

# Our Priestly Help for Our Sinful Weakness

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[0:00] Would you turn to your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 4.! I'm going to read 4:14 through 5:10.! It's on page of your pew Bible. It's on page 1189, bottom right.

And on to page 1190. Hear God's word. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.

Let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive and may find help, find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relationship to God.

To offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins, just as he does for those of the people.

[1:12] And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. 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 today, I have begotten you.

As he says also in another place, You were a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death.

And he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal life to all who obey him. Being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

May God bless the hearing of his word. Let me ask you, what do you have a weakness for? I have a weakness for chocolate.

Milk chocolate. Not any of the dark chocolate business. I have a weakness for something else. This is going to be difficult to say.

[2:26] I have a weakness for 1970 and 1980 soft rock. Also known as yacht rock.

I'm a huge fan. Do I have an amen? It's more than I thought. Okay. I have a serious weakness weakness for petite, curly-haired blondes who are in their second year of teaching kindergarten and have recently become a grandmother of a boy named Hudson who has a preference for dark chocolate.

I have a serious weakness for her. When we talk about weakness, we're talking about a soft spot, right? You've got a soft spot for something.

A desire for something. A wanting of something. What do you have a weakness for? We all have a weakness that's described in Hebrews 4 and 5 that is not talking about an emotional weakness. It's not talking about a weakness for chocolate, a physical weakness, a mental weakness. It's a moral weakness. We all have a soft spot to sin. We all have this want for things that grieve God.

[3:56] We have a weakness called a sinful nature. We see this in verse 15 and 5 too that the Levitical priests were beset with weaknesses.

Therefore, they are obligated to offer sacrifices for themselves. Because we have this weakness, do you know what this means?

We are in constant need of a certain kind of help. When you're tempted to sin, when there's this external temptation that hooks this internal want to sin in you, where do you turn?

Maybe you give yourself to the sin. Or maybe you turn to lesser helps in that time of need. You reach for a bottle.

Or you reach for some chemicals. Or you reach for a TV remote. Or things like that. Those are just distractions. They're not true help.

[5:04] They're false hopes. When you are tempted to sin, don't give yourself to it.

Don't settle for lesser helps as if you're your own high priest. Don't turn to yourself. Draw near to your great high priest, Jesus.

When you become aware of your sin weakness, don't shrink back from him. Draw near to him, Christian. And this morning, we are given two reasons why we must near to Jesus, our great high priest, in our weakness.

And all of us are weak. Reason number one, our great high priest is both willing and able to help us. And reason number two, our great high priest is better qualified than anybody else to help us.

When you're tempted to sin, don't shrink from Jesus. Draw near to him. So let's look at this first reason that comes from what John read at the beginning of the service, chapter 4, 14 through 16.

[6:23] We draw near to him because he's willing and able to help. Last week, I closed the sermon by pointing you to 4, 12, and 13.

And in verse 12, God's word is able to pierce an open heart and expose our sin weakness.

It cuts us. It flays us. It judges, discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And when you get exposed and pierced by the word, what do you do?

Verse 13, we have this picture of judgment. Nothing's hidden from his sight. There's nothing in your heart and life that is hidden from his sight.

And when you become aware of that weakness, what must you do? God is lovingly showing you your need for help.

[7:27] Where are you going to turn? At this point in the book of Hebrews, at 4, 14, the author turns his attention in earnest to the high priesthood of Jesus Christ.

The book of Hebrews is one long exhortation to hold fast to Christ to the end. And what takes center stage in this book is the high priesthood of Jesus.

We're to hold fast to Jesus by fixing our eyes drawing near to Jesus. In our passage, the word priest shows up a number of times in 4, 14, in 4, 15, in 5, 1, in 5, 5, in 5, 6, and even in 5, 5, 10.

When you hear the word priest, I'm guessing some of you in the room have a visceral reaction. That word priest has a bad connotation to you.

Others of you in the room don't have a bad connotation. Maybe you have a fond recollection of a priest. Or maybe some of you are just kind of like, you know what, I grew up in a, we just didn't really talk about any kind of priests.

[8:44] A priest is basically a go-between between God and man. And you can see it in the passage in chapter 5, verse 1. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relationship to God.

A priest is a mediator between God and man, especially when it comes to our sin. If we were Jews in the Old Testament times living under the Old Covenant, if you were to sin or I were to sin, we would have to find a priest.

And what we would bring to the priest is an animal to be sacrificed to God for our sins. And that priest would kill the animal, shed its blood in order to cover your sin, cover my sin.

But that that blood of bulls and goats, just temporary. It doesn't have the power to change your heart. It's just temporary.

It temporarily atones. The point is you would have needed a priest in your weakness.

[9:57] But all that changed with Jesus. In verse 14, we read that this Jesus, we see two titles.

And it's the first time in the book of Hebrews that the author brings these two titles together. Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.

Great high priest is getting at Jesus as the greatest mediator between God and man that there is.

And what we're going to see as the book of Hebrews unfolds is just how wonderful and great of a priest he is for us.

In fact, he is so great a priest, he makes the priesthood of the old covenant out of date and obsolete.

complete. That title, Son of God, in chapters 1 and 2, the author of Hebrews wants you to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, which means he's fully God.

[11:23] He's the creator of all, the sustainer of all. Do you remember that from chapter 1? He's superior to the angels and he is at the right hand of God.

You see that in verse 14, this idea of passing through the heavens. Jesus died, was raised, and ascended, passing through the heavens to God's right hand, exalted and throned on high. That's the passing through the heavens. It locates him for us. This high, great high priest, this mediator, is also our exalted king.

And he is eager to help you in time of weakness. That little phrase, hold fast the confession. Let us hold fast our confession. A confession is a, is a statement of truth. When you think of confession, you probably think about confessing sin, and what you're doing is you're, you're confessing the truth about your sin.

[12:31] There's also another kind of confession where you're confessing the truth about who God is. And right here, we're being told of a confession. Hold fast to the confession about Jesus, that he is our great high priest and our king, our son of, the son of God who reigns on high.

So I want you to speak a confession back to me. I'm going to, I'm going to feed you some lines and I want you to speak it back. You ready? Christ is my, risen and reigning, priest and king.

Christ is my, risen and reigning, priest and king. Let's do it one more time. Christ is my, Christ is my, risen and reigning, priest and king.

Hold fast to that. This week, don't let go of that. Hold fast to that truth. It's true. It's who he is.

Jesus, speak that confession to yourself. Now you might be thinking, okay, that might be true, but is Jesus my priest and king?

[13:58] Does he want to help me? Is he willing to help me? In verse 15, we read, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, weaknesses, sin, weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

That word sympathize. It's tenderhearted. Even he has an affection for us, even in our sin weakness.

He's not fond of our sin. He's fond of us trying to deal with our sin. He totally gets us. He is both completely holy and deeply compassionate towards you.

Now you might be asking this question, well, how can Jesus, how can he sympathize with our sin? I mean, did Jesus ever sin? Well, according to our New Testament and the rest of the Bible, the Christ never sinned once.

In fact, in 2 Corinthians 5.21, we read about this great thing that God through Christ has done for us.

[15:21] And for us, he made him. God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus is utterly without sin, which raises another question.

Well, then how does it work? How can he be tempted and yet without sin? It's right there in the text. Yet without sin. How's that possible? Well, we in our weakness, this internal sinful nature that when there's this external temptation, our internal sinful desires want it.

James 1 talks about that we're carried away, lured, enticed by the desires inside of us. Jesus did not have a sinful nature.

He didn't have that internal craving that we do to grieve God. It wasn't there. He was fully God and fully man, sinless to the core, which means this.

[16:40] Jesus experienced external temptation. Just think about him in the wilderness being tempted by Satan in Matthew chapter 4.

Those temptations were real. They affected him. He was yet he was without sin because there was nothing in him to grab hold of it.

What it means is that what he experienced, this real external temptation, it makes him sympathetic to us when we're tempted.

And he's not like this. It's not like that Jesus is looking down from his throne on you and say, hey, I handled that temptation. You gotta handle it too. It's more like this. I experienced that temptation. I know how hard it is. Let me help you. Let me help you. You've got a priest king who's willing to help you.

[17:48] Sympathetic. He's experienced the full gamut of temptation yet without sin. And his posture towards you is, I'm here to help.

But is he able? In verse 16, we read, let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Oh, he is able. Totally God. Totally man. He's the creator of the universe and sustainer of the universe. He gave himself for us bearing God's wrath in full.

2.17, this high priest was our propitiation. Oh, he's able to help. We draw near in our weakness to his throne of grace and there's the power.

power. When you read grace in your Bibles, think of both his power and his posture towards you. His power to change you, to help you, to transform you, to supply what you need.

[19:05] and his posture behind that power is love. Oh, he wants it for you. He wants to give you what you need.

He wants you to thrive in godliness. Anybody see the show? Who wants to be a millionaire?

It's kind of dated. And that show contestants are asked multiple choice questions and if they can't answer the question, they are given some options.

50-50, where two of the four multiple choice are removed or poll the audience, where the audience chimes in on what they think the answer is and then there's phone a friend.

You phone like your expert in the field to help you with that information. A million dollars is nothing when compared to holding fast to Jesus Christ to the end.

[20:18] Who in the room wants to hold fast to Jesus Christ to the end? I do. And do you know what? We've got something that's better than phone a friend.

It's not a phone. It's a throne. Authority, power, overall. And on that throne sits your great high priest who is wanting, eager to help in pouring out this grace to you.

What's keeping you back? What's holding you back? What's holding you back from just making a beeline to his throne? Is it shame? Is it fear? Oh, don't be afraid.

We are to draw near with confidence to the throne. Do you know why? Do you know what's the source of this boldness? It's not your performance. It's what Christ has done.

If you flip in your Bibles back to Hebrews chapter 10 verses 19 through 23, to just here is your confidence, your boldness to enter the throne of the risen and reigning priest king.

[21:36] Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, Jesus, the throne is in the heavenly sanctuary by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh.

And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful. We draw near to the throne of grace in our sin weakness because Jesus has paid for our sin.

He's the propitiation and his posture towards you is love and he's eager to help. Do you know what? His throne room is open to you anytime, anywhere.

Let's say that you are being, you're like, I'm going to be tempted to sin later today because I know that situation. Go to the throne of grace. Maybe you're in a situation and you're being tempted in that moment.

[22:51] Make a beeline to the throne of grace. Maybe you're on the backside of when you've sinned and you're feeling shame and guilty. Make a beeline to the throne of grace at any time.

Before, during, after. Let me ask you this question. When tempted, where do you turn? When you become aware of your sin weakness, to whom do you look?

Don't shrink back. Don't turn to yourself. Draw near to the throne.

Draw near to Jesus. Your great high priest is both willing and able to help. Do I have an amen? Amen. The second reason why we draw near to our great high priest and our weakness is that he is better qualified to help.

We see this in chapter 5, verses 1 through 10. Let's just pretend for a second. Let's just pretend that we were all members of the original church that received the letter of Hebrews.

[24:08] More likely than not, you would have come to faith in Jesus out of Judaism. You would have been a Jewish background believer. And we know from chapter 10, verses 32 through 34, that we would have suffered greatly for Jesus.

But we also know from this book, we're going to see this next week, that we had become dull in our hearing and sluggish. And we've been tempted to drift from our confession, to let it go instead of holding fast.

Our temptation in those moments would be to go back to that old, familiar, culturally acceptable way of Judaism.

To go back to the old priesthood, to go back to the old sacrificial system of the old covenant.

But you've got to understand, to go back to that means you'd have to reject Christ. You can't have both and you can't have but let's be honest.

[25:32] If we're granted to suffer or if we grow sluggish or dull of hearing, I'm guessing we're not going to go back to Judaism.

We weren't saved out of Judaism. No, I think we'd be tempted to go back to a Christ-less hedonism or a Christ-less materialism or a Christ-less conservatism or a Christ-less individualism.

And do you know who the high priest of individualism is? you appoint yourself high priest. You mediate what you want in a Christ-less individualism.

Brothers and sisters, we are not to go back to that. It's Christ-less. We've been called out of a Christ-less way of thinking and living.

So if we're called to share in the suffering of Jesus and we find ourselves tempted to become dull and sluggish, we don't go back to individualism.

[27:09] We draw near to Christ Christ. And there are five reasons from 5.1 through 10 why Jesus is better qualified. It's like the writer saying, don't go back.

And here's why. Number one, Jesus is better qualified in his appointment. 5.1 says, for every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relationship to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

4. And no one takes this honor for himself but only when called by God just as Aaron was. So the similarities between the Levitical priesthood, the priesthood that comes from the line of Aaron, and the priesthood of Jesus who he is in line with Melchizedek, the similarity is both priests are appointed by God.

Verse 5, Do you know what the difference is? The difference is that the Levitical priesthood, well, they were appointed according to kind of family lineage, chosen from among men, one.

Jesus was appointed by prophetic word of God. 5.5, quoting Psalm 2.7, we saw this in chapter one, you are my son, this is God the father speaking to God the son, you are my son, today I have begotten you, and when we saw this in chapter one, this is about his kingship, this is about his deity, this is about him being enthroned on high.

[29:00] But it's not just his being an exalted king, for the first time in Hebrews we have a quote from Psalm 110, verse 6, as he says also in another place, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, this is God speaking to God the son, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, it's a better appointment, prophetic word fulfilled in Jesus Christ, because Jesus is at the center of God's plan of salvation, in chapter 7 we're going to come back to Melchizedek where the writer will unpack more of that for us, but let me just tell you this, Melchizedek first shows up in Genesis chapter 14, Abram has just rescued Lot, he's coming out with all this stuff, Melchizedek comes from nowhere, and what his name means is king of righteousness, he's introduced as both the king of Salem and the high priest of God, he's both a high priest and a king, and you know what

Abram does? He gives him a tenth of everything he's got, it's from that priestly order comes Jesus, the appointment of Jesus as great high priest is the fulfillment of scripture, it's a better appointment, the second way that Jesus is better qualified is in his nature, both the Levitical priests and Jesus the Melchizedekian priest, both priests are totally human, chosen from among men, 5-1, verse 7, in the days of his flesh, speaking of Jesus, the difference is that the

Aaronic priesthood, the Levitical priesthood, was in verse 2, they were beset, beset by weakness, the weakness of indwelling sin, they were sinful human beings, whereas in 5-5, we read about Jesus being you are my son, today I have begotten you, he's fully God, we saw in 4-15, yet without sin, he is a sinless human being, by nature, Jesus is better qualified to be a high priest because he's sinless in his humanity, better in nature, third, he's better in relating, both priests, both Levitical priests and Jesus, our great high priest, they were tender-hearted to those they cared for, in 5-2, we see, speaking of the

Levitical priest, he can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself is beset with weakness, Jesus, we saw in 4-15, he is sympathetic, he's been tempted in every way, the difference is that Jesus is not a fellow sinner, sinner, he's a fellow sufferer, Jesus relates to us, he understands our being tempted to sin, but he also suffered, and for a church that was suffering, this is really helpful, we see in verses 7 and 8 that in the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications without cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence, although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered,

Jesus learned obedience, not because he was disobedient, but he learned true trust and obeying of God his father through hardship, he learned it as a fellow human being, he went before us, and now he's an example to us of how to endure suffering, he relates to us that way, because he himself suffered, he relates with us when we suffer for him, he's tender towards us, he relates to us better, he understands our temptation to sin, but he absolutely understands what it's like to suffer, the Levitical priesthood, they didn't, it's better in his relating, it's better in his sacrifice, this is the fourth qualification that separates him from the

[34:34] Levitical priesthood, you know it's similar between the two, Levitical priests and Jesus, our great high priest from the line of Melchizedek, both offered sacrifices, the difference is that the Levites had to offer animal sacrifices for themselves because they themselves were sinners and that animal sacrifice only lasted for a little while for their sin, just temporarily atonement, they had to offer sacrifice repeatedly because they were repeatedly sinning, Jesus who learned obedience through suffering became the source, verse 9, of eternal life to all who obey him, to all who hold fast to him to the end, he became the source of our eternal life, he is the greatest sacrifice of all, our high priest is the once and for all sacrifice for our sins, and he sat down at the right hand of

God, he's a better sacrifice, that in chapter 2, verse 17, the first time high priest shows up, the author connects him as being our propitiation, the sacrifice that satisfied God's wrath for our sins, he paid it all, all of your sin, all of the penalty of it, paid in full in that once and for all sacrifice by your great high priest king, he is better qualified because he offers a better sacrifice, you need help, do you need help, he's addressed your greatest need, what else do you need to see that he would give his life for you, that he would pay the sin, the wrath your sin deserved, but I've got one more, hang in there with me, he's better, he's better in his living, you know, the similarities between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Jesus is all of the Levitical priests, as Jesus, they lived and they died, that's what they have in common, the difference is that Jesus was raised from the dead, he's alive, we have a great high priest and king who is exalted at the right hand of God and he is alive, and that quote in verse 6, as he also says in another place, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, did any of you get a little confused when you were reading verse 7, in the days of his flesh

Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and you're thinking, hold on a second, but he died, what do you mean saved from death?

He died on the cross, do you know how God answered that prayer? He raised him from the dead. God heard his prayer and answered it, and so now, check it out, our great high priest and king is victorious over sin, death, and the devil.

[38:55] Oh, he's better qualified. Draw near to him, he's better qualified than any Levitical priest, even yourself. Stop dealing with your own sin.

Go to your great high priest. Now, I don't know about you, but hey, if I were taking resumes for who's going to be the great high priest of my life, and I'm looking at resumes from Levitical priests, and I'm looking at my own resume, and I'm looking at the resume of Jesus, do you know who I'm going with?

Jesus. Better in his appointment, better in his nature, better in his relating, better in his sacrifice, better in his living.

He is alive today. He is uniquely qualified to help you in your weakness. What's keeping you from his throne? Is it your shame?

Is it you don't want to come to terms with your sin? Are you just trying to avoid him? Are you just trying to handle your sinfulness on your terms?

[40:11] You make for a lousy mediator. He is uniquely qualified. He's willing and able, and he's qualified like no other.

draw near to him. Don't shrink back. Don't go back to your Levitical priests. Don't go back to your self-appointed priesthood.

Draw near to Jesus in your weakness and you will find help. God will we all have a weakness, a soft spot to sin, craving to sin.

It's internal. You're going to face it this afternoon. You're going to face it tonight. You're going to face it this week. All of us in the room, our internal sinful nature, this weakness that we carry around with us, it's going to get tempted.

Where are you going to turn? don't shrink back from Christ in your weakness. Draw near. Draw near in your most gross weakness.

[41:31] Draw near to him with confidence. And he'll give you grace at just the right time. He's willing and able to help.

He's better qualified to help. Now repeat after me. as you get ready to go, repeat after me. I want you holding fast to this.

Christ is my risen and reigning priest and king.

Draw near to him this week. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we do have a soft spot for sin, but we love you. I pray, Father, that you'd pour out your spirit on this people in this room and that you would convince them that your throne of grace is a place of welcome for the weak, for the tempted, for those who blew it, that you welcomed them, that you have grace for them, that you want to strengthen them, that you want to help them hold fast to you all the way to the end.

[43:01] God, I do pray that you would help us to remember our priest and king who's gone through the heavenlies and is at the right hand of you, majesty on high, and that you invite us in and it's blood-bought.

We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.