

Jesus, the Great High Priest, Understands our Weaknesses

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-3

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I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

During the time of Hebrews, many who believed in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Savior found themselves facing severe persecution and hardships. Many of them were being tempted to turn away from their newfound belief and return to their old Jewish traditions, customs, and practices.

Hebrews encourages all believers to persevere and remain steadfast in their faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus is the central role in the Plan of Salvation. He has superiority over all prophets and practices that existed prior to his arrival. The laws in the Old Testament were temporary and designed to point towards the coming of the Messiah but find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus. Jesus is the only one who can bridge the gap between humanity and God.

The life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the ultimate revelation of God's Plan for Salvation. Jesus lived a life faithful and obedient to His Father. Jesus' death was the ultimate sacrifice, as he willingly laid down his life for the sins of all humanity. Through his death, he made a way for people to be reconciled with God, to have their sins forgiven, and to be granted eternal life. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is a powerful testament to his divine nature and the truth of his teachings. Through his resurrection, he demonstrated his power over death and offers hope to all who believe in him.

Jesus cannot be compared to anyone. He is the heir of all things (Heb 1:1), creator of the universe (Heb 1:2), and the radiance of God's glory (Heb. 1:3). He is also the Apostle and the great High Priest (Heb 3:1, 4:16). As the heir of all things, he has inherited all the blessings and promises that God has made to his people. As the creator of the universe, he has the power and authority to rule over all things. And as the radiance of God's glory, he reflects the very nature of God himself. In addition, he is superior to the angels (Heb 1:4) and even greater than Moses (Heb 3:3), who was highly revered in the Old Testament. These descriptions of Jesus highlight his unique position as the Son of God and the Savior of humanity.

II. The Lesson: Jesus, the Great High Priest, Understands our Weaknesses (Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-3)

A. We have a great high priest, Jesus the Son of God! (Hebrews 4:14)

This verse describes Jesus as a "great" high priest, emphasizing the importance and uniqueness of his role. The high priest is the mediator between God and the people. As the great high priest and the Son of God, Jesus is superior to all high priests, because he is both fully God and fully human. The special connection that he has to God is one that no other high priest could match. As the great high priest, he is uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between God and man.

He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin. The verse says that Jesus, the great high priest, "*ascended into heaven*", meaning that he has gone up to Heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. While there, he serves as our mediator, offering a direct and unparalleled path of communication and access to God the Father. He is uniquely and eternally positioned to intercede on behalf of believers and offer sacrifices that atone for sins.

This verse ends with an urgency to "hold fast to our confession". In other words, we must keep our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We must continue to do so in the face of persecution and hardships, knowing that we have a high priest who is interceding on our behalf.

B. Jesus understands our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15)

"For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are – yet he did not sin."
(NIV)

Jesus comprehends our struggles and weaknesses on account of having gone through them firsthand during his time on earth. Jesus faced the same trials and tribulations that we do, and he experienced the same human nature and emotions as we do. For instance, in Matthew 4, the Holy Spirit guided Jesus into the wilderness where he abstained from food and water for forty days and nights. During this time, the devil tempted him three times. However, Jesus resisted the devil's advances and continued to remain sinless and obedient to God.

C. Approaching God with confidence (Hebrews 4:16)

This verse is an invitation and encouragement for us to come before God's throne of grace, which represents God's mercy and favor towards us. We are encouraged to approach God confidently, with boldness and assurance, knowing that we are

welcomed and accepted by Him. We can come before Him not because of our own merit or goodness, but because of Jesus Christ, who has made a way for us to approach God through His sacrifice on the cross.

When we come before God's throne, we can expect to receive two things: mercy and grace. Mercy means that we do not receive the punishment we deserve for our sins. Instead, God offers us forgiveness and pardon for our wrongdoing. Grace means that we receive blessings and favor that we do not deserve.

Jesus is our great high priest, who sympathizes with our weaknesses and offers us mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. God's mercy and grace is available to us when we face difficulties and challenges in life. When we need help, strength, comfort, or guidance, we can turn to God and receive His mercy and grace.

D. Qualities of A High Priest (Hebrews 5:1-3)

Hebrews 5:1 examines the historical roots and definition of the position of a high priest to help us understand how Jesus serves as our High Priest.

As an integral component of the Old Covenant, God instituted the priesthood to facilitate communication and establish a connection between Himself and His people. The priests acted as intermediaries between God and man through which the people could approach God and offer sacrifices on behalf of their sins. Through the act of offering these sacrifices, the priests made atonement for the sins of the people, asking God for forgiveness. Jesus fulfilled the role of the high priest and was chosen to serve as the mediator between God and us.

High priests possess two main qualities: compassion and understanding. Compassion grants them the ability to show empathy and understanding towards those who do not fully understand. This allows them to provide guidance and support to those who are struggling, rather than condemnation. Understanding human weakness allows them to recognize that everyone makes mistakes and to be more compassionate and forgiving.

Before, high priests offered sacrifices not just for the people, but also offer sacrifices for his own sin. These high priests were human, therefore they sinned and needed forgiveness too. Because Jesus was perfect and sinless, he does not need to offer sacrifices.

II. Conclusion

In conclusion, having Jesus as the Great High Priest who understands our weaknesses is a powerful and comforting message for all Christians. Through his humanity and his own experiences of temptation and suffering, Jesus can empathize with us and

intercede on our behalf before God. This understanding of Jesus as a compassionate and merciful mediator between humanity and God provides hope and strength for believers as they navigate the challenges of life. By turning to Jesus as our Great High Priest, we can find comfort, forgiveness, and grace, knowing that he understands our weaknesses and is always there to offer his love and support.