

Jesus: Our High Priest & King (Hebrews 4:14-5:10)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 March 2026

Preacher: Brett Sanders

[0 : 0 0] Amen, amen. Children, we are ready for Children's Church at this time. You may make your way here to the front for Children's Church. What a joy it is to be here worshiping on this Palm Sunday.

It always brings a smile to my face whenever we see the kids walking around the room waving those palm branches, and the choir this year waving palm branches as well.

And so that was exciting, but it's a joy to see that. And it's also a joy to see how many kids are in this church learning the songs of the church, learning who Jesus is and what he has done for us. And so I am very thankful for that. Next week is Easter Sunday, and so we're looking forward to that. Hopefully on your way in, you're able to grab one of those invitation cards.

I see some up here on the front. There's more in the back. I encourage you to get one of those invitation cards. Now, we do invite you to come back next week, but this invitation card is not for you.

[1 : 0 7] This invitation card is for you to take to someone maybe that you've been praying for, maybe that God has placed on your heart, and invite them to come to church with you next Sunday as we celebrate Easter.

Easter is always an exciting time when people are open, more open than usual to coming to church and hearing about who Jesus is. And so we want you to take those invitation cards.

Think about somebody that isn't attending church somewhere, that maybe hasn't attended in a very long time, and invite them to come with you next Sunday.

Now, as I told the early service, if nobody comes to mind, if you're thinking, well, Brett, I don't know anybody who doesn't go to church somewhere. I just don't know anybody like that.

Then let me encourage you. This week, make some new friends. Okay? Make some new friends. Be intentional about people that God could put into your life that you can share the good news of Jesus with.

[2 : 0 8] And a great way to start that is bringing them to Easter services next week with you. We look forward to that. It is always a time of celebration.

But today, as we begin to think about Palm Sunday, oftentimes what we focus on for Palm Sunday is the fact that Jesus was celebrated as a king when he came to Jerusalem.

And rightfully so, because Jesus is the king who reigns forever. And so we do celebrate him as king. But oftentimes, we remember the fact that the people who were celebrating him as king didn't really understand who Jesus truly was.

They had something in their mind of who they wanted Jesus to be, something that they thought was better than what he came to do. And all of a sudden, they began to turn on him as the week went on.

But he was not the king they wanted. And it is of utmost importance that we let Scripture, that we let God's Word remind us and tell us who Jesus is.

[3 : 2 3] When we start to put our own interpretation on things, often what we get with Jesus is a slightly better version of ourselves. You see, at the triumphal entry, the people were recognizing and wanting a king that was going to come in and remove them from Roman oppression.

But today, oftentimes, we want a Savior who is fine with our preferences, who is good with the prejudices we have in our life, who is okay with a little bit of sin here and there, who will give us health, wealth, and prosperity.

And we need today, as much as ever, a clear understanding of who Jesus is.

And all of this is important because who we say Jesus is, is of most importance. It is something that we can't waver on. You see, A.W. Tozer famously said, he said, What comes into our minds when

we think about God is the most important thing about us.

What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us. But we also must consider is how God looks at us.

[4 : 42] Yes, we must consider what we think about God, but we also must consider what He thinks about us. In fact, C.S. Lewis said, he said, I read in a periodical the other day, that the fundamental thing is how we think of God.

He said, By God Himself, it is not. How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except insofar as it is related to how He thinks of us.

Now, understanding the context of where these great men of the faith were coming from, I don't think they're contradicting each other. In fact, I think they're complementing one another when it comes to how God sees us and how we see Him.

Because how we see Him is in direct correlation to how He sees us. And so, when we begin to think about how God sees us and how we see God, both of these things are addressed in our passage today.

And so, if you have a copy of God's Word, I would like to invite you to follow along as we read Hebrews chapter 4, starting in verse 14, and we will make our way through Hebrews chapter 5, verse 10.

[6 : 06] So, Hebrews 4, starting in verse 14, it says this, Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.

Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to 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 mercy and 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 relation 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.

[7 : 17] 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. And he says in another place, You are 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 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 salvation to all who obey him.

Being designated by God as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. You see, in this passage, I want us to clearly see how God sees us in light of Jesus.

And at the same time, how we see God in light of what he has done for us. And as we do this, there are a handful of beautiful and life-giving truths that I wanted to bring our attention to this morning.

[8 : 41] And the first is the overarching theme of this passage that we'll be using to kind of set the stage for us to understand who Jesus is. And then we'll be able to see some of the wonderful realizations, the comforting realizations that we have in light of that.

And so the first thing that I want us to see clearly today is this. That Jesus, as our perfect high priest, I want us to clearly see Jesus, our perfect high priest.

Verse 14 in chapter 4 says, Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

Here we begin to see Jesus as this great and glorious and perfect high priest. But this is also something that he continues throughout the book of Hebrews and something that he will highlight specifically in the first part of Hebrews chapter 5.

And so I want us to almost see this as bookends, but to the comforting truths that we'll find in the midst of this. And so here in verse 14, he declares that Jesus is our great high priest.

[10:01] And then in chapter 5, he begins to give us some examples of what this high priest does for us. And so we see Jesus as our great high priest.

And then in chapter 5, we get to see a few of those things, a few of those examples of how this plays out. To begin with, in chapter 5, verses 1 through 3, we see these words.

It says, What we see is this example of how this plays out is our great and perfect high priest understands us and is able to save us.

He understands us and he's able to save us. The priests were chosen from among men so that they understood what everyone was going through.

They were going through many of the same things that they were going through. And so they were chosen from among men so that they could sympathize and understand the things that the people were struggling with.

[11:29] But it also tells us here that the priests in the Old Testament were sinners themselves. In fact, they had to offer sacrifices for their own sins just as they did for those of the people.

But Jesus, it tells us, and we're going to highlight this truth more in just a moment, but it tells us that he was able to sympathize, but he was able to sympathize without sin.

So Jesus can relate to us, but unlike the high priest, he can also fully save us. For this reason, he far surpasses the Old Testament priest.

Verses 4 through 6, it says, 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. And as he says also in another place, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. You see, like the Old Testament priest, Jesus was called by God.

[12:49] He was given this mission by God to accomplish this. And it's really interesting here that he says, After the order of Melchizedek. Now, we're going to address this and look at this more fully in a few weeks from now when we get to chapter 7.

But for our purposes today, it's really important for us to understand something about Melchizedek. You see, Melchizedek was seen as a priestly king. He was both seen as a priest and as a king. And so when we see that Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek, a priest forever, after this order, we understand that we serve a priestly king. He is our high priest who is also the king of everything. And so we begin to see this. And then in verses 7 through 10, it tells us, In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who is able to save 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 salvation to all who obey him, designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

[14:11] You see, our great and perfect high priest has shown us what perfect obedience looks like. In this passage, we are told that Jesus suffered greatly when he laid down his life for us.

He suffered greatly during that time, and he was obedient through that. If you'll remember, in the garden, Jesus cries out to God, knowing what's coming.

He says, Lord, if there is another way, if there's another way that doesn't involve me dying, going to the cross and dying, if there's another way that doesn't involve this separation between us that's about to happen, Lord, if there's another way, let's do that.

But there wasn't another way. So he willingly submitted himself to God's plan. You see, submission is a difficult thing for us and really not a very popular topic for us to consider and to talk about, but we are called to submit to whatever authorities are in our life and, most importantly, to God.

And when God says no, it can be difficult to submit. When God says no, it can be difficult to take that in and process that and still follow him.

[15:32] But Christ models for us submission to what might be the greatest and hardest no that God has ever given.

When this passage says that Jesus learned obedience through what he suffered, it's not referring to anything about Jesus ever being disobedient.

It's not that at all. We know that Jesus was perfect, but rather it emphasizes Jesus' human experience and being human who learned to obey God even in the midst of great suffering.

And so if you are suffering and find it difficult to be obedient to God, then take comfort in knowing that Jesus understands that better than anyone.

And so putting all of this together as Jesus is our great and glorious high priest means that Jesus is the only one that can save. This means that trusting in him is the only way that we can go from death to life.

[16 : 35] And so we must stop trying to do this on our own and learn to trust him in the midst of it all. But this is hard for us. Because in our culture today, we have historically put a high value on independence.

Self-reliance and this do-it-yourself mentality. We learn from an early age and apply it to all sorts of things. And I could give you example after example after example of how my kids show me all the time that they are independent, but only have one child that doesn't require me to pay them when I use them in a sermon illustration.

So let's talk about Charlotte for just a moment. You see, Charlotte is fiercely independent. She is opinionated. She's just like her mother. I mean, she's, you know, she's strong-willed.

She's independent, does all of these things. And recently she learned to ride a bike. Now she's learning to ride the bike. And now that she's learned to ride the bike, she doesn't want anybody to help her with that.

Don't help her get started. Don't give her a little push up the hill. If you do those things, she puts on the brakes, stops immediately, gives you a look, and then does it herself. She wants to be independent.

[17 : 51] She wants to do it all herself. And this attitude has actually helped her to learn to ride the bike really well. You see, many of these things, these independence things are things that are celebrated in our culture, and they should be.

The problem comes when we try to apply that independence to our faith. When we try to apply this independence to religion and our understanding of who Jesus is.

And what happens, we end up trying to fix our problem on our own. We may recognize we're a sinner, but our fix to the problem is to sin less, try harder, come to church more, give more in the offering plate.

But the problem is this doesn't fix our problem. You see, the message of Hebrews 4, 14 through 5, 10 is that we need an intercessor. We need someone to act on our behalf.

We need someone to do what we can't do. No matter how independent we are, how hard we try, we can't do this. You see, the Christian life is not about being independent.

[19 : 03] It's not about being independent. The Christian life is about being in dependence on Christ. It's not about being independent and doing everything on our own.

It's all about being dependent on Christ to accomplish what we couldn't accomplish. And so we see this all in Jesus as our perfect high priest.

But some things that we see that are comforting from this is we find great comfort in our confession. We find great comfort in our confession.

Again, verse 14, since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

What is our confession? Well, our confession is that Jesus is who he says he is, not who everybody else says he is. Our confession is that Jesus, the one that the author declares with the titles as the great high priest and Son of God, is none other than Jesus of Nazareth.

[20 : 10] He reminds us that our faith is grounded in the historical Jesus, in the incarnation that actually took place in space, time, and history.

But in addition to our confession of this historical Jesus, we are confessing the good news. We're confessing the gospel with this.

In Romans 10, 9, Paul says, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be what?

Then you will be saved. This is the hope that we build our lives on. The author says, let us hold fast to our confession.

In other words, let us not abandon this confession when times get hard. Rather, let us lean into it. Let us lean into this confession when life's not going the way that we think it should.

[21 : 10] When time is hard, let us not run away from this confession, but let us lean into it. Because this is what sustains us. This is what gives us hope.

This is what gives us a future. We will lean into this confession. You see, our confession reminds us that if you are a follower of Jesus, he will never, ever stop loving you.

If you are a follower of Jesus, he will never, ever stop pleading your case and representing you before God. This means that when God looks at us, he sees the righteousness of his son surrounding us.

We can have eternal security in heaven, not because of our actions, but because of what someone who is able to intercede did for us, namely Jesus Christ.

And he will continue to do that forever. You see, just as David's victory over Goliath in the Old Testament became his people's victory over Goliath, now Jesus' victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave becomes our victory over those things.

[22 : 25] And so we must hold fast to this confession because this is the confession that gives us life. This is what our lives are built on. And I'm not sure where you are in your relationship with God today, but my guess is in a room that this size, there are people who have a wrongly placed confession.

A helpful way to understand this is by thinking about how you would answer the question, are you going to heaven? How do you know that you are saved? And if you answer that question with, I hope so, I hope that I have done enough, or even if you answer the question, I hope so, I'm a member of First Baptist Church.

I hope so. I was baptized at a young age. I was talking with someone just the other day, and they were sharing a story about an older deacon in the church they had grown up in that gave their life to Christ late in life.

You see, I'm not asking, have you been baptized? Are you a member of this church? I'm not even asking if you're a deacon. I'm asking, are you a follower of Christ?

Because a follower of Christ confesses that their only hope is Jesus. And so this brings us comfort. The next thing that we see that brings us comfort as Jesus is our great and perfect high priest is we find comfort in the fact that Jesus understands us.

[24 : 02] He understands us. 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.

This is one of the most comforting truths that I have found as we study the book of Hebrews is over and over again. It tells us that Jesus understands us.

It reminds us that Jesus has experienced the same things that we experience. You see, the incarnation is not just that Jesus became a man, but that he lived life as a man.

He experienced the ups and downs that we all experience. And in this passage, it tells us that Jesus experienced the temptation just like we do, that he understands the temptation that we're going through.

But I don't know about you. This is sometimes hard for me to wrap my mind around. It's hard for me to wrap my mind around this fact, because in my mind, I think, well, Jesus, if you've never sinned, and you haven't experienced the sin like we have, how can you experience the temptation?

[25 : 21] How can you experience temptation if you've never sinned? How can you know the temptation that I'm experiencing if you have not sinned? How can you know the difficulty of addiction to alcohol, to drugs, to pornography, to lying, to gossip, or whatever, if you have not participated in those things?

And this is a place where this week, C.S. Lewis, in *Miracurhia*, if you have read that, you'll know that it is most helpful in this. He says nobody knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good.

A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is.

A man who gives into temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would be like an hour later. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it.

And he goes on to say, he says, And Christ, because he was the only man who knows to the full what temptation means, is the only complete realist.

[26 : 42] You see, what Lewis is stating is that those who have given in to temptation can't understand the full weight of it. They can't understand the full weight of it because as soon as you give in to the temptation, that is gone.

The temptation is gone because you've given in to it. And he's saying, Jesus experienced this but never gave in to it. So let us take great comfort in knowing that Jesus not only understands the difficulties we face, but understands them to an extent that we will never know.

Finally, as we see Jesus as our great and perfect high priest, we find comfort in the confidence that Jesus provides. We find comfort in the confidence that he provides.

Verse 16 says, 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.

Because of our great high priest has provided salvation, because he intercedes on our behalf, because he understands us and sympathizes with us, the author tells us that we can now confidently draw near to him.

[27 : 59] And there's no doubt in my mind that this is something that was very difficult for this original audience to understand. For the author to say that you can now confidently draw near to God was no doubt mind-blowing to them.

Because they had lived a life where they understood very well in their Jewish tradition that sin separated them from God. It separated them from the presence of God.

In fact, in the temple, they had the Holy of Holies that was blocked by this giant curtain that nobody could go into except only certain people in certain times of the year.

And oftentimes, when they would go in, they would have a rope tied around their waist in case when they entered the presence of God, they would be struck dead because of their unconfessed sin. And so they understood that there was this separation.

But now for the author to say, because of Jesus, you can confidently draw near to God is an unbelievable and life-giving truth.

[29 : 03] For those of us who are in Christ, God's throne is a throne of immeasurable grace. This throne of grace is a place Christians can confidently draw near in order to find the grace we need in every situation in this life and the mercy we need to continually cover the sins we commit.

You see, church, this is incredibly life-giving news for us today. The Bible over and over again, and probably most clearly in Ephesians chapter 2, reminds us that because of our sin, we are dead in our trespasses.

Because of our sin, we are dead and we are following the way this world wants us to go. We're just going the way the world wants us to go, the way that Satan wants us to go. And because of that, we are objects of God's wrath.

But God doesn't leave us there. But because of Jesus, when God looks at us, he doesn't see that sin, that shame, that regret, all of those things that we've committed when nobody else was looking, or maybe when everybody else was looking, he doesn't see those things, but rather he sees his son's righteous life that was given in our place.

And this allows us to boldly come before God, boldly come before his throne. And so coming back to this question, if someone were to ask you, are you going to heaven?

[30 : 35] Can you come into the presence of God? How would you answer that today? Would you answer it with, I hope, maybe, I guess we'll just have to see when we get there.

Or will you answer that question? Can you come into the presence of God boldly by saying, yes, because of Jesus, yes, this is the good news of the gospel.

This is what we get to celebrate this week, that Jesus lived the life that we couldn't live, went to the cross, took our sin, took our shame on himself, and gave us his righteous life.

So yes, we can boldly come to God and say, I deserve to be here, not because of my sin, but because of what Jesus did for me. This is wonderful news for us.

And so as we think about how God sees us and how we see him, may we see that God sees us as his son's holy and perfect life because of what Jesus accomplished, because he declares us that, not because of our actions.

[31 : 46] And may we see him clearly for who he is, a loving father who is there with us, no matter what we're going through. Our great and perfect high priest is not constantly making sacrifices because he has already made the final and perfect sacrifice by giving his life for ours.

And so help us to not be like the crowds on the first triumphal entry who were seeing what they thought they wanted, the Jesus that they thought they needed. Help us not to see the Jesus that is a slightly better version of ourselves, who is just there to give us health, wealth, and prosperity, but help us to see who Jesus truly is.

Because who Jesus is, is so much better. Father, thank you so very much for your word. Lord, thank you for what it teaches us about you, for what it reminds us of, that you are our perfect and great high priest, that you live the life that we couldn't live to give us hope.

Lord, I thank you for that. I thank you for how it changes our life, the comfort that it brings to our life, how we find comfort in who you are, how we find comfort in what you've done for us, how we find comfort in our confession of who you are.

Lord, help us to lean into that. Help us to find comfort in the fact that you understand us, that you get us. But Lord, I pray that you help us to find comfort in the confidence that only you can provide.

[33 : 33] Lord, a confidence that is not built on our own actions, but a confidence that is built on you. And so Lord, help us to live in light of that each and every day.

And I pray that if there's someone here today that doesn't know you, that can't confidently come into your presence, that maybe is trusting in their own actions, Lord, they would see you as better and realize that they can give their life to you and go from death to life.

Father, we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.