

Our Great High Priest Lesson 7 10-18-26

Bible Basis: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-10

Bible Truth: God appointed Jesus, the High Priest, as an intercessor on behalf of His people.

Memory Verse: “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” (Hebrews 4:14)

Lesson Aim:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to explain who Jesus is as the Great High Priest, describe why He can sympathize with human weakness, interpret the commands to hold fast our confession and come boldly to the throne of grace, and identify one way to respond to Christ’s priestly ministry in daily life.

1. Who Jesus is as our **Great High Priest**.
2. Why Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses.
3. What it means to **hold fast our confession**.
4. Why believers can come **boldly to the throne of grace**.

The lesson unfolds in two movements. Hebrews 4:14–16 shows what believers possess because Jesus is their Great High Priest: a firm confession, a sympathetic Savior, and confident access to grace. Hebrews 5:1–10 explains why Jesus is qualified for this ministry: He was appointed by God, identified as the eternal Priest, tested through suffering, and made the source of eternal salvation.

Historical and Background Context:

Hebrews was written to believers facing pressure, hardship, and the temptation to turn away from faith in Christ. The letter addresses a pressing question: Why should they continue trusting Jesus when suffering makes returning to what they knew before seem easier? The writer’s answer is that Jesus is greater—greater than the angels, greater than Moses, and greater than the Old Testament priesthood. He also provides a better covenant and a better sacrifice. Therefore, the believers’ security rests not in easier circumstances but in the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ.

Hebrews 4:14–16 brings these ideas together by focusing on Jesus as our **Great High Priest**.

Background Scripture Comparison:

How does Hebrews 4:14–5:10 correlate with Ephesians 4:7–13?

Ephesians 4:7–13 and Hebrews 4:14–5:10 present complementary aspects of Christ's ministry. Ephesians emphasizes the gifts Christ gives to equip His people for service, maturity, and unity. Hebrews emphasizes Christ's continuing priestly ministry through which He represents His people before God and provides mercy and grace in their weakness. Together, the passages show that the exalted Christ both equips His church for growth and sustains His people as they persevere in faith.

Together they reveal *Christ empowering His people from above and representing His people before God*, forming a complete picture of spiritual growth, unity, and perseverance.

What we've learned so far:

Hebrews 1–4 has established that Jesus is God's supreme revelation, greater than the angels and greater than Moses. The writer has also warned believers not to drift, harden their hearts, or fall short through unbelief. After showing that God's Word exposes the heart, Hebrews 4:14 turns to the hope believers possess: Jesus, the Son of God, is their Great High Priest.

Today we're in Hebrews 4:14–16 and Hebrews 5:1–10

The Lesson:

I. Jesus, the Great High Priest: Hold Fast and Come Boldly (Hebrews 4:14–16)

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.

15For 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.

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

What's Happening Here?

Verse 14 — “We have a great High Priest”

The first important word is “**we.**” The writer isn't merely saying that Jesus *was* a High Priest.

He is saying: “**We have a Great High Priest.**” Jesus is presently our representative before God. Under the Old Testament system, the high priest represented the people before God. But the earthly high priest was limited by human weakness and ultimately by death.

Jesus is different. He is the **Great High Priest**.

What makes Him great?

He is:

- The **Son of God**
- The One who **passed through the heavens**
- The One who represents us before God
- The One who understands our weaknesses
- The One who offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice

Teaching Point:

Our confidence is not based on how strong we are; it is based on who our High Priest is.

“Let us hold fast our confession”

The writer immediately gives a command:

“Let us hold fast.” In other words: **Don't let go of your faith in Jesus.**

The believers were experiencing pressure, but their circumstances were not a reason to abandon Christ.

This is important for us today.

There will be seasons when:

- Prayer seems difficult.
- Circumstances don't make sense.
- We experience disappointment.
- People may misunderstand us.
- We may become spiritually tired.
- God may seem silent.

But Hebrews says: **Hold fast.** Your circumstances don't change who Jesus is.

Teaching Point:

When life becomes unstable, we hold tightly to the One who does not change.

Verse 15 — “He can sympathize with our weaknesses”

Jesus understands human weakness. The word translated “**sympathize**” carries the idea of being able to understand and share in another person's experience.

Jesus knows what it means to experience:

- Hunger
- Weariness
- Rejection
- Grief
- Temptation
- Suffering
- Opposition

Jesus experienced genuine human weakness, yet He remained without sin. That distinction is essential: He fully understands temptation, but He never surrendered to it. Because our High Priest is both compassionate and sinless, we can bring our struggles honestly to God rather than hiding in shame. His sympathy does not excuse sin; it assures us that mercy and transforming grace are available when we come to Him.

“Tempted as we are, yet without sin”

Jesus was tempted, but He never sinned. This gives us tremendous encouragement. When we are tempted, we don't have a Savior who is distant from our experience. Jesus knows what temptation feels like. But He also demonstrates that temptation itself is **not sin**. The believer can experience temptation without having to surrender to it.

Teaching Point:

Jesus understands our struggle and gives us a reason to keep fighting rather than giving up.

Verse 16 — “Let us therefore come boldly”

The word **“therefore”** connects verse 16 to everything that came before it.

Because:

- We have a Great High Priest.
- Jesus is the Son of God.
- He understands our weaknesses.
- He was tempted yet remained without sin.

Therefore, come to God. Notice that the writer doesn't say:

“Run away from God when you fail.” He says: **“Come.”**

What Does “Boldly” Mean?

Boldness here does not mean arrogance or disrespect. It means we can approach God with **confidence, openness, and freedom** because of what Christ has done. We don't approach God saying: **“God, look at how good I am.”** We approach Him saying: **“God, I need You.”** Our access is based on **Christ**, not our perfection.

“The Throne of Grace”

A throne represents authority, power, and judgment. But the writer calls it: **“the throne of grace.”** Because of Jesus, the place where we might expect judgment becomes a place where we can receive God's grace and mercy.

At the throne of grace we find:

Mercy — God does not give us the judgment we deserve.

Grace — God gives us what we do not deserve.

Help — God provides what we need when we need it.

“Help in Time of Need”

Notice that God promises help **“in time of need.”** Not merely after the need is over. Not only when everything is already fixed. God invites us to come **while we need Him.**

That means we can bring God:

- Our fears
- Our questions
- Our failures
- Our weaknesses
- Our disappointments
- Our burdens
- Our temptations
- Our need for strength

We don't have to get ourselves together before coming to God. **We come to God because we need Him to help us get through it.**

Hebrews 4:14–16 tells believers what to do because they have a Great High Priest: hold fast their confession and approach God with confidence. Hebrews 5:1–10 now explains why Jesus is qualified to serve in that role by comparing Him with earthly high priests and showing how His appointment, suffering, obedience, and eternal priesthood make Him unique.

II. Jesus, the Perfect and God-Appointed High Priest (Hebrews 5:1–10)

(Psalm 110:1-7)

1For 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:

2Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7Who 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;

8Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

What Is Happening Here? Hebrews 5:1-10

Verses 1–4 — What was the role of an earthly high priest?

The writer begins by explaining the Old Testament priesthood.

“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God...” — Hebrews 5:1

A high priest had a **representative role**. He stood between the people and God in matters concerning worship, sacrifices, and sin.

His responsibilities included:

- Offering **gifts and sacrifices**
- Representing the people before God
- Dealing compassionately with people who were spiritually ignorant or had gone astray
- Offering sacrifices for sin

But there was an important limitation:

The priest himself was also a sinner.

Verse 3 says:

“...he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.”

The earthly high priest had to offer sacrifices for **his own sins** as well as the sins of the people.

That becomes extremely important when we get to Jesus.

Verse 4 — The High Priest had to be called by God

“And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”

The priesthood wasn't something a person could simply decide to take. **God had to call the person.** Aaron didn't appoint himself. God appointed Aaron. This establishes an important principle: **The priesthood is based on divine calling, not personal ambition.**

And the writer is preparing us for an important question:

Did Jesus appoint Himself as High Priest?

The answer is **no**.

Verses 5–6 — Jesus was appointed by God

Verse 5 says:

“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest...”

This is powerful. Jesus didn't promote Himself into the priesthood. **The Father appointed Him.**

The writer then gives two Old Testament quotations.

Psalm 2:7

“Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.”

This identifies Jesus as **God's Son**.

Psalm 110:4

“Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Jesus is both: **Son** and **Priest**. But His priesthood isn't according to the Levitical/Aaronic priesthood. He belongs to another order:

The order of Melchisedec.

Why is Melchisedec important?

Melchisedec first appears in **Genesis 14:18–20**.

He was:

- King of Salem
- Priest of God Most High
- A person who blessed Abraham

Later, Psalm 110:4 speaks prophetically of a priest who would serve **“forever”** according to the order of Melchisedec. Hebrews uses this to explain that Jesus' priesthood is fundamentally different from the Levitical priesthood.

The Levitical priests served temporarily and eventually died.

Jesus' priesthood is **permanent**.

That is why Hebrews 5:6 says:

“Thou art a priest for ever...”

Verses 7–8 — Jesus experienced suffering

“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears...” — Hebrews 5:7

The writer is emphasizing the reality of Jesus' humanity.

Jesus prayed. Jesus cried. Jesus experienced suffering. Jesus experienced anguish.

This connects beautifully with Hebrews 4:15:

“...we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...”

Jesus doesn't merely understand human suffering intellectually. **He experienced suffering Himself.**

“He was heard in that he feared”

This phrase can be misunderstood. It does not suggest that Jesus doubted the Father's faithfulness. The expression points to His reverence, submission, and godly fear as He prayed to the One who was able to save Him out of death. The Father heard Him, not by preventing the cross, but ultimately through resurrection and victory over death.

But notice something important: **Being heard did not mean Jesus was spared from suffering.** Jesus still went to the cross. This teaches us something important about prayer:

God hearing our prayer does not always mean God will remove the suffering we are praying about.

Sometimes God's answer involves sustaining us through the suffering and accomplishing His purpose through it.

Verse 8 — “He learned obedience”

This verse can raise a big question: **If Jesus was sinless, what did He have to learn?**

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”

Jesus didn't have to learn **how to stop sinning**. He was already without sin. Rather, His obedience was **demonstrated and fully experienced through suffering**. Jesus obeyed the Father when obedience was costly.

He obeyed when obedience meant rejection, suffering, the cross, and death. His obedience was not merely theoretical; He carried it through completely when faithfulness to the Father was most costly.

So His obedience wasn't merely theoretical.

He lived it out completely.

What does “made perfect” mean in verse 9?

This phrase can be confusing: “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation.” Here, perfect does not mean that Jesus changed from moral imperfection to moral perfection; Hebrews consistently presents Him as sinless. The term points instead to completion—the fulfillment of the mission for which He came. Through obedient suffering, death, resurrection, and His completed saving work, Jesus was fully qualified to serve as the perfect High Priest.

Through His suffering, death, resurrection, and completed mission, Jesus was fully qualified to accomplish His priestly work.

Think of it this way: **Jesus' mission was brought to completion.** Therefore: “...he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

“Author of eternal salvation”

The contrast is decisive. Earthly priests offered repeated sacrifices; Jesus offered Himself and accomplished salvation. Earthly priests eventually died; Jesus remains a priest forever. Earthly priests offered sacrifices for their own sins; Jesus was sinless. Therefore, Jesus is not merely another priest—He is the source of eternal salvation and the One who brings God’s saving purpose to its intended goal.

Verse 10 — The Main Point

The passage ends where its argument began: Jesus was called by God to be a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. His priesthood is not self-appointed, temporary, or limited by sin and death. Jesus is the God-appointed, eternal, perfect, compassionate, and effective Great High Priest. Because His priesthood never ends, believers can trust that His saving and interceding work will not fail.

A Powerful Teaching Theme

“Jesus Understands, Jesus Intercedes, Jesus Saves.”

Jesus understands our weakness.

Jesus intercedes as our Great High Priest.

Jesus saves as the source of eternal salvation.

And because of that:

We don't have to run away from God in our weakness. We can come boldly to the throne of grace.

Life Applications

1. Receive spiritual calling with humility. Hebrews teaches that priestly authority is received from God rather than seized through self-promotion. Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest; He faithfully fulfilled the role the Father gave Him. In the same way, believers should treat every God-given responsibility as a trust to be carried out with humility and obedience.

Hebrews reminds us that true spiritual authority comes from God, not self-promotion.

2. Jesus understands what suffering feels like.

When we experience hardship, we aren't praying to a Savior who is unfamiliar with suffering.

3. Obedience sometimes involves suffering.

Jesus' suffering did not mean He was outside God's will. His obedience was demonstrated through suffering.

4. God hearing us doesn't always mean removing the difficulty.

Jesus prayed, and He still went through the cross. God's answer can involve sustaining us through what we face.

5. Our salvation rests in Christ's completed work.

Jesus is the source of eternal salvation.

6. Come boldly to God.

Hebrews 4:16 gives us the response to everything we learn in chapter 5:

Because Jesus is our Great High Priest, we can approach God with confidence.

Discussion and Response Questions

1. What makes Jesus greater than an earthly high priest?
2. How does Jesus' sinless experience of temptation encourage believers who are struggling?
3. What does it mean to hold fast our confession when circumstances are difficult?
4. Why can believers approach the throne of grace boldly without becoming arrogant?
5. Which truth about Jesus as High Priest do you most need to remember this week, and how will you act on it?

Key takeaway:

Jesus is our Great High Priest: appointed by God, proven obedient through suffering, fully qualified through His completed mission, and the source of eternal salvation. He understands our weakness, represents us before God, and provides mercy and grace in our time of need. Therefore, we can hold fast our confession, approach God with confidence, and trust Christ to sustain us when faithfulness is difficult.