**Hebrews 5 & 6 Sermon**

**Jesus, a Perfect High Priest**

Background:

Purpose of Hebrews: To give heart to Christians who have endured much but are being tempted to waver in their faith.

* + Warnings/Exhortations against “falling away.”

Theme: The preeminence of Jesus Christ!!!

* + His deity
	+ The greatness of his ministry as high priest
	+ The greatness of his covenant
	+ The greatness of his sacrifice

Message:

Hang on to Jesus. Stay faithful to the end and you will see you hope of heaven fulfilled.

The Greatness of Jesus:

**1. Greater than the prophets. Hebrews 1:1-3**

**2. Greater than the angels. Hebrews 1:4-14**

**3. Greater than Moses. Hebrews 3:1-5**

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

**5. Jesus is greater than Abraham. 6:13-18, 7:4-5**

**6. Greater than the Levitical Priesthood. 7:1-28**

**7. A Better Covenant. Hebrews 8:1-13**

**8. A better Tabernacle Hebrews 9:1-11.**

**9. A perfect sacrifice. Hebrews 9:12-10:18.**

Exhortations:

**Exhortation #1 Pay careful attention 2:1-4**

**Exhortation #2 Make every effort. 3:7-4:13**

**Exhortation #3 Move on to maturity 5:11-6:12**

**Exortation #4 Draw near to God, do not shrink back. 10:19-39**

**Exhortation #5 Live by faith. 11:1-40**

Our Sermon:

Jesus: A Perfect High Priest

Heb 4:14-5:6. Jesus is the perfect high priest.

Q: What does a priest do? He makes intercession between humans and the supernatural power(s) that control the universe. A bridge-maker.

Latin *pontifex*  a bridge. One who connects to God. He offers praise to God from us and he asks for blessings from God to us.

The priest must speak the language of both humans and of God. Who can do this better than Jesus?

Even before the incarnation, Jesus spoke the language of God perfectly, as he is the Son of God.

But when he came and “lived for a while among us” (John 1:14), he learned our language. He understands us perfectly.

That is the point in this section.

**Q: What did the High Priest do?** Once a year, he made intercession for the sins of all the people. He formed a bridge between man and God. Lev 16:3-8 has the details.

1. Wash hands and feet in laver

2. Change into perfectly white linen clothes.

3. Lay hands on a bull he paid for and sacrifice on the altar of sacrifice.

4. Sprinkle this blood in the Holy Place for his sins.

5. Fill a censer with incense, light it, and place it behind the curtain.

6. Select two goats kill one of these goats and a bull for the sin of the people. (the other goat will be the scape-goat *Azazel*)

7. Enter the Most Holy Place with a rope tied around his ankle, first to sprinkle the blood of the goat, then the blood of the bull on the Mercy Seat.

Jesus takes the place of this imperfect high priest.

Jesus is not up in an air conditioned office. He knows the language of God perfectly and, because he came here, he knows the language of humans perfectly as well.

Like Moses who was living in great comfort in Pharaoh’s palace, but saw God’s people suffering as slaves, so he walked out of the palace to live like a slave so he could save the slaves.

Hebrews 4:15 empathize Greek: *sympatheo* lit. touched with the same feeling.

This is why we can “approach God’s throne with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need. (Heb 4:16)

How much better is the high priesthood of Jesus!

Jesus is like the earthly High Priest in several ways:

a. Human, can relate. Can empathize with us. (Greek: *sympatheo*) Tempted like us in every way (Heb 4:15).

b. Makes intercession for us. Offers mercy, grace. (Hebrews 4:16)

c. Selected by God from among men (Heb 5:1,4-5 v. 5 Jesus did not appoint himself)

d. Represents man to God (Heb 5:1)

e. Offered gifts (sweet smelling offerings) and sacrifices (sin and guilt offering) 5:1

But Jesus is much greater than the High Priest:

a. In the heavenly tabernacle, not the earthly one. “Has gone through the heavens” (v. 14)

b. Was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

c. Did not have to offer sacrifices for his own sin (Heb 5:3)

d. A priest forever (Heb 5:6).

e. Of the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:6,9 Ps 110:4) (d and e will be emphasized more later)

Hebrews 5:2 He can deal gently *metriopatheia* we get the word empathy Sympathetic feeling. Bear with us without becoming irritated. A good high priest cannot be too sympathetic/overwhelmed, but not apathetic either.

Not like a rich person telling someone on the street, “I can relate.” No you cannot dude!

Have you ever felt that God is too far off—too distant to relate to you. Think about Jesus.

Feeling lonely? He has that one covered.

Tempted to lash out at someone hurting you? That one too.

Tired, want to rest, pull back from the spiritual battle. Jesus can relate. And he can explain you to the Father.

What a great gift we have as Christians—a High Priest who can sympathize with us in the deepest possible way!

What a concept. Unknown in the ancient world.

Hebrews: God has empathy, fellow-feeling with us.

No one would have made up a religion like this!

Aside: Heb 5:2 He deals gently with those who are ignorant and going astray. OT never conceived of a sacrifice for willful sins.

Unpardonable sin is sin of presumptuousness. Willful sin. In the OT, only unwilling sin, accidental sin could be removed by the actions of the High Priest.

[Lev 4:13 Numb 15:22-31 esp v. 30-31 Deut 17:12]

Unwilling sin included an act of impulse, an emotion of the moment, swept away by the events.

We fathers and mothers understand defiant sin—when our child looks us in the face and disobey our command.

Hebrews 5:7-10

The Greek could not imagine Heb 5:7 being applied to God. This is blasphemy to them. “Loud cries and tears” “reverent submission.” This is what a priest does. A reference to Gethsemane. Jews: God is holy, separate, omnipotent, righteous, distant, removed.

Look how humble Jesus is.

Greeks (stoics) God cannot experience any feeling, or he is somehow superior to us.

Heb 5:8 In what sense did Jesus “learn” through obedience? He **learned** in the sense of **experiencing** the suffering which we faithful Christians know comes with obedience.

He did not sin, but he experienced the things which humans experience because of their sin, and disobedience and for this reason and in this sense he was “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

Aside: Heb 5:9 Made perfect (*telios*) means mature, completing the task. Jesus’ suffering completed his preparation to be our High Priest.

Heb 5:10 briefly mentions Melchizedek, but goes into an aside and returns to him in 7:1.

Hebrews 5:11-6:8 **Exhortation #3 Grow up!!!!** (or you will fall away)

5:11-14 Concerning him (Melchizedek) Hebrew writer is about to get deeper with his hearers (believe it or not). He is on a roll, but he must first give his third admonition.

Their ears are dull *nothros* slow-moving in mind, torpid, witlessly forgetful, dull of hearing. God has spoken to you repeatedly and you JUST DON’T GET IT.

They deliberately choose not to seek deeper understanding. Passive Aggressive. Are you a passive aggressive Christian?

Like a doctor who says, it was good enough when I was in med school 50 years ago, so it is good enough for me now.

A case of arrested development. Childish (vs childlike) Is that you?

Brothers and sisters, we need to engage our mind in the great task of getting to know God!!! (and putting his precepts into practice)

Maturity involved knowledge (v. 12) and putting it into practice (v. 14)

“He who ceases to be better, ceases to be good.”

Q: How, specifically, have you grown in your knowledge of God recently?

What is your short, medium and long-term plan to grow in your knowledge of God and of his Word?

But I’m busy in school. So…….!

I am working a lot of hours. So…..!

Me: I am still learning. I decided about 8 years ago to know every book in the Bible in-depth. A 15 year project.

v. 13 Anyone on milk is, by definition, an infant.

Some of us are living on spiritual “junk food.”

Q: The theme of Hosea?

Taking in solid food requires training. Practicing. v. 14 Acquired godly habits and the ability to distinguish good and evil on a more subtle level. This maturity the Hebrew writer is talking about involves both maturing in depth of knowledge and in practical behavior.

Some have become desensitized to sin. Is that you?

6:1 You are not ready, but I am going to go on anyway! (presumably, some of them were ready)

6:1-2 Elementary teachings *stoicheia* = the ABCs

a. repentance

b. faith

c. baptism

d. the Holy Spirit In the early church, they layed hands on the baptized person as a symbol of receiving the HS. This is what “laying on of hands refers to.

e. Resurrection

f. Judgment

These are the basics. When going to maturity, let us not lose the basics.

What is the point of going on to maturity? 6:4-8 Warning against falling away.

This is sober, this is emotional stuff.

You could lose everything you have!!!!

In fact, you could end up worse off than you were at first. (2 Pet 2:22)

Just in case there was any doubt who the Hebrew writer is talking about:

a. been enlightened (NT church “enlightened” = baptized)

b. tasted the heavenly gift (salvation?)

c. shared in the Holy Spirit

d. tasted the goodness of the word

e. tasted the coming age (saved)

Impossible…. if you fall away…. to be renewed to repentance.

Why? Publicly crucifying Jesus again! Spitting on Jesus.

We do not have time, but we could expand on this point using Hebrews 10:26-31.

What kind of sin will cause us to fall away?

1. Continual

2. Deliberate [Numbers 15:30-31 anyone who sins defiantly…. Lev 4:1,13, 5:14-15 talks about unintentional sin.]

* Crucifying the Son of God all over again. (Hebrews 6:6)
* Subjecting Jesus to public disgrace. (Hebrews 6:6)
* [Trampling the Son of God under foot. (Hebrews 10:29)
* Showing disdain for the blood of Jesus. (Hebrews 10:29)
* Insulting the Holy Spirit (Heb 10:29)
* Blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:32)]

Q: Is this you/me? Well, you are here this morning. Like Robert said, you are still in the fight, so NO!!!!!

Hebrews 6:9-20 Encouragement and confidence.

6:9 but… “We are convinced of better things in your case.”

 **Q: What are the things which accompany salvation?**

Answer: v. 10 He will not forget the work and love you have show him. (see Hebrews 10:32-35)

Assurance: He will not forget this!

I think of the old days when Jan and I and Luis Mendez and John Godwin and Jeff and Lisa Chacon and Phil and Sandy Baily came down South. We worked hard. Those were great times. Many were saved. God will not forget your work and your love.

6:9-12 The solution: work hard, love God, help his people, be diligent to the end. The Hebrew writer is concerned he has come across too hard. He needs to encourage us. (beloved v. 9) Put up with the arid times in your faith. If you persevere, times of blessing will come. In any case, you will be saved.

Ex: Mt Whitney last month.

6:13-end God’s assurance. (and Jesus greater than Abraham) He will take care of you if you hang in there.

How confident does God want us to be of our salvation? He swears it!

v. 13 God swore by himself:

Like the movie Oh God! So help me me.

Why would God swear? Because he wants us to be confident!

v. 14 We need to be patient, like Abraham. God will deliver on his promises.

God swore on oath (Genesis 22:16-18) Genesis 22:16 “As I live”

[God has only done this twice. Gen 22:16 and Ps 110:4 So not only is the Promise to Abraham sure, the promise that Jesus is the perfect High Priest is also sure. (Heb 7:20-22)]

v. 17 Why did God do this? God wanted us to be very confident.

 v. 18 “Two unchangeable things” 1. God’s word 2. Himself.

The word promise here three times. 15 times in Hebrews—more than any other Bible book.

Vs 18 Take hold of the hope. [remind of Mt. Whitney illustration.]

Brothers and sisters: We need to cling onto our hope tenaciously.

You have an anchor. Jesus is there and he is not moving.

Your anchor is behind the veil.

“Behind the veil” Means that Jesus is with the father, interceding for us.

The “anchor” is Jesus forerunnerhood (v. 20) (*prodromos*), his firstfruithood as a priest in the heavenly tabernacle.

Jesus is like a scout who check ahead that all is clear.

Hebrews 10:19-22. We can enter boldly.

It is your High Priest Jesus. Jesus in the Holy of Holies is our assurance.

Summary: If only you do not turn back, you can be assured of your salvation. You do not have to do amazing. You can struggle. Sometimes you will just hang on to the anchor. Come boldly into the presence of God.

The secret to salvation is this: Just keep walking by faith.