

Hebrews can be difficult for many of us to read and interpret because we do not have a shared experience with the author and first readers. Their temptation was to reject Jesus in order to return to their Jewish religion and heritage. So the core argument the author makes throughout this sermon/letter revolves around the superiority of Jesus to every aspect of the Jewish religion. Yet, in this case, the religion of their ancestors did come from God's revelation of Himself. Jesus is not better than Judaism because their religion was bad, rather, Jesus is better because everything in their religion served as preparation for the coming of Jesus, and is ultimately fulfilled in the incarnation (Jesus coming in humanity). Yet, just because we don't have a shared experience with them does not mean that we don't need the book. The author of Hebrews under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has given us a vast treasure for understanding the person and work of Jesus.

In the First Century, no Jewish religious leader was more important than the High Priest. For those who grew up Catholic, the High Priest was the Jewish equivalent for the Pope. He stood as the ultimate human representative of a whole line of men who served Israel by leading their religious observances. The priesthood stood as one of the three key person gifts given by God to His people for the purpose of showing us the character and grace of God. While prophets spoke on God's behalf, and kings ruled for God, the priests duty was to be the go-between or mediator between God and His people. The priest stood in the middle, between sinful Israel who deserved God's justice yet received His mercy and their holy, glorious God who could not accept sinfulness into His presence. In fact, the theme of God's presence is vital for us to understand to make sense of the ministry given to priests, as they closed the gap between God and His people.

God's presence is what we most need. We were created for God, to know Him and to be fueled by His glory and presence. Yet, God's presence is the single most dangerous thing in all the universe for sinful people. Funny how we know this. Just think Indiana Jones and the scene where the Ark of the Covenant was opened. The movie gave a depiction of the object that represented God's throne inside the Holy of Holies. Now these Nazi soldiers had the Ark and they hoped to open it up to discover the powerful presence of God. Yet, upon opening it they were all immediately consumed, killed by the very presence they longed to experience, and absolutely consumed. Funny thing here, the truth is that the creators of this movie are actually spot on as to what would happen if the glory of God showed up in this sort of way among sinful people. So what we most need is also the most dangerous thing for our survival. That's a huge problem.

So God raised up priests with the High Priest being the most important of the crew. As I said, the priests Job was to be the go-between. They went to God on behalf of the people by offering sacrifices and fulfilling other rituals in Judas. These sacrifices atoned for the sin of the people, symbolically taking the justice they were due and paving the way for forgiveness and cleansing. These sacrifices took place in the Tabernacle and then the Temple, places that represented God's presence among His people. The priests also went to the people on behalf of God by being interpreters of the Torah, God's Word for them. So to be Jewish meant that you trusted in the ministry of the priest to bring you to God.

While the details of our text today are in the deep end of the pool, the core point

the author is making is straight forward, everything imaged in the ministry of these priests is fulfilled in Jesus and therefore He is now our greater and truer High Priest. So much so that the priesthood, Hebrews will argue, is ultimately obsolete. Jesus is God who became human just like us. He is a true and better priest because He can sympathize with our weakness and temptations. But He can also be our High Priest because he never sinned, and therefore His sacrifice is infinite and sufficient to cover our sin and make us holy and clean. And He is the Great High Priest because Jesus takes us not to a Temple made by hands, but stands for us and with us in the very throne room of God, in heaven, and He draws us near. Because of Jesus' priestly ministry we are invited in. No Hebrew would have ever considered running past the priests into the Holy of Holies. Yet, for the believer in Jesus, we find that we are invited to come before His Throne with bold confidence. And we will find that the true Holy of Holies is here, next to us, or I should say in us, where God appears in glory to give mercy and grace in our time of need.

**Bible Reading for the Week**

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
James 3	James 4	James 5	Psalms 121	Psalms 122	Psalms 123	Psalms 124

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 5:11-6:12

**Family Worship**

Song - *Christ is Mine Forevermore*

[https://youtu.be/roQovDZeAWE?si=gCjuW\\_wTlIkA8sb](https://youtu.be/roQovDZeAWE?si=gCjuW_wTlIkA8sb)

Gospel Project

Unit: God Is In Control

Story: Joseph Taken to Egypt

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything?

Answer: God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

Scripture: Genesis 37, 50

New City Catechism

Question 47: Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work?

Answer: No, Christ died once for all..

Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

Scripture

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

- Why is the presence of God both important and dangerous for us?
- How does the text show us that Jesus is our true and better High Priest?
- Why do we need a priest? Why can't any other human truly fulfill this role?
- How can we better trust Jesus as our High Priest?

Prayer

\*Give thanks this week for the people who led you to Jesus and have impacted your spiritual life.

\*Pray that we would lean into Jesus as our Great High Priest.