

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 5, Hebrews 4:14-5:10: A Great High Priest

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Okay, so have you ever wished you could just like bypass all the earthly stuff and get a direct line to divine favor? Well, today we're diving deep into a concept that might be just that: the high priest, specifically how it's presented in the book of Hebrews. We've got an excerpt from a lecture focusing on Hebrews chapters 4.14 through 5.10. And our mission is to unpack this idea of Jesus as this kind of high priest, what makes him qualified, what's his purpose, and then what does it all mean for you and me today? Well, what's so compelling here is how Hebrews takes this very Old Testament figure, the high priest, and completely reframes it through the lens of Jesus. Right, like it starts by painting this contrast.

You've got Hebrews 4.1 till 13 talking about the fear of God's judgment, but then boom, 4.14 and 16 swoop in with this confidence we can have because of Jesus. The text really zeroes in on Jesus' ability to sympathize with our weaknesses, our struggles. Yeah.

He was tested in every way, just as we are, yet without sin. Right. This makes him a unique mediator between humanity and God.

It's like having someone in your corner who just gets it right. They've been through the wringer, come out stronger. Yeah.

And now they're saying, hey, come on, let's approach God together. Right. Don't be intimidated.

But if we're being honest, doesn't the idea of God's judgment, that whole throne of grace thing, still feel intimidating? Yeah. Yeah. You're touching on something really important.

That feeling of intimidation, it's not new. Even in the Old Testament with the Day of Atonement ritual described in Leviticus 16, the high priest had to atone for their own sins first before interceding for the people. So this idea is that even the high priest wasn't perfect.

Right. Needed forgiveness. Yeah.

This sets the stage for how different Jesus is. Yes. He's the ultimate high priest because he is sinless.

Exactly. And that's why Hebrews keeps hammering home this phrase: hold fast to the confession. Right.

This isn't just about believing certain things; it's about living them out loud, proclaiming them. Right. Especially when it's tough.

So what does that even look like for us? Holding fast in a world that doesn't always share those same beliefs. Think about it this way. What do you stand up for even when it's unpopular? Where do you find strength and encouragement when things get tough? Yeah.

Holding fast is about clinging to those core beliefs, to that connection with Jesus who understands and intercedes for you. It's definitely a call to action, not just sitting back passively. Right.

Now Hebrews 5.4 to 6 kind of shifts gears a bit. Okay. It jumps into this idea of Jesus' priesthood being divinely appointed, just like Aaron back in the Old Testament.

But what's fascinating is how it pulls in Psalm 2 and Psalm 110. The author of Hebrews is making a brilliant connection here. Yeah.

By linking Jesus to these Psalms, he's highlighting how Jesus fulfills both kingly and priestly roles. Yeah. It's not one or the other; it's both.

And there's this detail that always gets me: the word forever in Psalm 110. Right. It takes on this whole new level of meaning when you consider Jesus's resurrection.

Absolutely. Forever isn't just poetic language anymore. Right.

With Jesus, his priesthood truly is eternal. It transcends time and even death itself. Okay.

Now strap in because we're about to tackle a head scratcher. Oh. Hebrews 5.7 to 10 talks about Jesus learning obedience through suffering.

Right. It's a complex sentence. And to be honest, I needed to read it a few times to even begin to understand it.

Yeah. Can you break it down for us? It's definitely a passage that rewards careful reading. Yeah.

The Greek phrase used here, *emethon*, *epethon*, literally means he learned he suffered. Right. It suggests that even Jesus, the Son of God, grew and matured through hardship.

Wait, so when it says perfected in this context, it doesn't mean sinless. You got it. Oh.

Perfected here points to reaching a final state, a goal. Okay. Think of it as Jesus completing his journey and becoming the source of eternal salvation for all who follow him.

Right. But doesn't that raise some questions, like how does Jesus' suffering actually relate to his role as a high priest? And what does it even mean for us today? Right. That's where it gets really interesting.

We'll dive deeper into that in part two. So if we connect Jesus' suffering to the bigger picture, we can see that his experience allows him to empathize with our struggles in a way that no one else ever could. Right.

It makes his intercession for us so much more powerful. Yeah. After all, who better to plead your case than someone who's walked in your shoes? Right.

It's like he gets it, you know? And that kind of brings us back to that whole throne of grace thing we were talking about earlier. Hebrews encourages us to approach God boldly because of what Jesus has done. Right.

But it's still hard to shake that Old Testament image of a God who's ready to zap you for like the slightest misstep. I hear you that imagery can be intense, but think about it this way. The throne of grace isn't about judgment.

It's about grace. It's about a God who wants to shower you with blessings because of what Jesus has already accomplished. So it's less about earning favor and more about just accepting it.

Exactly. It's about approaching God with confidence, knowing that you're loved and accepted because of Jesus, not because of anything you've done or haven't done. Okay.

That makes me feel a lot better about approaching that throne. Yeah. But speaking of things that are hard to wrap your head around, Hebrews throws another curveball in chapter five.

Right. It starts talking about Jesus's priesthood being after the order of Melchizedek. Yeah.

Honestly, when I first read that, I was like, whoa. Melchizedek is one of those figures in the Bible that just sparks a lot of curiosity. Right.

He pops up briefly in Genesis 14, described as a king of Salem and a priest of God Most High. Okay. He blesses Abraham and then vanishes from the story.

No genealogy, no backstory, just this mysterious encounter. It's like a divine cameo appearance. But the author of Hebrews obviously sees something really significant in Melchizedek.

Right. By connecting Jesus to this enigmatic figure, the author is highlighting the uniqueness and superiority of Jesus's priesthood. Yeah.

It's a priesthood that transcends the limitations of the old Levitical system. So it's not just about being a descendant of Aaron or belonging to a particular tribe. Exactly.

Melchizedek's priesthood, and by extension, Jesus's operates on a whole different level. It's not bound by earthly lineage. It's rooted in something far greater.

Jesus's eternal nature and his divine appointment as the Son of God. It's like saying, forget the old rules. This is a brand new game.

That's a great way to put it. And this revolutionary priesthood has some major implications for us today. Okay.

It means we have direct access to God through Jesus without needing any other mediators or rituals. So no more burnt offerings or elaborate ceremonies, just straight to the source. Yeah.

It's all about grace and accessibility. You don't have to earn God's favor or jump through hoops to reach him. Jesus has already done the heavy lifting, and he invites you to come boldly into God's presence.

That's good news. But here's a question I've been wrestling with. Okay.

If Jesus learned obedience through suffering, as Hebrews says, does that mean we're supposed to go looking for suffering to grow closer to God? That's a question a lot of people grapple with. Yeah. It's important to remember that Hebrews isn't saying suffering is something to be sought after or glorified.

Right. It's inevitable though, isn't it? Life throws curveballs. Yeah.

But when those tough times come, you can approach them with a different perspective, knowing that God can use even the most difficult experiences to shape you and draw you closer to him. So it's not about wanting to suffer, but about recognizing that suffering can have a purpose. Exactly.

Think back to what we were talking about earlier. Jesus, the one who understands your pain, who's walked a path of suffering himself, he's there with you in those moments, offering compassion, grace, and strength. It's like having a guide who's already navigated the treacherous terrain.

He knows the dangers, the shortcuts, and he's there to help you reach your destination even when the path seems impossible. It's an amazing image. It's so comforting to know that even in the midst of suffering, you're not alone.

You're never alone. And that's a truth worth clinging to. You know, it's incredible how many layers of meaning are packed into this concept of Jesus as our high priest.

It's not just some abstract theological idea. It has real-world practical implications for how we live our lives, how we approach challenges, even how we understand the tough stuff that inevitably comes our way. What's fascinating is how Hebrews connects Jesus's priesthood to our personal journeys of suffering and growth.

It's almost like it's asking us to look at our struggles through a totally different lens. It's like, instead of seeing suffering as purely negative, like a dead end, we can reframe it. Maybe it's a chance for us to grow spiritually, to become more like Jesus.

Right. Hebrews says he learned obedience through what he suffered, right? Right. So maybe when we face trials, we can actually grow in our faith too.

It's important to be clear though. Yeah. Hebrews isn't saying we should go out looking for suffering, like it's some badge of honor or a shortcut to holiness.

Right. No one wants to suffer, but it's part of life. And when it comes, we can remember that God might use even our most painful experiences to shape us, refine us, and draw us closer to him.

It's like that saying, pressure makes diamonds. Yeah. Not that we want to be under pressure all the time, but maybe it's in those moments that we discover a strength we didn't even know we had.

Absolutely. And you're not alone in that pressure cooker. Remember, you have a high priest who understands exactly what you're going through.

He's been there. He's walked a path of suffering himself. It's so comforting to know that no matter what we face, we have someone who gets it, who can offer compassion and grace when we need it most.

Yes. And not just compassion, but real tangible help, right? Like that advocate in the divine courtroom we were talking about. Exactly.

He's there pleading your case, reminding God of what he's already done for you, ensuring that you receive the grace and mercy you need to make it through. So as we wrap up this deep dive into the high priesthood of Jesus, I'm left with this overwhelming sense of awe, awe at how God orchestrated this whole plan, how he sent his son to walk among us, experience our pain, and ultimately pave the way for us to have a relationship with him. Right.

And gratitude, deep gratitude for the gift of Jesus as our mediator, our advocate, our eternal high priest. I hope you're also walking away with a renewed sense of confidence. Yeah.

Knowing that you have such a compassionate and powerful intercessor in your corner empowers you to live your life boldly with purpose and with a hope that reaches beyond even the toughest circumstances. It's a message that speaks to all of us, no matter where we are in our faith journey. Absolutely.

So as you go about your week, remember this truth. Yeah. You are loved.

Uh-huh. You are accepted. Right.

And you're never alone. And may the grace and peace of Jesus, our great high priest, be with you always. Until next time, keep diving deep.