



# Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10

In our last session, the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers not to harden their hearts, and to listen to God's voice. We are not to follow the Israelites' disobedient example as quoted in Psalm 95. Just as how the Israelites' were still commanded to enter into God's rest after entering the Promised Land, Christians today are urged not to harden our hearts when we hear God's voice.

In today's session, the author starts to focus on the theme of the priesthood of Jesus, after giving short snippets of it in 1:3-4 and 2:17-18. Priesthood is not a topic that we think about much, but it is one of the central role that Jesus plays. It is so important that the author of Hebrews devotes chapter 5 to 10 to talking about Jesus' role as priest.

As we come to learn about Jesus' priesthood, we must not forget that the author has established Jesus as the divine Son of God, who is greater than the angels (Heb 1), greater than Moses (Heb 2 – 3) and also provides a greater rest than Joshua (Heb 3 – 4). So, this priesthood is not merely a human one, but one that is occupied by the divine Son himself.

## Launch

What is the role of priesthood as you understand it, in your culture or other religions?

## Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10 – Jesus Christ, Our Great Appointed High Priest

### Read Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10

- 1) According to the author, why should Christians hold firmly to the faith that we profess? (4:14)
  - a. Who is this great high priest?
  - b. Where did this high priest go that sets him apart from the high priests in the Old Testament? (cf. Heb 9:11, 24)
  - c. What do you think "the faith that we profess" is referring to?
- 2) What similarities does this high priest share with us mankind and what is different about him? (4:15)
  - a. What then should we do? (4:16)
- 3) According to the author, how does one become a high priest? (5:1)
  - a. Who does the high priest represent and in what matters/topics?
  - b. What is the high priest supposed to do? (5:1)
  - c. Based on your knowledge of the Old Testament, who can become high priest?
- 4) What is the high priest able to do according to the author? (5:2) Why?



- 5) What do you think “weakness” in 5:2 referring to? (cf. Heb 4:15)
  - a. What is the result of this “weakness”? (Heb 5:3)
- 6) What does the author say about the honour of being high priest in Heb 5:4?
- 7) In what aspect is the priesthood of Christ the same as the high priests in the Old Testament? (5:5)
  - a. What two passages does the author quote to make his point? (Heb 5:5-6)
  - b. What is the difference between Christ’s priesthood and the Old Testament priesthood? (5:6) (cf. 5:10) (The author will discuss this in greater length in Heb 7)
- 8) What did Jesus do during his life here on earth? (5:7-8)
  - a. What incident do you think 5:7 is talking about?
  - b. What do you think it means that Jesus “learned obedience from what he suffered”? (5:8) Does he have to learn obedience?
- 9) In what way was Jesus made perfect? (5:9) (cf. Heb 2:10)
  - a. What did he become after that? (5:9)
  - b. Who is this salvation for? (5:9)
  - c. What are some acts of obedience the author urged his readers to do? (cf. Heb 2:1, 3:1, 3:6, 4:11, 4:14, 4:16)

## Application

- 10) What encouragement can we draw from Jesus’ as our high priest – as one who can empathize with our weaknesses and also tempted in every way, yet he did not sin?
- 11) If Jesus had to learn obedience, what does this say about our own obedience to God? What is one area of your life that you struggle being obedient to God? How can you *learn* obedience in that area?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is our high priest before God. He is not only a high priest, but a *great* high priest – a fact that the author emphasises by pointing out that he ascended to heaven and that he is without sin. Because of that, we can approach the throne of God with confidence. We can do this not because of how great we are, but because of who is representing us before God.

In fact, it was God himself who appointed Jesus as our high priest, in the order of Melchizedek. He had to learn obedience through what he suffered (his crucifixion), but because of that, he become the source of eternal salvation to everyone who obeys him.