

Series: “Rest in the Son – An Exposition of Hebrews 3-5”<sup>1</sup>

Main Idea: In Hebrews 5:1-10 we learn about the humility of our high priest, Jesus Christ. His humility is exhibited in two ways.

- I. We see humility in His calling (1-6).
  - A. Think about what is true of high priests in general (1-4).
    1. They’re human, yet they have access to God (1).
      - a. This privilege is received.
      - b. This privilege is for the good of others.
    2. They understand human weakness (2).
    3. They offer sacrifices (3).
    4. They are called by God (4).
  - B. Think about what is true of Christ (5-6).
    1. He did not glorify Himself (5a).
    2. He did not initiate His priesthood (5b).
    3. He received the glory of His priesthood from His Father (5c-6).
      - a. This is confirmed by Psalm 2.
      - b. This is confirmed by Psalm 110.
    4. He lives in submission to His Father’s will and word.
    5. He will serve as a priest forever.
- II. We see humility in His suffering (7-10).

Make It Personal: Since we have a humble high priest...

1. We ought to be known for humility.
2. We ought to live in submission to God’s will and word.
3. We ought to use our positions to serve others for God’s glory.
4. We ought not turn away from this high priest.
5. We ought not do anything that would dishonor Him.

*Scripture Song:* Let’s sing together Mark 15:38 and Hebrews 10:19-22.

*Good Friday Gift:* When you leave today, we have a gift for you called *The Torn Curtain*. Special thanks to the team of men who made these for us. I encourage you to use it on Good Friday with your family, and if possible, invite friends and neighbors to join you. Talk about why the curtain was torn. Invite people to come with you next Sunday to hear a message, *The Torn Curtain*. Let’s pray for the Lord’s blessing on this.

And now as we turn our attention to Hebrews 5, it’s time to recall that significant day so long ago when crowds of people lined the street, each person straining his or her neck to catch a glimpse of him. He was the talk of the nation, and when news hit the streets that he was coming the whole city turned out for the occasion.

“What’s that?” someone shouting over the crowd noise. “He’s riding a *what?*”

“A donkey!” was the reply. “You know, just like the prophets predicted!” Indeed, they all knew. Every good Jew knew what this meant. And so they began to cry out together, “Hosanna! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! (Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38)!”

We call it Palm Sunday because on that day the people spread their clothes in the road along with palm branches to give honor to this amazing person who was riding into their city on the colt of a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. “This must be the king!” they concluded. And indeed, He was and is the king of all kings. But what the people didn’t understand, what so many today fail to grasp, is that He is not the kind of king they expected. What king purposefully lets his subjects kill him?

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\*\*Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the Hebrews series preached at WBC in 2008.

So many people don't why Jesus died, and many who think they know focuses on a secondary reason. "He died because He loves sinners," they announce. And they are correct, for the Savior does love sinners, but there's a more fundamental reason. Indeed, there was a higher motivation that governed the actions of the Son of God, higher than His matchless love for undeserving rebels like us. And what is that motivation? We find the stunning answer in Hebrews 5. Let's read our text.

*Scripture Reading: Hebrews 5:1-10*

Many years ago, I visited a family that had been attending our church. I was there to pick up a man named Keith, and we were going to play golf together. Before we left for the course I went inside the house and visited with the rest of the family for a few moments, which included Keith's wife and their two young children.

The following week Keith's wife said to me, "Our son was really surprised by something when you visited the other day."

"What's that?" I asked.

"You were wearing a sweatshirt," she replied. "He'd never seen a pastor in a sweatshirt before."

I chuckled as I thought about the situation from the perspective of that seven year old boy. It made sense. Every time he had seen me (which was always on a Sunday), I was wearing a suit. I guess when he heard his pastor was playing golf with his dad, he expected me to show up wearing my sport coat, white shirt, and tie, with a golf bag over my shoulder. Some words just don't seem to go together. For that boy, *pastor* and *sweatshirt* didn't belong together.

I want you to give you two words right now. See if you think they belong together. Here are the words.

*Humble* and *high*. Those words don't seem to relate, do they? After all, James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." The Greek verb for *humble*, *tapeinos*, in its basic sense means "to be low." To be humble, this verse indicates, is to make oneself low, and it's that person whom God then *lifts up*.

Can a person be both humble and high at the same time? It's kind of like asking, can a person be both dry and wet simultaneously, or hungry and full, or rich and poor? The adjectives are opposites. *Humble* and *high* don't belong together, do they?

When it comes to Jesus they certainly do. This morning we're going to begin to ponder Jesus as *the humble high priest*. That's how He is revealed in Hebrews 5. Last time, in Hebrews 4:14 we learned that Jesus is a "*great* (mega) high priest," so great that through Him we may approach God's throne with confidence to find help in time of need. But in Hebrews 5:1-10 we learn the shocking truth that the *great* high priest is also a *humble* high priest, and His humility is exhibited in two ways.

We're going to focus primarily on the first way this morning by probing verses 1-6. At the end, I'll mention the second way and we'll plan to marvel at it next time (which will be in two weeks), the Lord willing.

### I. We see humility in His calling (1-6).

We need to address a problem at this point. The problem is that we're not familiar with *high priests*. That wasn't the case for the first readers of this epistle. For the previous fourteen centuries, Israel had high priests, many of them. They knew what we don't know. For 1,400 years their ancestors had been raising animals, and taking those animals to the tabernacle (and later to the temple) in Jerusalem so that the priests could offer those animals as sacrifices to God.

Have you ever raised a lamb or a calf? Have you ever tried to transport one? Or kill one? Many of the first readers of this letter could answer those questions *yes*.

I raised 4-H calves while growing up. It's one thing to see a cow out in a field somewhere and say, "Look, there's a cow!" But if you raise a calf, it's not just "a cow." It's a part of your life. I gave them names. Boog. Babe. Buster. And so on. Transporting a several hundred pound animal is no small task. And knowing that when you reach your destination that animal is going to be killed is no small thing either.

The Jews had been experiencing this for centuries. They knew about animals, and they knew about priests, too. They knew what a high priest was and did. Since we're not familiar with high priests, we need to consider carefully the first four verses.

But keep in mind, this isn't a mere history lesson. I want us to see where this is heading. Look at Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity." Unfortunately, that is the condition of many people in church then and now. They have an *elementary doctrine of Christ*. They know Christ, but not very well. They heard a preacher tell them the basic gospel message, and believed it. But that's as far as they've gone.

This is a massive problem in Appalachia. Churches present the gospel. That's not a problem. The problem is, that's as far as it goes. Week after week, basic elementary teaching about Jesus. You can't keep people coming back with that so you resort to other things. Appealing music. Programming for kids. Some more elementary teaching. Potlucks. Sports leagues. Another dose of the Romans Road. Week after week.

The writer of Hebrews calls that "living on milk" in 5:13. And what's the result of living on milk? Verse 11 says you become "dull of hearing". Verse 12 says, "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again." Verse 13 says, "Everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child."

Baby Christians. Churches are filled with spiritual toddlers who do what toddlers do. Play games. Fight over toys. Cry when life doesn't go their way.

What needs to happen? According to Hebrews 6:1 again, they need to "leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity."

How does that happen? It's going to require some careful thinking. About what subject? According to the writer of Hebrews, it starts with this subject. Christ's priesthood. And if we're going to understand Christ's priesthood, we need to back up and think carefully first about what a priest is.

**A. Think about what is true of high priests in general (1-4).** The writer gives us four insights into high priests in this text.

1. *They're human, yet they have access to God (1).* "For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."

So God is in a class all by Himself. He is the Creator of all things. He is our Creator, which means we are His creatures. He created mankind to live in relationship with Him, but sadly, due to Adam's disobedience, mankind lost that fellowship. In His grace, however, God provided a way for sinners to reconnect with Him. Do you remember what He did for Adam and Eve after they sinned? He killed animals and gave their skins to the first couple for a covering. Animals died so humans could live.

Years later the Lord graciously gave something else to sinful men and women. At Mount Sinai He gave them *priests*. In the Mosaic Law, He provided detailed instructions for building a tabernacle, for offerings that were to be given in that tabernacle, and specified who could sacrifice those offerings.

I made this model of the tabernacle so we could visualize it. There's the courtyard, the holy place, and the holy of holies. If you wanted your sins forgiven, you brought an unblemished animal to the courtyard and presented it, not to God directly, but to a priest.

This is critical. No sinner approaches a holy God directly. There must be a priest.

Notice the prepositions in verse 1. Every high priest is selected “from men” and represents men “in matters related to God.” If you take time to read the Pentateuch, you’ll discover that God gave Israel many priests, but one *high* priest. The high priest entered the holy of holies once a year on the Day of Atonement, to offer a sacrifice in behalf of God’s people.

How did a person become a high priest? Does he volunteer? No. From verse 1 we learn that **this privilege is received**. The text says he *is chosen* and *is appointed*. And why is this man given this honorable position? **This privilege is for the good of others**. He represents others *in matters related to God*. What matters? Verse 1 says, “to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.”

There were five major offerings prescribed in the Torah. There were burnt, grain, fellowship, sin, and guilt offerings (Leviticus 1-7). While the common person brought the offering, only the priest could give it to God, and he did so in behalf of the people.

Verse 1 says the high priest offers both “gifts” and “sacrifices.” Is there a difference? Gromacki suggests the difference may be in the sweet savor offerings (burnt, grain, fellowship offerings) and non-sweet savor offerings (sin and guilt offerings). He explains, “The former were voluntary, whereas the latter were obligatory.” Then Gromacki adds, “Another possible difference may be that the gifts were non-bloody offerings (grain and wine) and the sacrifices were bloody, requiring the death of the victims (animals and birds).”<sup>2</sup>

Let’s not miss the purpose for offering gifts and sacrifices. It was “for sins.” Sin is our biggest problem. Sin separates us from God. The only way to get rid of sin is to utilize the means that God in His mercy provides. That’s why He established the position of high priest. High priests are human, yet they have God-authorized access to God.

2. *They understand human weakness* (2). Verse 2 says, “He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness [NIV ‘subject to weakness’].” In verse 1 we learned that every high priest was selected from *among men*. That meant a high priest, by God’s design, was human. And being human meant the high priest was able to relate well to other humans since he himself was *subject to weakness*.

We’re also told why we need a priest in the first place. Yes, we’re sinners, but what kind of sinners? We are “ignorant” and “going astray.” In his commentary Raymond Brown suggests that ‘the ignorant’ refers to those who did not know the way and those ‘going astray’ refers to those who knew it but ignored it.<sup>3</sup>

This is our twofold problem, everyone’s twofold problem. We don’t know what pleases God, and even if we do know, our bent is to ignore it.

William Barclay offers this helpful insight, “By the sin of ignorance the Jews meant more than simply lack of knowledge. They included the sins committed when a man was swept away in a moment of impulse or anger or passion or mastered by some overmastering temptation and the sins followed by repentance. By the sin of presumption they meant the cold, calculated sin for which a man was not in the least sorry, the open-eyed disobedience of God.”<sup>4</sup>

We understand this distinction. Have you ever said to yourself, “Man, that was a stupid thing to do! Why did I just yell at this person I say I love?” Sin is stupid. We show our ignorance when we sin.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Gromacki, p 88.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Brown, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> William Barclay, p. 46.

But some sin goes beyond ignorance. Did you realize that under the Law there was no sacrifice that could be offered for a sin of presumption? For a sin of ignorance, yes. For high-handed sin, no. The writer of Hebrews may have that in mind here. Later in Hebrews 10:26-27 he'll have this to say, "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."

This is why we need a high priest. A high priest can understand human weakness. What's more, verse 2 says he can "deal gently" with sinners. What does that mean? Barclay says the Greek verb 'deal gently' (*metriopathein*) is really untranslatable, and offers this explanation: "The Greeks defined a virtue as the mean between two extremes. On either hand there was an extreme into which a man might fall; in between there was the right way. So the Greeks defined *metriopatheia* (the corresponding noun) as the mean between extravagant grief and utter indifference..., the mid-course between explosions of anger and lazy indulgence... It means the ability to bear with people without getting irritated; it means the ability not to lose one's temper with people when they are foolish and will not learn and do the same thing over and over again. It describes the attitude to others which does not issue in anger at their fault and which does not condone it, but which to the end of the day spends itself in a gentle yet powerful sympathy which by its very patience directs a man back to the right way. No man can ever deal with his fellow-men unless he has this strong and patient, God-given *metriopatheia*."<sup>5</sup>

This was a critical trait for a high priest. He was constantly dealing with the sins of other people. He needed the balance between the extreme of sympathetic *over-involvement* on the one hand, and on the other hand cold, distanced professionalism.

If you've done any counseling, you understand just how vital this balance is. Someone once came to me and told a heart-wrenching story about their childhood. They spoke of an abusive step-parent, of incredible pain, not just physical, but the kind of pain that goes deep. What did that person need from me? They didn't need some emotional outburst, and they certainly didn't need a disinterested yawn. They needed *metriopatheia*.

Parents, you understand this. You see your children sin. What do they need from you? Understanding? Certainly, you've done your own share of sinning, so you can relate. But they need more than understanding and this is where the gentle parenting approach misses the mark. They need more than your understanding. They need you to act like a priest and help them get rid of that sin. Not just with talk, but intentional action. The same way God deals with your sin. You are His representative, after all.<sup>6</sup>

This is what a high priest had the potential to do. I say *potential* because not all high priests did. Many abused their position for selfish gain, and that's because like the people they represent, high priests by nature are "ignorant" and "going astray."<sup>7</sup> That's why, by God's design, even the best of high priests did the following.

3. *They offer sacrifices (3)*. "Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people." He *has to* offer sacrifices, says the text. He's obligated to do so. And why is that?

In our age we have a low view of sin. In fact, we don't even like to use the word 'sin.' But sin is a big deal, not just because the consequences of it mess up our lives,

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<sup>5</sup> William Barclay, pp. 46-7.

<sup>6</sup> To learn more, consider Ted Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Also, Samuel Waldon *A Man as Priest in His Home*.

<sup>7</sup> If you are involved in counseling, never forget this. You are made of the same stuff as your counsees.

that's a secondary issue. The fundamental problem with sin is vertical. Sin violates God and His law and separates us from Him.

That's why the high priest *had to offer sacrifices*. He had to *for sins*, for His own sins and for the sins of the people. "The wages of sin is death," declares Romans 6:23. When there is sin, the consequence is death. There must be death.

Yet in His grace God has chosen to accept the death of a substitute. He gave the sacrificial system to Israel, and accepted the death of a lamb in the place of a sinner.

This is the message Moses gave to Israel's first high priest. In Leviticus 9:7, "Moses said to Aaron, 'Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded.'"

And so, by the Lord's command, high priests did in Israel, year after year, century after century. They offered sacrifices to cover sins, their own sins and the sins of others.

4. *They are called by God (4)*. "And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was." Note the final words, "Just as Aaron was." 1 Chronicles 23:13 states, "Aaron was set apart, he and his descendants forever, to consecrate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices before the LORD, to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in his name forever.

Why did Aaron become a high priest? It wasn't his idea. God called him.

Quite frankly, the notion of God's call doesn't sit well in our society. "You can be whatever you want to be," says the Mother Earth Toons kids' song. We like to think we have some say in such matters.

Do you remember the names Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? These three men came to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16 and said, "Why do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly? We are *all* holy (see 16:3)." They didn't like the fact that Moses and Aaron were Israel's leaders. They wanted the position. Their self-seeking actions cost them their lives shortly thereafter when God opened the earth and swallowed them alive.

In the very next chapter, God reconfirmed Aaron's role as high priest. The Lord told the Israelites to take twelve staffs and engrave the names of the twelve tribes on them, one per staff. Then the Lord said in Numbers 17:5, "The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites." Moments later, the staff with Aaron's name on it budded, bloomed, and produced almonds!

Sadly, it wouldn't be the last time someone tried to usurp the position of priest. King Saul offered a burnt offering and lost his kingdom for it (1 Sam. 13). Later King Uzziah in his pride entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense and 2 Chronicles 26:17-18 records what happened, "Azariah the priest [the high priest] with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. They confronted him and said, 'It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God.'" The result? God struck King Uzziah with leprosy and he lived in isolation the rest of His life.<sup>8</sup>

God made it clear, didn't He? He chooses His priests. By His design, high priests were human, yet had access to God. They understood human weakness. They offered sacrifices. And they were called by Him from the tribe of Levi.

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<sup>8</sup> It's worth noting that Israel had its share of high priests who *weren't* called by God. For instance, in 174 B.C. Antiochus IV appointed Jason to be high priest. In 162 B.C., Demetrius I appointed Alcimus. Later Herod the Great appointed a high priest, so did Archelaus, and other political rulers. The last high priest, Phanni, was appointed by popular ballot during the war against Rome in A.D. 67. F. F. Bruce, p. 92.

Now think about why the author of the book of Hebrews took the time to say all this. Think about his purpose. He wrote the book of Hebrews to Jewish men and women who had professed faith in Messiah Jesus. But some, due to intense persecution, were considering going back to Judaism. Why? Here's one reason. We used to have a high priest. For centuries our people have had a high priest, but we left our high priest behind.

Notice the first words of verse 5, "So also Christ." We do have a high priest! His name is Jesus the Christ! Leon Morris points out that no other New Testament writer speaks of Jesus as a high priest, but this New Testament writer did. Jesus Christ is many things to His people. He is our shepherd, Master, husband, and *high priest*.

What kind of high priest is He? The writer will have much to say about this question throughout the rest of this epistle. Notice what he says right here.

**B. Think about what is true of Christ (5-6).** We learn five insights.

1. *He did not glorify Himself (5a).* Listen to the NIV, "So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest." That's an amazing statement. Christ is God, the second person of the triune Godhead. At the beginning of this letter, He is identified as "the Son" who is "the radiance of God's glory" (1:3). As God, Christ deserves glory. As the Son, He manifests glory. But here we're told that He did not take upon Himself the glory of becoming a high priest.

What does that mean? The KJV renders verse 5, "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest." The ESV says, "So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, 'You are my Son.'"

The Lord Himself gives His own explanation in John 8:54. In response to His critics, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me."

Jesus, who deserves glory, did not glorify Himself. He is the *humble* high priest.

2. *He did not initiate His priesthood (5b).* Notice the next statement in the middle of verse 5, "But was appointed by him who said to him." This is why Christ became a high priest. He didn't initiate it. Rather, it was an act of obedience. God the Father gave Him the assignment. In contrast to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and so many others who have sought positions of authority for self-exalting reasons, Christ did not glorify Himself when He became a high priest. To the contrary, He actually laid aside His glory to become a high priest.

Christ actually talked about this in His prayer to His Father on the night before His crucifixion. Listen to what He said, particularly about *glory*, in John 17. Let's start with verse 1, "Father, the time has come. **Glorify** your Son, that your Son may **glorify** you." Glory wasn't something the Son sought when He entered the world. Indeed, He left glory in order to come. And for thirty-three years He walked humbly in the world. Yet now, He says, *the time has come*. What time? The time for the Father to glorify Him and the time for Him to glorify the Father. It was time for Him *to finish His work*.

Notice the connection between *Christ's work* and *glory*. It's even clearer in John 17:4, "I have brought you **glory** on earth by completing *the work* you gave me to do." There's why Christ left heaven and came to earth. He came to bring glory to His Father, and He did so by doing the work His Father had assigned Him.

He continues in verse 5, "And now, Father, **glorify** me in your presence with the **glory** I had with you before the world began." Notice that Christ acknowledges that He deserves glory. He asks God the Father to glorify Him, a request that would be blasphemous coming from the lips of any mere mortal. But Christ asks His Father to glorify Him, and indeed affirms that this glory is something He enjoyed with the Father prior to the creation of the world.

Answer this. Why did God send His Son to the earth? If we say, “He sent His Son to earth to rescue sinners,” we are right, but there’s a greater reason. We’re right because John 3:16 clearly says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” But there’s a far more significant outcome than the salvation of sinners, as marvelous as that is. \

It has to do with *God’s glory*. Listen again to Christ as He continues His prayer in John 17:10, “All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And **glory** has come to me through them.” This is the result of God’s Son coming to earth. He says that glory has come to Him *through them*. Who is ‘them’? He’s referring to His disciples.

And consider what He said toward the end of His prayer in verse 24, “Father, I want those you have given me [His disciples] to be with me where I am, and to see my **glory**, the **glory** you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

It’s all about His glory, beloved! Christ acknowledges that He wants His people to see His glory, the glory His Father gave Him. And this is why He became a high priest.

3. *He received the glory of His priesthood from His Father (5c-6)*. The writer of Hebrews cites two Messianic psalms to substantiate this point.

**First, this is confirmed by Psalm 2.** Notice the end of Hebrews 5:5, “But God said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you [NIV ‘I have become your Father’].” Those words come from Psalm 2:7, the same passage we saw previously cited in Hebrews 1:5. When quoted in Hebrews 1, it shows that Christ is superior to angels. But what does this quote from Psalm 2 have to do with Christ’s priesthood?

Wiersbe offers a helpful explanation. Based on Paul’s quotation of Psalm 2:7 in Acts 13:33-34, the phrase “Today I have begotten You” does not refer to *the birth* of Christ at Bethlehem, but to *His resurrection* from the dead. “The Son of God was ‘begotten’ into a glorious new life in His resurrection!” says Wiersbe. “He ascended to heaven in a glorified body to become our High Priest at the throne of grace.”<sup>9</sup>

Christ is now our high priest, and He is glorious! In case we need more proof, **second, this is confirmed by Psalm 110.** Psalm 110, a psalm of David, was also cited earlier in Hebrews 1:13. But that was a quote from Psalm 110:1. This time, in Hebrews 5:6, the author references Psalm 110:4. “As he says also in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek [NIV ‘in the order of Melchizedek’].”

Beloved, this is holy ground. We’re listening to a Trinitarian conversation. These are the words of God the Father to God the Son. “You are a priest.” It was the Father’s design for His Son to assume the role of a mediator, a representative, a *priest*. And in obedience to His Father, God the Son became a priest.

This brings us a fourth insight regarding our high priest.

4. *He lives in submission to His Father’s will and word.* The Father says it, and He fulfills it. *You are a priest.* And He is. He does what His Father tells Him to do.

You say, “It’s hard for me to read the Bible. I need incentive.” Okay, consider this. Jesus learned and lived the Word. When we choose to learn and submit our lives to this Book, we are walking in His steps.

5. *He will serve as a priest forever.* “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” Interesting name. *Melchizedek*. I loved saying it when I was a child. Who was he? We meet him in Genesis 14 where he blessed Abraham and Abraham gave him a tithe of all he possessed. He’s mentioned again only in Psalm 110 and in the book of Hebrews.

He’s called “priest of God Most High” in Genesis 14:18. His name means ‘king of righteousness.’ That’s significant. Melchizedek was both a *king* and a *priest*. There’s no

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<sup>9</sup> Wiersbe, p. 291.

record of his death in the Bible. As Wiersbe points out, “Of course, because he was a real man, he did die at some time; but the record is not given to us.”

That seems to be the point in Hebrews. Melchizedek is a fitting type of Christ who indeed is a priest *and* a king, and He is both forever. The writer of Hebrews will have much more to say about this in chapter seven.

The ESV, NIV, KJV, and nearly all English translations state that Christ is a high priest “in the order of” Melchizedek. But as Leon Morris observes, “This is incorrect. There was no succession of priests from Melchizedek and thus ‘no order.’”<sup>10</sup> The Greek word *taxis* can also mean ‘kind’ or ‘nature.’ That’s the idea in Hebrews 5. Jesus is a high priest, not in a line of succession from Melchizedek, but *of the same kind as* Melchizedek.

But there’s something that makes Jesus different from any other high priest, including Melchizedek. All high priests offer sacrifices to God, but only Jesus *became* a sacrifice. Jesus was both the priest who offered the sacrifice *and* the sacrifice, a blood sacrifice, a lamb slain for sinners.

Yes, we have a humble high priest and His humility is seen first in His *calling*. Allow me to mention a second way and then we’ll discuss some implications.

## II. We see humility in His suffering (7-10).

Verses 7-10 describe His suffering this way. “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.”

In my own limited suffering, I have found so much comfort from this passage over the years. I don’t want us to gloss over it. So we’ll devote an entire message to these four verses, as we ponder how He exhibited humility, not just in His *calling*, but in His *suffering*. But now it’s time to take inventory. Indeed, we *must*. His example beckons us, behooves us, yea, demands that we take inventory.

### Implications: Since we have a humble high priest...five implications follow.

1. *We ought to be known for humility.* We live in a world that says, “If you don’t promote yourself, who will?” But we belong to a *humble* high priest. Are we giving the world an accurate picture of what He is like by the way we live?

John Stott said it well: “Every time we look at the cross Christ seems to be saying to us, ‘I am here because of you. It is your sin I am bearing, your curse I am suffering, your debt I am paying, your death I am dying.’ Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves, especially in self-righteousness, until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross, that we shrink to our true size.”<sup>11</sup>

When I’m proud, I talk about myself a lot. I worry what others think about me. I get offended when people ignore me. And when I’m proud, I am not giving people around me an accurate picture of my Savior. We are to be known for our humility.

2. *We ought to live in submission to God’s will and word.* The Son became a high priest because it was His Father’s will for Him. Is there anything that God is wanting you to do that you’re resisting? If you say you are a Christian and have never made it public

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<sup>10</sup> Leon Morris, p. 49.

<sup>11</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, p. 179.

through believer's baptism, what are you waiting for? If you are not serving in His church, why not? If you're harboring an unforgiving spirit and need to forgive someone, why haven't you? If our high priest lived in submission to the will and word of God, ought not we? Indeed, yes.

3. *We ought to use our positions to serve others for God's glory.* The Father gave His Son the position of high priest and the Son uses that position to serve others. So ask yourself. What position has God given me and am I using it to serve others for His glory?

We all have God-given positions. For some it's the position of *parent*. If you are a parent, are you using that position to serve your children for the glory of God? Perhaps He's given you the position of *husband* or *wife*. Are you using that position to serve for His glory? Some of you are *teachers*, others are *coaches*, others are *business owners*, most of us are *citizens* of this country. Are we using these God-given positions to serve others for His glory?

4. *We ought not turn away from this high priest.* That's what the first readers were considering. What about you? You've heard about the humble high priest today. What place does He have in your life? Martin Luther said it well, "It is not enough for a Christian to believe that Christ was instituted high priest to act on behalf of men, unless he also believes that he himself is one of these men for whom Christ was appointed high priest."<sup>12</sup> Is Christ truly your high priest? Are you trusting in Him, and are you coming to God through Him? If not, why not begin right now?

5. *We ought not do anything that would dishonor Him.* If it's the Father's intent to glorify His Son, if Christ is our high priest, it ought to be our intent, too. Is there anything in your life right now that is bringing Him dishonor? Then confess it to your high priest right now, and deal with it by His help.

**Closing Song:** #97 "*All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*" (all four verses)

Community Group Discussion:

1. In Hebrews 5:1-10 we learn about the humility of our high priest, Jesus Christ. After reading the passage again, discuss what stands out most to you.
2. For over one thousand years prior to Christ's coming, Israel had dozens of high priests. What did a high priest do according to verse 1? According to verse 2, why was an Old Testament priest able to "deal gently" with people? According to verse 3, why did a priest offer sacrifices both for himself and others? According to verse 4, how did a person become a priest?
3. According to verses 5-6, how did Christ become a high priest? What makes Christ different from other priests?
4. What does it mean to say that Christ is a *humble* high priest? What effect should His humility have on us?
5. What are some ways we can apply what we've learned from this passage this week? After sharing, spend time as a group *praying the Word* by having several people offer prayers of both thanks and supplication.

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<sup>12</sup> Quote taken from Philip Hughes, p. 175.