**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.

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

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.

**Hebrews 9:12-10:18 A better sacrifice.** (first: a better covenant, then a better tabernacle, now a better sacrifice)

A beautiful verse: Hebrews 9:12-14 The blood of bulls and goats and the red heifer were mere shadows. They only created ceremonial cleanness, not actual cleanness. (see also Heb 10:2-4)

bulls and goats refer to the Day of Atonement. The whole idea of the Day of Atonement was to provide for purification of sins. The Hebrew writer: it never worked. It only created ceremonial cleanness. It prevented God wiping them out.

“Bulls” = sacrifice for the sin of the high priest.

“goats” = sacrifice for the people.

**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.

Here is how it worked: The high priest took two stones. One was marked “for YHWH” the other was marked “*azazel*” Then he took two stones, and selected by lot. The one marked “for YHWH” was killed as a sacrifice and blood sprinkled in the inner sactuary.

The one marked “azazel” High priest confessed his sins and the sins of the people and laid his hands on the goat and sent it off into the desert as a symbol.

The Day of Atonement was only a foreshadow. The reality if the Real Day of Atonement. The Day Jesus died on the cross. (Remember Hebrews 10:1)

“the ashes of a heifer” refers to the Red Heifer sacrifice.

The point of the Hebrew writer: All this was pretty great, but it only created ceremonial (physical, outward) cleanness. The blood of Jesus is much greater. (Hebrews 9:14)

The sacrifice of Jesus is a much better sacrifice:

1. It gives us eternal redemption. v. 12. Which is better temporary or eternal redemption?

2. It gives us a clean conscience “from acts that lead to death”. v. 14 The Jews, ultimately, never felt a clean conscience (as they should not have!).

How awesome is that! Q: How do you feel about having a clean conscience? How much is that worth? Immeasurable!

v. 23-24 The greater sacrifice acts in a greater sanctuary

the lesser sacrifice (bulls, goats, red heifer) only ceremonially, outwardly cleansed the lesser tabernacle (v. 23 the copies of the heavenly things).

Better sacrifice (v. 23) Why?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The lesser sacrifice (goats, bulls, red heifer) | The greater sacrifice (Jesus) |
| Outward (appearance) | Inward (spiritual) |
| Temporary (repeated again and again) | Eternal (only done once) |
| Ceremonial | Real |
| Not voluntary | Voluntary |
| Mechanical | Spontaneous (by choice) |
| Unaware | Rational, aware |
| Did not remove guilt | Removes guilt eternally |

Heb 9:25-27

v. 25-26 Proof the former sacrifices were powerless: They had to be performed again and again. Jesus sacrifice is “once for all”

v. 27 He is simply stating an analogy. How many times do we die?

How many times did Jesus have to die? Our death is a final thing. It happens only once. Similarly, Jesus death is “once for all”

**Hebrews 10:1-18** A recapitulation of Ch 8,9.

Heb 10:1-4

10:1 The law is only a shadow (dim copy) Shadows have no power. They do not talk or breathe.

The reality (*eikon* accurate picture, perfect representation) has great power.

v. 1 For this reason (the fact that it is only a shadow, not a reality) it can never do for us what we desperately need—make us perfect (complete, whole)

Illustration: Imagine you apply for a job and they say you must complete the training program first. Great. How long does the training program take? Forever. No thanks!

v. 2 Proof: They still felt guilty and came for forgiveness again and again.

Q: Do you still feel guilty? Hopefully not!

v. 3 But, the OT sacrifices did accomplish something: They reminded us how deeply sinful we are. [Romans 5:20 “the law was brought in so that trespass (our recognition of it) might increase”] Romans 7:13 “through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.”

v. 4 blood of bulls and goats has no power.