

HEBREWS – PRESSING ON

“Lord, Please Don’t Let Me Grow Mildew!”

Week 9

Obedience – what does that look like? And, do I have to do something of MAGNANIMOUS proportions to get a reward?

We need to obey what God has given US to do. When Jesus told Peter “Feed My lambs. . . tend My sheep. . . feed My sheep” – Peter looked at John and said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”

Jesus responded, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.”

You need to obey what God is directing YOU to do. You need to carry through with the good works that God has prepared beforehand for YOU (Eph. 2:10) – as a believer in Jesus – believing that it is God Who is working in you and through you – through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Charles Spurgeon's book titled DAILY HELP: "God is glorified by our serving him in our proper vocations. Every lawful trade may be sanctified by the gospel to noblest ends. Turn to the Bible, and you find the most menial forms of labor connected either with the most daring deeds of faith, or with persons whose lives have been illustrious for holiness. Therefore be not discontented with your calling. . . . Fill your present sphere to his praise, and if he needs you in another he will show it you."

Oswald Chambers (devotional for June 15th) – “We are not meant to be illuminated versions, but the common stuff of ordinary life exhibiting the marvel of the grace of God. Drudgery is the touchstone of character (where the rubber meets the road). The great hindrance in spiritual life is that we will look for big things to do. Jesus took a towel. . . and began to wash the disciples feet. Learn to live in the domain of drudgery by the POWER of God. The tiniest detail in which I obey has all the omnipotent power of the grace of God.”

Re: Hebrews 4:12 concerning the Word of God – God – piercing our very core, Oswald Chambers continues to say in 7/27 - “He educates us down to the scruple. The Spirit of God unearths the spirit of self-vindication” – our desire to justify ourselves – our actions – to defend ourselves. JESUS IS OUR DEFENSE!

Jesus, in His first coming, was faithful to His calling – to what was determined within the tri-une Godhead in eternity past - to become Immanuel – God in the flesh – so that He could identify with mankind – so that He could have compassion on us and sympathize with our weaknesses.

Jesus is SINLESS – but He was tempted in all points as we are. . . so He can come to our aid and He can function as our GREAT HIGH PRIEST. Jesus pleads our case. Jesus has the SCARS!!!! God’s wrath and judgment have fallen on Him at the cross!

Therefore, we can come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16) that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Prayer draws on the grace of God for NOW! One of the greatest proofs that you are drawing on the grace of God is that you can be humiliated without manifesting the slightest trace of anything but His grace!

Hebrews 5:1 to Hebrews 10:39 proclaims that Jesus Christ is a great High Priest superior to Aaron or to any other high priest whoever lived. The middle portion of the book of Hebrews proclaims that Christianity has a High Priest who takes men to God. The primary job of the High Priest was to officiate, either directly or indirectly through lower-ranking priests, sacrifices unto the Lord. The way to God was opened as the priests did the sacrifices day in, day out, day in, day out presenting the atoning blood to God. Not every sacrifice was a blood atonement for sin. Many of the ritual sacrifices were intended to be simple gifts to God, expressing thanks and desiring fellowship.

Not just anyone could serve as a priest – much less as High Priest. One of the first questions on the mind of an early Jewish believer – on the mind of the readers of Hebrews – when told that Jesus holds the position of High Priest would be: IS HE QUALIFIED? Plus, Jesus wasn't on earth as High Priest. The Aaronic priesthood had been in place since 1500 BC!! The Temple and the Aaronic priesthood was life for the Jewish people. Now what?

In his plea to the readers to FIX THEIR EYES ON JESUS, the author reminds his readers that there were two essential prerequisites for the priesthood (Heb. 5:1-4):

1. The High Priest must be genuinely human (5:1-3) since he represents man to God. If he wasn't human, he would not have experienced all that men experience and could not have compassion on mankind. Angels cannot be mediators. The priest was taken from among men.
 - Under the Aaronic Priesthood, it was necessary for the priests to offer sacrifices for their own sins, demonstrating their true humanity.
 - Our great High Priest, Jesus, is perfect, He is sinless, He is God. In God's plan of redemption, it was necessary for God to become man – to take on flesh, to hunger, and thirst and grow weary – so that He could identify with man – have compassion for man.
 - “Priest” means bridge builder. Only by becoming man could the eternal Son of God become the sacred bridge on which sinful human beings and a holy God could meet.
 - Think of mankind's cry against God all too often – “You don't understand, God! You don't care!”
 - But the characteristics of our High Priest, Jesus, as Hebrews reveals them show that thoughts like these are simply not true! Jesus does understand us. He does sympathize with us. He does care, and He is ever before the Father interceding for us!

2. He must be called by God (5:4). “And no man takes this honor to himself, but He Who is called by God just as Aaron was.” Jesus was called of God.
- Hebrews 5:5 – quotes
 - Psalm 2:7 - where God declares Him to be the Eternal Son of God – the Son Who would reveal the Father – and function as the High Priest on behalf of the people before God.
 - Psalm 110:4 – where God declares the Messiah to be a Priest forever. . . .
 - What roles were to be fulfilled by the Messiah? King and Priest! (Zech. 6:11-13)
 - Was it kosher according to OT law for a King to function as a Priest? NO!
 - Saul offered a sacrifice because he couldn’t wait for Samuel, the Priest, to get to the site. What happened to Saul?

Consider, re: the priestly role - God’s wrath was to be satisfied through the ministry of human priests; therefore it was necessary that God appoint those whom He would accept as His representatives.

- Exodus 28:15 – the High Priest wore the breastplate of judgment.
 - In this chapter of Exodus we read about the garments of the Priests and the High Priest:
 - Ephod – kind of a “waistcoat or apron” – made of linen. It consisted of two pieces – front and back – joined at the shoulders by straps or shoulder pieces (v. 7), and bound around the waist by a girdle that was part of the ephod. On each shoulder strap was an onyx stone in a setting of gold filigree upon which were engraved the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, six on each stone.
 - Thus, symbolically, the High Priest bore upon his shoulders the burden of all Israel as he represented them before God.
 - The Breastplate of judgment was a bag of the same material as the ephod. It was made of one piece of material, folded over to form a pouch. Fastened into this pouch in settings of gold were 12 precious stones, four rows of three each, upon which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes. The breastplate also held the URIM and Thummim which were tools for discerning God’s will – for giving a verdict/decision.
 - As the High Priest ministered in the sanctuary, he bore the burdens and needs of his people not only in the place of strength, upon his shoulders, but also upon his heart, that with wisdom and compassion he might be their mediator before Jehovah.

NOTE: It states that the High Priest had compassion on those who are “ignorant and going astray”

- The High Priest ministered only on the behalf of the one who sinned in ignorance, not knowingly – and, thus, going astray.
 - Lev. 4:1-2 – “If a person sins unintentionally” - The contrast to an unintentional sin is to sin *presumptuously* (Numbers 15:30). Literally, this was “to sin with a high hand.” There was no atonement available for the one whose heart was so defiantly turned against the LORD in presumptuous sin. If your heart wasn’t turned towards the LORD, then all the animals in the world sacrificed on your behalf did you no good. David prayed, “Lord Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.” (see Num. 15:30-31 for presumptuous sins)
 - What was necessary re: cleansing/forgiveness from presumptuous sins? REPENTANCE!!!
 - Psalm 51 – David’s cry of repentance following his intentional sin with Bathsheba.
 - On the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur – once a year – Lev. 16:21ff – regarding reconciliation for the sins of the NATION. “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. ²² The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”
 - Transgressions/iniquities – rebellion, defiance against the Lord
 - The Day of Atonement – atoned for - covered -all the sins of the nation of Israel – because of God’s covenant relationship with them – because of His promises to them (see Eze. 36:20-24). Because of GOD – for His glory – so that all the nations would know that He is God!
 - The Day of Atonement looks forward to **fulfillment in Jesus** – Isa. 53:5-6 – “But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Melchizedek?

Heb. 5:6 – “You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” - ???

In the OT we see him in Gen. 14. He’s the King of Salem (Jerusalem) and “Priest of the Most High God” (El Elyon – sovereign over all) who met Abraham and congratulated him on his victory in battle. Melchizedek brought bread and wine for the exhausted warriors and blessed Abraham. In return, Abraham gave the King Priest a tenth of all the

spoils taken from the enemy (Gen. 14:18-20). Giving the tenth was acknowledgement of the divine priesthood of Melchizedek. The tenth was, according to the general custom, the offering presented to deity.

Some see Melchizedek as a theophany – a preincarnate appearance of Christ – stating that Melchizedek is actually a Priest forever. (seeing that Melchizedek is labeled as a priest forever in Heb. 5:6).

Some see Melchizedek as a real man who is a type of Christ:

- Each was/is a Priest not of the tribe of Levi.
- Both were/is superior to Abraham.
- Beginning and end are unknown for both Melchizedek and Jesus.
 - “Without father,” etc. (Hebrews 7:3), refers to priestly genealogies. Melchizedek is not found on the register of the Aaronic line of legitimate priests; his father’s name is not recorded, nor his mother’s; no evidence points out his line of descent from Aaron. It is not affirmed that he had no father or that he was not born at any time or died on any day; but these facts were nowhere found on the register of the Levitical priesthood.
- Both are King/Priests.
- *Melchizedek* means “king of righteousness.”
- Melchizedek offered bread and wine – memorials of sacrifice – body and blood.

Hebrews 5:7-9

- Jesus’ true humanity and His eligibility to represent people before God is seen in vv. 7-9.
 - “The days of His flesh” refers to the time of His life on earth in a mortal body.
 - “prayers” – specific requests; entreaties.
 - “supplications” - the word in Greek speaks of an olive branch wrapped in wool. In the Greek culture, to express desperate prayer and desire, an olive branch wrapped in wool would be waved. This supplication of Jesus, the LAMB of God, took place in a garden of olive trees!! The one who offered supplications approached the one who would aid them with an olive branch to signify that they came as suppliants – those who would beseech/ask humbly and earnestly.
- The weight of all that lay upon Him produced “vehement cries and tears.”

The author is now focusing attention on a test that occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before Jesus was crucified. Jesus had just celebrated a Passover Seder with His disciples in the Upper Room and had instituted the New Covenant in His blood. Judas left the Passover Seder to finish his business re: the betrayal of Jesus. The disciples and Jesus, following the Seder, went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Read Luke 22:40-45.

For what did Jesus pray?

- Some have suggested that Jesus, knowing what death He would die, prayed that He might be spared. HOWEVER, because Jesus frequently prophesied that He Would be crucified and because He said He came to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:16 - He came to fulfill all prophecies), this explanation seems unlikely.
- Others have suggested that Satan was in Gethsemane, making a final attempt to prevent Christ from offering Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. Because Jesus had already stated that He was sovereign over His own death (John 10:18), and His authority over His death could not be usurped by Satan, this could not have been the source of such agony in the Garden.
- Some have said that He was asking that there be no separation from God the Father on the cross. If there was – then the Godhead cannot be the eternal Godhead. Not for a moment would the Son be separated from the Father.
 - Psalm 22:24 – “For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard.”
- Another explanation is that Jesus was praying not concerning physical death but spiritual death – the wrath of God coming down on Him.
 - Jesus’ prayer was heard. Psalm 22:24b.
- Another explanation – Jesus to God the Father that He would “save Him from death” (Heb. 5:7).
 - In the Greek that's the word *ekt*. *Ekt* means out from within. He wasn't saying God don't let me die. Why he said "for this hour came I into the world." He was simply saying Father, once I get into this thing, get me out of it. He was praying for the resurrection.” (see Psalm 16:10)
 - When Jesus bowed His head and took on Himself the sins of the world, He was incapable of raising Himself.
 - Ephesians 1:19-20 – “. . . and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

Heb. 5:7 – His prayer was heard – it was answered! He did die on the cross. He suffered God’s wrath on the cross. His prayer was answered in that He was raised from the dead!

Hebrews 5:8-9

- “. . . He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” Jesus learned all obedience entailed
- “having been perfected” – there was no progression from incompleteness to completeness or from imperfection to perfection. In His humanity His sufferings were completed. John 17:4 – Jesus completed what He was sent to accomplish.

How could Jesus, Who is eternally God, *learn* anything? Then again, how does God, enthroned in heaven *experience* obedience, except by casting off the glory of the throne and humbling Himself as Jesus did? Jesus did not pass from disobedience to obedience. He learned what obedience entails by actually obeying. Jesus did not learn *how* to obey; He learned what is involved in obedience.

The Bible never teaches that strong faith will keep a Christian from all suffering. Christians are appointed to affliction (1 Thess. 3:3). It is through many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22), and our current suffering is the prelude to glorification (Romans 8:17).

Jesus’ experience of suffering makes Him perfectly suited to be source of our salvation: justification, sanctification, glorification.

Notice that 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 – because we’re kept by the power of God – I Peter 1:5; Romans 8:30.

Hebrews 5:10

- And so Jesus was called by God as High Priest.
- “according to the order of Melchizedek.”
 - Jesus did not come from Aaron’s line – the tribe of Levi. Jesus came through the tribe of Judah.

Hebrews 5:11-12

- The author tells the readers there’s much to say re: why the order of Melchizedek is superior to the order of Aaron. He can’t give a brief explanation.
- AND this truth is hard to explain to them because they have become dull of hearing!
 - It appears that they weren’t in this dull of hearing state previously.
 - They’ve regressed – moved backwards.
- So – the author is going to give another warning. . . .