

Hebrews 4 & 5

by Pat Kenney

The sermon highlights the importance of faith in Jesus as the source of true rest and encourages believers to remain steadfast amidst challenges.

Duration: 1:03:14

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 3:7-8, Hebrews 3:11-12, Hebrews 4:12, Hebrews 5:14

Topics: "Hebrews"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not taking the word of God lightly. He warns against simply being inspired by the message without truly internalizing and applying it to one's life. The preacher encourages trust in the Lord and not relying on our own resources. He also highlights the concept of rest, both in the future heavenly sense and in the present through a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. The sermon references the history of God's people, particularly the Israelites in the wilderness, to illustrate the consequences of not fully trusting in God's word.

Transcript

And if you get your Bibles out and open them to the Book of Hebrews, Book of Hebrews chapter, well, we're going to try to get, we're supposed to get through chapters 4 and 5 tonight. So, let's start in chapter 3, okay? Just to guarantee that we probably may not get that far. We've been, as we've been going through the Book of Hebrews, we've been understanding that this book was initially written to Jewish Christians who may have been on the verge of turning back from their promised rest in Jesus Christ.

They, persecution was increasing, and it was becoming more and more difficult to be a Jewish Christian. And so some of them were beginning to slip back to the things of the world. Well, in essence, they were the things of the world because they were beginning to be deceived by the old religious traditions which could not save them, which could not give them the rest that God intended them to have in Jesus Christ.

And so we were looking at the end of chapter 3, actually in the middle of chapter 3 where the writer was quoting from the Psalms, and he was quoting, today if you will hear his voice in verse 7, Don't harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tested me and tried me and saw my works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation and said, They always go astray in their heart and they have not known my ways. And so I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest.

Beware brethren, I mean this was written a thousand years ago in the Psalms, of your forefathers, beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.

You know, what he's saying is hang in there guys. You know, it is hard, it is tough, but hold on, don't let go just because it's tough. And I think in that it would certainly be a message for the church today.

Wouldn't you agree? That there is many forces out in the world around us to pull our concentration off of Christ, to put our trust in something other than Christ. And we find it evidenced by, you know, the stress of the day that we live in, the anger of the day that we live in. We see it by the materialism of our day, of our culture in particular, where if you don't keep up with the Joneses, so to speak, you know, you're just a second class citizen.

And oftentimes believers will begin not to disbelieve in Jesus, but to turn their focus of their trust into something other than Jesus, which eventually weakens their faith. It eventually brings them in a place of carnality, where instead of every day being responsive to what God wants and what God desires, and hey, isn't that what this is about? How many of us have learned it's not about going to church? Because, I mean, there's a lot of religions out there you can go and put in your time and, you know, do your hour a week and that's fine. But this is our life.

This is our life now and on into eternity. And I think it's only as we stay fixed on Jesus and listen to Him and talk with Him and walk with Him each and every day that we really are walking in the fullness that God's intended for us. And there is a fullness.

The Christian life is meant to be full. Full of Jesus, full of the joy of the Lord, full of His power, overflowing with His love, where worship is something that doesn't have to be coaxed, but it just flows out of our lives because we're just so thankful for who the Lord is and what He's done for us. And the writer of Hebrews is urging these young Jewish believers, don't pull back from that.

Don't turn back from that. Because only He can hold you. Don't harden your heart.

If you'll hear His voice, don't harden your hearts. For who having heard rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. They trusted in their own resources instead of God's resources.

They came up to Kadesh Barnea. We talked about this a couple weeks ago. The Lord said, go in, take the land.

And they went in and came back and said, yeah, it's a nice land, but there's already somebody there. And they're bigger than us. And they're stronger than us.

And we're like grasshoppers in their sight. Only in Joshua and Caleb said, they're bread for our eating. Let's eat.

You know, they're the only ones that brought a good report. The rest of them brought an evil report. They were looking at their own resources.

They were afraid. They were afraid of what would happen to their children. And indeed, 40 years later, it was their children that went in and conquered the land.

We need to trust the Lord, no matter what it is that we're facing and going through, and not pull back from Him and get back onto our resources. There is a rest. And that rest, I don't believe, is just the sweet by and by.

I believe it does speak of heaven, certainly. And we know that when we get to heaven, the battle will be over. But there is also a place of rest in the fullness of your relationship with Jesus Christ that you can have right now.

And so this is why he says in chapter 4, Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear, lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed, the gospel was preached to us as well as to them, but the word which they heard, and again speaking of Israel and the wilderness, did not profit them. Why? Because it was not mixed with faith in those who heard it.

For we who have believed do enter that rest, as he said, So I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Psalm 91. Although the works, I'm sorry, Psalm 95.

Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way, and God rested on the seventh day from all His works. Now He's going all the way back to Genesis.

Genesis 2-2. And again, in this place, they shall not enter my rest. Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience.

Again, He designates a certain day in David. This again is quoting that Psalm. Today, after such a long time as it has been said, Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, then he would not afterward, hundreds of years later through David, have spoken of another day of rest. If Joshua had led the people of God into their final promised land of rest, then David would not have written 400 years later a warning about not hardening their hearts. Verse 9 then, There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

And I believe understood in that would be a rest for the people of God that cannot be found in the Old Testament. That cannot be found in the law of Moses. It could not be found in angels.

He already brought that out in chapter 1. It could not be found in Moses. Brought that out in chapter 2 in the first part of chapter 3. Here we're going to find out that it's not going to be found in the priesthood, in Aaron. And we'll get into that in a little bit.

But there is a rest for the people of God. And I like that verse. Because that means there's a rest for me and there's a rest for you.

And I don't know what may be causing you unrest tonight. If you're living in this world, the odds are pretty good that there are forces at work to keep you unsettled, to keep you off balance, to keep you distracted from seeking the Lord first. Lots of stuff out there.

But God wants you to know tonight that there is a rest for the people of God. A rest that we can have each and every day, where the peace that passes understanding can guard our hearts. And I honestly don't

believe that that means that we just find ourselves in a meditative pose 24 hours a day.

You know, just kind of in a mystical state. We've got a very real world that we need to function in. We've got very real problems that we have to face and deal with in a godly manner.

But it is possible to face the challenges and trials that we have each and every day with a supernatural rest. A rest that will have its fulfillment, of course, as Revelation 21.4 says, where God will wipe away every tear from their eyes and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away.

And that's another good promise too. Amen? That the things that have caused the pain, the sorrow, the crying will one day pass away and will be swallowed up in glory. And we get to taste that now.

We get to taste that the moment we're born again, the moment we surrender our lives to the Lord, where His rule and His peace takes over. And we realize that it's not something that we strive to do in our own efforts, either our own moral efforts or our own religious efforts. Verse 10 says, For he who has entered his rest, speaking of the Lord's rest, has himself also ceased from his works as God did from his.

Entering this rest means no longer needing to work. Now, I don't mean that you can just go quit your jobs now because the pastor said we don't need to work. But the work he's speaking of, the idea isn't that there is no longer any place for doing good works.

The idea is that there is no longer any place for works as a basis of our own righteousness. Like, God, look how good I am. And I'm doing all this stuff, and I'm a pretty upright, disciplined person.

And I deserve to get into heaven. Well, if that's what you're basing it on, woe unto you. Because God will reveal the prideful attitude of your heart, which is sin.

And you'll realize that you weren't perfect, and you were counting on impressing God with your perfection. That won't work. That won't work.

And I don't know about you, but I take a deep sigh of relief at that because I'm so imperfect. And I fail so much. And I'm so thankful.

So thankful that he is made. He has made a way that is beyond my abilities. Because I know, again, there's a lot of us that put a bit of a challenge in front of us, and we'll try to meet it.

And if you say, well, it's not easy to get saved. It's not down here. It's kind of way, way up here.

Well, I'm going to try to invent some way to get to that. And then once I get there, I'm going to go, yeah, did it. I'm better than you.

Sadly, we've seen that in religious history throughout the centuries, where those who have so-called or seem to have arrived have lorded it over others. And that's never what Jesus did. You know, I think the more spiritual you are, the less people really know or are drawn to you as how spiritual you are.

Because the more spiritual you are, the more you get out of the way. The more the glory goes to Jesus, the more broken you are to the Lord for the mighty work that he's done in your life. And there's not a prideful thing.

It's a humble thing. And I think the more you grow in the Lord truly, the more broken and humble your life is going to be. And that's because it's all Jesus.

He's done it all for us. There's no longer any place for my works as a basis for my righteousness. Now, there's plenty of room for good works.

And God calls us to do good works, but not as a basis in which we can be saved and our sins can be washed away. The good works are a fruit of what God has done in our lives. And our rest is in Jesus and nowhere else.

And this cessation from works as a basis for righteousness fulfills what we call our Sabbath rest. God rested from his works on the original Sabbath of Genesis 2 because the work was finished. Right? It was done.

It was evening and morning the first day, evening and morning the second day, but he got to the seventh day when he rested and doesn't say anything more about evening and morning. Because it was a completed deal. It was a finished work.

We, similarly, we cease from self-justifying works because the work is finished by Jesus on the cross. And our salvation comes when we've learned to rest in what God has done for us on the cross and we stop trying to earn our salvation through our own works. That's why you find a lot of church people getting saved.

A lot of times we'll find folks coming forward, turning their lives over to the Lord and they've been in church all their life or been exposed to church or they thought that they were Christians because they went to church occasionally on Easter, Christmas. And they come to find out that it's not about a membership that you have in a particular denomination. It's not about your church-going track record.

You know, it's not even about the rituals that you may have performed. It's not even about getting baptized. I mean, you can get baptized.

You can get dunked in the water and still be as carnal the next day as you were the day before. The baptism itself, just the act of going into the water is just like the children of Israel. They didn't mix it with faith, as we read there in chapter 4. It wasn't connected with faith.

And it's that faith in what Jesus has already done for us. And that's why we sing, I cannot tell at all. He's done so much for me.

Wiped away my sins. Removed them as far away as the east is from the west. Filled us with His Spirit.

Changed our hearts. Taught us His Word. Poured out His love through us.

Keep it coming, Lord. I want more of that. And so the application of this, verse 11.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to that same example of disobedience. Again, looking back at the example. He says, remember the story of your forefathers.

Remember their history. Remember their failure there. And their lack of belief in trust in Me.

Don't forget that. Because the Word of God, and I'm sure he's specifically referring to the exhortation in Psalm 95 that he just quoted. But I believe this certainly speaks to the whole body of truth.

The Word of God is living. You know, he's taken a poem that was written a thousand years earlier. And he's saying, this Word is living.

This is not dead poetry. This is alive and powerful. And if you'll open your hearts to it, if you won't harden your hearts to it, it'll convict you, and you'll understand what the Lord was trying to teach through that.

Not just the history of the people of Israel that we read in Numbers, but God's assessment of what all of that was as we looked at the Psalms, and now here in Hebrews. That it was because of unbelief, that they couldn't enter into the rest. Yeah, they didn't go all the way back to Egypt, but they didn't enter into the promised land either.

And they died there in the wilderness, and there's a lot of people, a lot of Christians, sadly, that are still kind of roaming in a wilderness. The joy of the Lord is not their strength. You know, they're not overflowing with thanksgiving day in and day out.

Instead of having victory in their trials, the smallest thing just overwhelms them and throws them into a tizzy, into confusion. Church shouldn't be that way. You know, if we've been feeding on God's good word, and I'm happy to say and thankful to say that God is doing a work in this fellowship.

He's doing a work in so many of your lives. And I just want to encourage you, let Him pull at full throttle. I mean, let Him pour all that He wants.

Let your cry when you go out of here tonight be, Jesus, fill me more. Fill me up. Pour it into me, Lord.

Lord, I just want to walk with You. I just want to know You. I want to hold on to Your promises.

Even if I don't see them. Even if I don't see the immediate fulfillment. We read in Psalm 91, well, the first few verses of Psalm 91, beautiful passage.

We used to call it, when I first got saved, God's insurance policy. Unfortunately, some folks went beyond wisdom and chose not to get automobile insurance and so forth as a result. They said, well, Psalm 91 is my insurance.

Tell that to the officer. There is a place for our responsibility as well. And I think as Christians, we are called to be responsible.

Here He says, He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Man, if I'm dwelling, walking close with the Lord, there's going to be a sense of abiding. I'm home, man.

I'm where I'm supposed to be. There's a settledness there. And I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him I will trust.

Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence, and He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge. His truth shall be your shield and buckler, and you shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day. Beautiful passage.

But I like that second part of verse four. His truth shall be your shield and buckler. The New Living Bible translates it, His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

His faithful promises are your armor and your protection. It's as we trust in what God has said that we find ourselves protected and strengthened. Trust God's word.

Trust His promises. Hold on to Him. Every word of God is yea and amen.

Every promise of God is a good promise. And we can look at those promises, those promises of His peace, those promises of His cleansing and His forgiveness, those promises for wisdom, to walk uprightly in Him. We can count on those.

We can stand on those. Even those promises for our kids, those promises even concerning our healing. We stand on them.

We know that God is a God who heals. He's our healer. And I know that this world is going to pass.

And there is that day that we're going to be standing before Him. 100% complete. Perfect.

Spotless. Fearless. Worryless.

Oh, bring it on, Lord. Bring it on, Lord. Sometimes God chooses to heal immediately, physically.

And we've seen it. We've seen God's hand of healing upon folks. Sometimes He chooses to wait and teach us different things as we suffer, as we go through hard times.

And sometimes that healing will come when we hear Him say, get up here. It's now appointed for you to enter into your rest. Either way, His promise is still sure.

And we stand on His promises. Amen? Solid. Solid.

So, let's be diligent, because the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. And I need that every day. I need God's Word to bring me back to center, bring me back to focusing my heart and life on serving and loving Jesus Christ, on living my life for Him, on trusting completely in what He has done.

I mentioned this over the weekend, and if you want to get a little deeper study on this, you can get the tape from the weekend. John Corson pointed out that he always thought the Word was quick and powerful and sharper because it would bring to light and deal with our failures. And he pointed out, well, this wouldn't really be true according to the context of this verse.

The Word pierces the heart as it recounts stories of people who were robbed because they just didn't believe how good God is. They were robbed. You see, it is all about Him.

And it's so not about me or thee. So what is your heart trusting in? I believe the Word of God will reveal that. As you find yourself immersed in the Word of God, studying the history of God's people, looking at how the Lord not only worked in the Old Testament, but how He worked in the church, in the early church, you'll find where your heart is.

You'll understand what the motive behind your works would be if you're trying to impress God and earn His favor. God's Word will nail you on that. The Word will reveal the futility of that course.

The Word of God is powerful. The Bible isn't a collection of musty stories and myths. It has an inherent life and power.

The preacher doesn't make the Bible come alive. The Bible is alive and gives life to the preacher and anyone else who will really receive it. Sharper than any two-edged sword.

You know, God's Word can deal with us with surprising precision, can't it? And the Holy Spirit empowers the ministry of the Word to do deep work in our hearts. And, you know, many times people wonder how a minister's message can be so relevant to their life. You know, they sometimes honestly wonder if the preacher doesn't know some inside information about their life.

But it isn't necessarily the preacher at all. It's the sharpness of the Word of God delivering the message in just the right place. And I can preach the same passage and have a deal with a hundred of you a hundred different ways.

You can be facing issues and things in your life completely different from the people on the other side of the sanctuary, but the same Word will go right to the deepest place of where you're at, if you're open. And He'll draw you out from that place of bondage. He'll draw you out away from that place of confusion.

He'll bring you into that place of rest, which is in Him. And kind of as a postscript to that, verse 13, there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things, all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. There is no one hidden before God.

And He's probably bringing it home to these Jewish believers. He's saying, hey, you can run, but you can't hide. You know, you can sneak away.

You can kind of, you know, not press on and follow Him, but God knows your heart. And you can't play both sides of the fence. There is no one hidden before God.

He sees our hearts and, you know, He knows how to touch them. Thank you, Lord. And our responsibility, we must give account for how we respond to His touch.

You know, God is touching you tonight. He's touching you through His word. And not just because there's some mystical aura or presence here this evening.

I mean, you can be watching this on video six weeks from now or three or four years from now in the Philippines. You know, when the tapes get over there. And the Holy Spirit can speak to your heart because it's His word that's alive.

And if His word speaks to your heart, and here's the warning, don't blow it off. Don't go, well, that was real inspiring. And I'm going to just go off like it.

Okay, I had my religious experience and I felt that conviction and that burning. All right, yeah, preacher. And then it's like, was that a show? Was it just something you got a buzz off of? And then that's it.

No, we got to give account to Him. And so what we hear tonight, we're responsible for. And so He's just saying, hey, have a sober heart towards it.

Don't take it lightly. Take it wonderfully. Take it beautifully.

Take it powerfully. Take it personally. Don't take it lightly.

And it is comforting to realize that although God knows us intimately, He still loves us. And you can thank God for that right now. You really can.

Verse 14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. The writer to the Hebrews wants to call attention to the specific unique character of Jesus as our high priest.

No other high priest in the Bible was called great. No other high priest passed through the heavens, certainly. No other high priest is the Son of God.

So knowing that we have a high priest and knowing how unique and glorious He is, is so wonderful. It is even greater to know that He's passed through the heavens, that He's ascended into heaven, and now ministers there on our behalf. Wow, that's even greater.

Both of these things should encourage us to hold fast our confession. For we do not, verse 15, have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. You know, to the Greeks, the primary attribute of God was *apathia*, the essential inability to feel anything at all.

That was the Greeks' attitude of God. Jesus isn't like that. He knows.

He feels what we go through. The ancient Greek word for sympathize literally means to suffer along with, and He does that with us. What makes the difference is that Jesus added humanity to His deity and came and lived among us as a man.

And when you've been there, it makes all the difference. And Jesus has been there. We might hear of someone stricken with cancer and feel a measure of sorrow, but it's nothing like the pain we would feel if it were our own family.

I'm learning that. Goodness, for 30 years of ministry, I've been ministering to cancer patients, and I'll be honest with you, I've hurt with them and I've cried with them, but none of it has been anywhere near what it's like with having your own wife have it. You know? Jesus went through it for us, yet without sin.

So let us... See, there's a therefore, verse 16, and that kind of sums up everything. A therefore is sort of like the action word, okay? On the basis of all these things, now do this, okay? Therefore, because we have a high priest who is sympathetic with us, who does understand what it's like to be human, he's been here, and now he's in heaven interceding for us. Therefore, let's come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Let's come boldly. I think the living Bible says, let's come before the throne of grace and stay there. No, just park yourself there.

Don't ever leave that place. David Gusick said, because we have a high priest who is both omnipotent and compassionate, we can come boldly to his throne. Now, discouraging us from this access is a central strategy of Satan.

The devil sometimes wants us to consider Jesus as unapproachable, unapproachable. I don't know how many of you were raised in a Catholic tradition. I was, and I never really understood that I could come to Jesus.

No, I had to go to St. Patrick, of course. Or Mother Mary or some other saint because Jesus was unapproachable. That's a lie of Satan.

And it's sad that that church, that the huge Roman Catholic church, many parts of it have bought into that. We can come directly to the throne of grace because of the passion of the Christ, because of what he did and suffered for us. It wasn't to establish a bunch of other mediators.

He's the mediator. And Timothy points that out there. There is one God and one mediator between God and man.

The man is Christ Jesus, the Messiah. And he's alive. He rose from the grave.

He ascended through the heavens. He's interceding for you and I even right now. You might think nobody's praying for me.

You're wrong. Jesus is praying for you. Whoa.

Jesus is praying for me. I don't know about you, but that gives me a little encouragement that maybe I will get through this. Maybe you will get through that, what it is you're facing.

Because the Lord on high is interceding for you. Sometimes the devil wants us to think of Jesus as being powerless to help, not as one who sits on a throne in heaven. And again, that's why on our crosses we don't have Jesus crucified.

He's risen. He's been victorious over sin and death. He's conquered it.

And he reigns on high. So in the Protestant churches, you usually see an empty cross. It's not being disrespectful.

It's recognizing the power because sometimes, you know, poor Jesus. You know, poor Jesus hanging there on the cross. That's not where it ended.

That was just the pain of the price. Three days later, he rose. And he's alive forevermore.

And I think that's one of the things that blew my mind when I first gave my heart to the Lord was that I realized that Jesus was alive and that he knew me and that I could know him and that I could talk with him. I could have fellowship with him because he's alive. We're celebrating this Easter.

He's alive. We don't serve a dead Savior. We serve a risen Savior.

And he's in the world today. Amen? How's the rest of that hymn go? Whatever man may say. I hear his voice of terror.

See, Mark does the senior study, and they got all these down. The good old classic hymns. It's true.

It's true. Do you see his hand of mercy tonight? Do you know he's near tonight? Oh, brother and sister, he is. And he loves you so much.

So come boldly. We need to come daily for God's help. Daily.

Hourly. Sometimes by the moment. Dwight L. Moody said, A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next six months.

Nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it. There's a great store there, folks.

How much grace do you need today? How much mercy do you need today? The Bible says His mercy is higher than the heavens. How much is that? Well, it's certainly more than enough to meet whatever your need of mercy or grace is. How much love do you need? You know, I'm not very loving, or I'm not very lovable.

Well, because you have that faithful high priest, Jesus, who can sympathize with your weaknesses, you can come before His throne. You can know Him and walk with Him, and He can use you and work mightily in your life. Thankfully, God provides help in our time of need.

Amen? No request is too small because He wants us to be anxious for nothing. But in everything, by prayer, supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known to God, Philippians 4, 6, and the peace of God that passes understanding will guard your heart. Chapter 5. We continue the thought.

We're talking about Jesus as our perfect high priest. And unlike the priests of Israel, Jesus is an eternal priest, a priest forever. Warren Wiersbe notes that in the first couple of chapters, the writer has shown that Christ is greater than the prophets and the angels.

In chapters 3 and 4, he has shown that Christ is even greater than Moses. And now he points to Aaron, Israel's first high priest, and proves that Christ is a greater priest than Aaron. If his readers were to abandon Christ for Judaism, they would be exchanging a great high priest for a lesser high priest.

And he's saying, don't go there, guys. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for his sins. You know, there were the burnt offerings, the sin offerings in the Old Testament, but there were also sacrificial offerings.

There were thank offerings that the people brought, not because of sin, but just to say thank you to the Lord. And this was the ministry of the priest, to receive those gifts and those sacrifices and lift them up to the Lord. And every high priest taken from among men, he can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also beset by weaknesses.

A good priest would know what the people were going through because he went through the same things. And because of this, he is required as for the people, so also for himself to offer sacrifices for sins. A normal priest not only makes sacrifices for the people, but has to make sacrifices for his own sins as well.

And the Jews that were reading this understood that. And no man takes this honor to himself. You don't just make yourself a priest, not in the Old Testament times.

But he was called by God just as Aaron was. And there is a lesson for that, because God chooses people for ministry. A person wasn't supposed to decide on their own whether or not they wanted to be a priest.

God did the calling. God chose Aaron. And you remember back in Numbers chapter 16 and 17, there was the rebellion of Korah.

You know, Korah and his friends in the wilderness, this guy thought he had just as much a right to be a priest as Moses' brother Aaron. And he gathered a group of people to stand with him and demand to be made a priest. And God decided to have a little pop quiz there.

God decided to show Korah who he had chosen to be priest. And you remember the story, Korah and Aaron were both to offer incense before God, and whoever survived would be priest. And as they were offering the incense, you remember the Lord said to Aaron, separate yourself from these guys.

That should have been their clue. You know, a lot of times when we hear someone cursed or something, we kind of jokingly back away, you know, like lightning bolt might hit them or something. Well, it's kind of what Aaron was doing.

The Lord said, back away, Aaron. And fire came out from the altar and devoured them, destroyed them right there. The only thing that was left was the censers, you know, the incense censers.

That's all that was left, smoldering in the ash. Pretty radical. And then the earth swallowed up.

The guys who were supporting Korah, fire came out from God and consumed the guys who were trying to be priests on their own. And then to make things even clearer, God asked Moses to take his staff from each of the tribes, you know, the staff that he carried, you know, to take a staff from each one of the tribes and put it in the tabernacle overnight. So the heads of the tribes, and Aaron, of course, was the head of the tribe of Levi.

And Aaron put his staff in there. And Naphtali and Judah and all the different tribes brought their staffs in. And the next morning, the staff of Aaron stood out because it had blossomed and produced ripe almonds.

Get the point, you know? It was God making a statement. God picks who he wants to. And interestingly, God shows us who he's picked because they will bear fruit.

Think about that. So also Christ did not glorify himself to become high priest, but it was he who said to him, you are my son, today I have begotten you, quoting from Psalm 2-7. This is a psalm of the Messiah.

And he says in another place, you are a priest forever according to the order, not of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. He goes all the way back to the beginning of Genesis. During Moses' day, God made a choice that Aaron would be the priest and his sons would follow as the priests.

So all priests under the law of Moses would be of the order of Aaron. They all had to be descendants of Aaron. But there was another priest in the Bible, Genesis 14, a mysterious man named Melchizedek.

And we'll talk later about who this Melchizedek was, chapter 7, he's brought up in more detail. But the point the writer here is trying to make is that King David mentioned that the Messiah would be from the order of Melchizedek, not from the order of Aaron, not of the tribe of Levi. It turns out Jesus was from the tribe of Judah.

And God already established that in the Psalms. Psalm 110, verse 4, the Lord has sworn and will not repent, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And a priest forever is certainly an important contrast, isn't it? Jesus' priesthood, like mysterious Melchizedek's, is unending, but no high

priest descended from Aaron ever had a forever priesthood.

The writer is simply trying to make a point here that the Messiah would be called a priest. And to understand all that Jesus has done for us, this is important, folks, to understand all that he's done for us, we need to grasp what a priest does. And before you grasp what a priest does, you need to establish that Jesus was a legitimate priest.

The Jews might object to Jesus being called a priest because he was of the tribe of Judah, not descended from Aaron. Not even of the same tribe as Aaron, but that's okay because of Melchizedek. We'll get more into that later on in Hebrews.

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to him, who was able to save him from death and was heard because of his godly fear. Here we have a picture of Jesus, our high priest in the Garden of Gethsemane. And if Jesus asked that the cup be taken away from him and the cup was not taken away, how can it be said that he was heard? Because his prayer was not to escape his father's will, but to accept it.

And that prayer was definitely heard. I delight to do your will. Not my will, but your will be done, Father.

That was his prayer. Sweat great drops of blood. Lord, if it's your will, let this cup pass.

If there's any other way, the people can get saved. Any other way but the cross. But nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done.

God answered that. And Jesus took our shame and our guilt, and he bore our sin on that tree, that you and I could have eternity. And again, not just sweet by and by eternity, but eternity in our hearts right now.

That certainty and that peace and that rest. Right now. Though he was a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

Jesus did not pass from disobedience to obedience. He learned obedience by actually obeying. Jesus did not learn how to obey.

He learned what is involved in obedience. He learned obedience by things which he suffered. Suffering was used to teach Jesus.

If suffering was fit to teach the Son of God, we must never despise it as a tool of instruction in our lives. Amen? And God help us in that. Because, you know, life is hard.

Life in Jesus is good. It's the best there is. But that doesn't mean we as Christians are immune from hard times.

Or, you know, that we'll never suffer. If Jesus had to suffer. You know, the Bible never teaches that strong faith will keep a Christian from all suffering.

In fact, 1 Thessalonians 3.3 says that we are appointed to affliction. That's not a bad thing. Because it's through many tribulations.

Acts 14 says that we enter the kingdom of God. And Romans 8.17 says our current suffering is the prelude to glorification. You don't know glory without suffering.

So it's not a bad thing. It's a hard thing. Just because something is hard doesn't mean it's bad.

I know as kids, if something is hard, it's bad. If it's not easy, it's bad. If it's uncomfortable, it's bad.

But we begin to learn, wait a minute, you know, God's got a lot of ways that He's working in our lives and teaching us lessons and helping us to grow up. How else do you learn patience? But by having to go through some trial. You come out the other side.

And you know what? Your temper is not quite as hot as it was when you went into the trial. Because God's used the trial to soften you a little bit. Don't despise the chastening of the Lord.

Because like a good dad, his chastening is not punitive. It's corrective. It's instructive.

He's not there to hurt you. Amen? Hallelujah. And those of you that have been watching on TV, stay tuned.

There's a few more things that we'd like to share with you. Get close to Jesus. Don't let anything move you away from Him.

Amen. We still have a few more minutes. So let's just finish off the chapter, okay? And having been perfected, verse 9, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

Some don't want Jesus to be the author of their salvation. They want to write their own book of salvation. But God won't read it.

You can write it, but God won't read it. Only Jesus can author your eternal salvation. And notice this salvation is extended to all who obey Him.

In this sense, all who obey Him is used synonymously for believing on Him, which simply assumes that believers will obey. I think that's a fair assumption, isn't it? You say, I believe in you, Jesus. What that should be communicating is, what Jesus wants you to do, you're going to do.

I believe, trust in, and rely on you. Yes, Lord. Called by God as High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have much to say and hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing.

Well, let's get into the point there again. Being dull of hearing, what's that about? It's not a problem with the ears, really, but it's a problem of the heart. You just aren't really interested in what God has to say to you.

Not wanting to hear the Word of God points to a genuine spiritual problem. And these Christians who felt like giving up with Jesus were also dull of hearing. The dullness usually comes first and then the desire to give up.

Watch out when the Word of God starts seeming dull to you. Notice it says they have become dull of hearing. Become is an important word because it indicates that they didn't start out that dull of hearing, but it became that way.

And he rebukes them here, he says, for by this time you ought to be teachers. You need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God. You have come to need milk and not solid food.

I think the writer here is a little frustrated with him. Saying, you guys have been Christians long enough, you should be teachers of God's word, but instead you need constant reminding of the very earliest basics of Christianity. And you guys ought to be teaching this rather than arguing about it.

You guys are just on milk. And everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he's a babe. And the writer isn't just talking about God's word in a broad sense, but God's word and how it encourages us to change our ways and live as God wants us to live.

You know, a little baby sucking on a bottle is cute. A 40-year-old sucking on a bottle is sick. There's a lot of Christians, though, who are still sucking on a bottle.

And I might suggest, if you've been under the word for a couple of years here, you yourselves ought to be teaching. You ought to be having Bible studies in your house. You ought to be having discipleship meetings with younger believers.

You ought to be going through the word together with others. If you've been sitting week after week under the word of God, ask yourself tonight, where am I being used? How am I being used, Lord? How am I transmitting what You have so graciously given to me? I don't know if there's any... That would have been great if we had needs for Sunday school right now, wouldn't it? So just fill it, but there's always needs. And I dare say in your family and in your neighborhood, there's needs.

You can have a Bible study. In fact, you can just take what we're studying on Sunday morning, if you want, or Wednesday night, and get a few people who aren't here and share it with them. I know in the early days of Calvary, when we didn't quite understand how to do that, we'd just get tapes from Pastor Chuck.

We'd get eight or nine people around in a circle. We'd put a little cassette player in the middle of us, and we'd turn on Chuck, and we'd have a Bible study. And you know what? We'd get fed.

We'd worship. We'd get fed. We'd pray for each other.

You know what? We had church. In fact, a lot of those little Bible studies became churches. Some of the largest churches in the nations started like that.

Just a little home fellowship. So I don't think He's given this to us to be discouraged that we can't go forward from this place. He's saying, look, guys, you've got so much.

You've been given so much. Let's step it up. You know, let's move on.

For everyone... I'm sorry, verse 14. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Solid food.

What's that? It's what you apply to your life from God's Word. And again, like a lot of pastors... I heard Rick Cathers say this. He said, people will come up and tell me, wow, pastor, what a great sermon.

That was solid meat. And I've come to learn for most people this means that I either, number one, said something they never heard before, number two, kept them awake during the entire message, or number three, said something that they think their wife needed to hear. But the whole idea behind solid food is not about how much the pastor kept your attention.

It's all about how much God said to you that you turned around and put into your life. And I pray you've gotten some meat tonight to put into your life. Maturity comes as we make a habit of telling good from evil.

God wants our understanding, our perception to be sharpened through constant use. And God bless you guys for being out here tonight and for opening up the Word of God and daring to listen to it and receive it into your heart. Keep it up all week.

We grow in discernment as we stay in God's Word and find out more and more what God wants and what he doesn't want. So let's grow and let's press on. And Matt, why don't you come on up if you could and let's stand together, okay? And would you pray with me? Father, we do thank you for tonight and we thank you for this time in your Word.

We thank you, Lord, that you have a rest, that there is a rest for the people of God and that, Lord, you have done it all. You have gone into the Holy of Holies. You have gone into heaven itself, Father, and you are there, Lord Jesus, to intercede for us and to draw us close to you.

And we thank you tonight, Lord. We thank you for being our faithful, compassionate high priest. We love you, Jesus, and we so want to follow after you.

And so, God, have your way in our lives, Lord, and use us for your glory.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7133.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/pat-kenney/hebrews-4-5/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net