

Hebrews 5:1-4

“The Sympathy And Sufficiency Of Christ”

As our time came to a close last month we were considering the person of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ; His sympathy, and as we’ll in Ch 5 even as we continue on next week; His sufficiency. Vs 14 of Ch 4 reads

Vs 14

The idea here obviously revolving around the reality of who Jesus is. He’s not simply the High Priest of the Levitical order, there were various high priests down through the centuries who performed the various rituals and rites required by the Law. But there has never been a High Priest designated with the title “Great” there’s never been a High priest who’s passed through the heavens, meaning having ascended through the heavens (literally) to the right hand of God (and that phrase is in the perfect tense signifying that Jesus is still there to this day performing His priestly duties) there’s never been a High Priest who’s been fully man (as acknowledged by the name “Jesus”) and fully God (acknowledged in descriptive, “the Son of God”). The covenant that God has called us to in Christ has greater promises, greater power, greater privileges and a *Great* High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. Therefore, “Let us hold fast our confession.”

What confession? The confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that He’s the One we *trust in* for salvation, *depend on* for sanctification, that we *look to* for strength, sustenance, fortitude and follow through in our walk and relationship with God. Remember this was written to a group of people who’d confessed Christ but were actually contemplating returning to the rites and rituals of the law and temple sacrifice. They were being put down, persecuted, losing their jobs, unable to provide for their families simply because they confessed Christ. and They’re sitting around, thinking things through and coming to the conclusion that perhaps it’s just not worth it, it’s too tough, “...perhaps we should just forget this stuff and return to the tradition.” and The writer of the book of Hebrews is seeking to place a gigantic red light in front of them is sharing with them and showing them how that to do that is to walk radically backwards in their walk with the Lord and exchange the greater for the lesser, that which is more than sufficient for the insufficient, that which God has ordained as the means of salvation for that which was never intended to save anybody. No one has ever been saved by following the law; salvation has always been by grace through faith. Remember what Paul told the Galatians? He said, “*I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.*” Gal 2:21 The law was given as a tutor (the bible says) it was meant to teach us the righteous standards of God and the need for a Savior because we can’t keep the law. and So to return to the law is to return to the ministry of death, that which can only condemn you. Don’t turn away from Christ, hold fast to your confession.

I don't know what difficulty, what dilemma confronts you today, perhaps you're in that place whereby you're considering giving in, giving up, you've tried the "Christianity thing" and it's just too tough, you're just going to return to the ways of the world. Don't do that, you've grabbed hold of the plow, don't look back, don't go back, it's to exchange life for death, peace, for uncertainty, clarity for confusion, let us hold fast to our confession. Hey, there's going to be tough times in Christ, there are tough times in the world, but in Christ you have hope, apart from Christ you're with out God being with out hope in the world. Let us hold fast our confession.

Vs15

Now right here lays a giant quandary, a particular predicament, a sticky situation for the scholarly. Now I'm no scholar so it's not quite as difficult of a dilemma for me. Oh surely we could consider the conundrum till our head's explode should we so desire but it seems best to me to simply take the word of God for what it says.

"What's the worry?" You ask, "Pre'tell, what's the problem?" Well, where we read that Jesus was in all points tempted as we are, yet with out sin, the question comes up; "Since Jesus didn't have a sin nature was the difficulty for Him found in the fact that He was not *able* to sin, or that He was able *not* to sin?" You see since Jesus is God, God can't sin, yet since Jesus was fully man, lived in a tent like yours and mine was He able to sin but overcame the temptation by depending fully upon the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit in His life? and Man people go back and forth on this, "He could sin but He by the power of God didn't sin." "Sure He was a man but He was also God and because He was God He could never sin." and You start venturing down those paths and if you're anything like me it won't take you too terribly long to drive yourself bananas.

Why wrestle with that? Just take the word of God for what it says, "He was in all points tempted as you and I are tempted, yet with out sin." What that means is that He can identify fully and even to a greater degree than you and me with the limitations of the human frame. We identified last time how that He was tempted in every area that you and I can be tempted with. The lust of the flesh (Satan after His 40 day fast tempting Him to turn the stones to bread). The lust of the eye, (Satan *showed* Him all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory and said, they can all be Yours if You'll only bow down before me). and The pride of life, (Satan took Him to the pinnacle of the temple, told Him to jump and He would be ok because the Word of God said that He would give His angels charge over Him and they would bear Him up lest He dash His foot against a stone.) and Yet He overcame every area of temptation by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in His life.

Jesus knew what it was like to be cold, to be hungry or thirsty, to be hurting physically or emotionally. To have the sense of security in your friends, or becoming incredibly lonely being abandoned by them all in time of need. Here's one, Luke 2:52 in regards to the childhood of Jesus, "*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*" Let that one roll around in your heart and in your mind for a little while. Jesus is fully God, How on earth could He "increase" in wisdom or in favor with God? He knew what it was like to fall down and skin His knee as a kid, to have to obey His parents when they made a wrong decision, He was familiar with the frailty (fully) of the human frame.

You see (and we touched on this last time) as to where you and I have a breaking point, a "boiling point" if you will. Jesus didn't, so as to where you and I have given in to various temptations when the pressure brought us to a point we just couldn't take it any more, Christ never did. He experienced the full force and fury of the temptations that confront the human frame. Every now and then I'll watch the world's strongest man contests on ESPN, and they have various tasks that they have to confront and complete in order to win, be it towing a 400 lb anchor, or picking up and placing on higher and higher platforms bigger and bigger boulders, or they'll hold these 2 battle axes out to the side up to a plate of some form and if one drops it'll sound off a buzzer. Well you watch these guys and they all have different breaking points, but my question is this, which one feels more intimately the frailty of the human frame, the one who gets to a certain point and just gives in due to exhaustion or whatever; or the one who despite the pain, despite the fatigue, and the desire to give up just holds out to the very end and completes the task? You see we represent those guys who can only go so far and then we give in. But Christ went all the way, regardless of the pain, regardless of the fatigue and the frailty of the human frame, He never gave up, never gave in, He knows the full force and fury of the temptations that confront you and me as humanity. Therefore He can "sympathize" with our weaknesses.

What does it mean when it says that He can "sympathize" with you and me? The word *sympathize* here is a great word, because it speaks of being touched with the same feeling as another. You remember when Lazarus had died, and Jesus waited 4 days to show up because He knew that He was going to raise Him from the dead to the glory of God. But when Martha came out to see Him we read that she fell down at His feet saying, "Lord if You had been here my brother wouldn't have died."

The bible says, "*Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept.*" John 11:33-35 He sympathized with her, she hurt, so He hurt, when your heart hurts, His heart hurts. Remember this vs? Isa 63:9 "*In all their affliction He was afflicted,*" We have a High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses.

Now understand that when we speak of Jesus “sympathizing” with us it’s not that He encourages us to wallow around in self pity, He doesn’t encourage us to feel sorry for ourselves. But He shares in the reality of our experience; there is a thing in the music world known as “sympathetic resonance.” If there are 2 pianos in the room and you strike a note on one of them, the same note on the other piano will gently begin to respond to the other. It’s *sympathetic resonance*, if you have 2 tuning forks tuned to the same note and you strike one and begin to draw it in close to the other it’ll begin to resound as well, one is a generator, the other is a resonator. and When a chord is struck in the weakness of the instrument of our humanity, and pain, or grief, or sorrow is generated, that resonates in Him. There is no note of the human experience that doesn’t resonate with in the exalted instrument of Christ’s humanity.

So the question is, to whom or to what do you turn when you need sympathy, someone to understand and be there *for* you, a source of strength *to* you? Why go *anywhere* or turn to *anyone* other than Christ? Sure it’s good to have brothers and sisters *in* Christ to whom we can turn, but don’t think they’ll satisfy or bring healing to the deep recess of your heart. Only Christ can do that.

Vs16

So the invitation goes out, “*Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you — The sure mercies of David.*” Isa 55:1-3 and Again, “*And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*” Rev 22:17 “Let us come *boldly* to the throne of grace.” Not *brazenly*, or *pridefully*, *deservingly*, or *disrespectfully*, but *boldly*, that is; with out reservation, let your guard down and come to your Creator as One who is well aware of your weakness and has compassion on you. He’s not looking to squash you, or punish you, He wants to dispense mercy and give grace to help in your time of need.

So what do you need today? Strength to make it through another day? A renewal in the joy of salvation that He’s so freely given you? A fresh hunger and restored appetite for the word of God, a heart of worship for God? Forgiveness of sin, and a repentant heart? Come to Christ that you might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Now certainly there is a sense in which our entire time on this planet on the “pre-side” of eternity is our time of need, and certain God’s mercy and grace is there for us in that capacity. But be there a need *specifically* in your life, you’ll find it met in the person of our Great High Priest who’s passed through the Heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.

Vs1 Ch 5

Now we won't focus on it so much today but here in Ch 5 the writer both compares and contrasts the High Priesthood of Christ with the Aaronic High Priesthood.

That is, the High Priesthood of the line of Aaron (Israel's 1st High Priest). But we see a # of things in this 1st Vs here, we see the person, the position (or platform) and the priority. As far as the person is concerned, we've been speaking of it already it's the person of the high priest who's in view here. The *position* or the platform is that of *taken from* men to be *appointed for* men in things pertaining to God (meaning he's to represent the people to God, be a mediator, stand in the gap on their behalf). and The *priority* or his chief responsibility is to offer both gifts and sacrifices *to God* for sins.

Now the fact that he's to be taken from among men so that he might be appointed *for* men is important. Why? Because it means it takes a human being to represent humanity before God, this speaks to the fact again that not only what Jesus 100% God, but He was 100% human, He was taken from among men, that He might be appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, namely that of offering gifts and a sacrifice for sin.

Now regarding the duties of the high priest we realize from this that not every offering given to God was a blood sacrifice for sins. His duty was to offer both *gifts*, and sacrifices to God. There were offerings made to God of grain, there were drink offerings that could be poured out to God, there were offerings made simply as a way of expressing desired fellowship and thanksgiving to the Lord. and You could offer those any time, you know you've been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus offered the gift of Himself as a sacrifice for sin thereby interceding on behalf of man "once for all." Now the door that grants us access into the very presence of God Himself is standing permanently open to all who are in Christ. Before the cross there was a veil in the temple that separated the holy place from the very holy of holies, the holy of holies was reserved exclusively for the high priest and at that only 1 day a yr, the Day of Atonement. But do you realize that the bible tells us that when Jesus breathed His last and commended His Spirit into the hands of God there on the cross that, that veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. Not from the bottom to the top as if man did it, but from the top to the bottom as though God reached down out of Heaven and tore that veil in 2 saying in essence to all who are in Christ, "C'mon in." Access has been made available in to My presence by the work of My Son. The blood sacrifice has been made, but you're free at any time to offer gifts to God of thanksgiving, of love, simply because you dig and desire His fellowship intimately. and It might be a gift of service, a gift of your time, of your resources, an offering above and beyond the tithe, not because you feel guilty, or are somehow pressured into it, but man you just love the Lord, and you're thankful. You know you could never out give God, you're not trying put God in the position of "owing you" you're just loving *on* Him, giving *to* Him an offering through Christ.

Christ has made the offering, the sacrifice for sins. Why? Because all sin and have fallen short of the glory of God, there's the gospel message right there. We all like sheep had gone astray, we had all turned each one to our own way and the LORD laid on Him the iniquity of us all. For God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son for us, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, that by believing in Him we'd never perish but have everlasting life.

But again the job of the high priest was more than that of a butcher, it wasn't to be simply a ritualistic slaying of the sacrifice, going through the mechanics, the motions, he was to serve the people out of a heart of love, having compassion upon them, notice.

Vs2

Now we've seen a few comparisons, Aaron taken from among men, Jesus taken from among men, both appointed *for* me, both offered gifts and sacrifice for sins, both having compassion on those ignorant or going astray, the contrast?

They weren't both subject to weakness. Oh, Jesus was familiar with human frailty, even more so than Aaron, but He was never made subject to weakness, meaning He never gave in to the temptation to sin. Aaron had compassion in the regard that he knew he could be in that position of having sinned at the drop of a dime but for the grace of God. Jesus would never be put under the yoke of sin, He *became* sin for you and me, but He *never* became a sinner.

But we note again that He served with compassion. We read in Matt's gospel, "*Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*" Matt 9:35-36 Many and manifold are the moments pictured for us in scripture of Jesus moving and ministering with *compassion*, and it's a beautiful thing. We could spent lots of time reflecting *on* them and being challenged *by* them, why? Because what was true of Christ is to be true of you and me, we're to move *with* and minister *to* others from a heart, from a position of compassion.

But this word "compassion" speaks not of an emotional position so much as a practical involvement. It speaks of "balanced (real time) involvement." Perhaps you've been in or seen a situation whereby maybe a child has an accident of some sort and one parent is so upset, so overwhelmed by the circumstance at hand it's like they're literally paralyzed/sterilized from being able to help. and So the command is issued to the other parent "You deal with this, I can't deal with this, you deal with it." The scales have tipped and they're overwhelmed, no longer able to add profitable input or insight to the situation.

Listen, Jesus is never overwhelmed, never weighed down or beset by a situation, He's always able to "deal with it," always able to involve Himself in a balanced manner that will

make for your eternal good and God's eternal glory. He feels for you, there is a sympathetic resonance about Him, yet not only is He sympathetic *toward* you He's also sufficient *for* you. He can do something about your situation. When you begin to breakdown He'll be there to build you up, remember He's able to sleep in the most violent of storms, there He was in the bottom of the boat, the disciples were freaking out, fearful, thought they were going to die, He wasn't worried, didn't even wake up. Yet at the disciples beckoning, as they called and cried out to Him, He was aroused and brought balance to the otherwise overwhelming and seemingly out of control situation.

When we read here of the *ignorant* and those *going astray* it's talking of those who sin being unaware, didn't know any better, just blindly being apart of something sinful. and Then those who are going astray are those who are being deceived, being led in to sin via the deception of something or someone else. Again it's the picture of the sheep going astray, so often people want nothing to do with Christ because they don't know the reality *of* Christ, who He *really* is, and what He's done for them personally. Others are like the 1 leaving the 99, being deceived, following a misguided notion, unable to adequately discern what's most beneficial for their spiritual best interest. Christ has compassion on the weak, those hurting, unaware and being led astray, He understands the weakness associated with humanity.

Vs3

Again this is where Aaron and Christ would part ways, God made provisions in the law for the High Priest to be made radically aware of his own sinful disposition. Before he could offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement he had to offer 1st a sacrifice for himself, so that he might be covered, considered clean before God. He was readily aware of his own need for the grace and forgiveness of God.

Jesus, on the other hand, never sinned once, had no need to offer a sacrifice for His own sin, but He made Himself the sacrifice for *your* sin, and for my sin.

Vs4

The position of the high priest was taken from among men, and was appointed to minister for the needs *of* men in things pertaining to God. But the high priest was never elected *by* men, he was called, ordained, and appointed by God. and Of the few instances we have in scripture where men presumed to function in the position of the priesthood who weren't called and ordained of God (be it Korah, Saul, or Uzziah) each one was met with tragic results. No man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called of God.

Today we might draw the application regarding ministry that it needs to be a calling, too many are simply making it a career choice. and The results are tragic, God doesn't honor it, the Spirit doesn't anoint it, and the people aren't blessed or built up *by* it, in many cases these

people leave a trail behind them like the path of a tornado or a hurricane, just battered people and broken lives. They don't have sympathy for God's people, they don't move or minister in compassion, they aren't called or ordained of God.

Jesus, taken from among men, appointed *for* men in the things pertaining to God, has given Himself as a sacrifice for our sin, He's been called of God, ordained and anointed by God to be our Great High Priest, the One who stands in the gap for you and me building the bridge between our sinful lives and a holy God. In Him you'll find sympathy, you'll find sufficiency, whatever your need may be, restoration, rejuvenation, a fresh start on the path to sanctification... perhaps a brand new start; salvation. Let God meet the deep need of your heart today in Christ.

Prayer Points

Father thank You for being such a loving and gracious God, Lord we're blown away by Your sympathy, overwhelmed by Your sufficiency, help us to appropriate them in reality by faith. We look *to* You, and trust *in* You, may we hold fast our confession that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

If God is calling out to you, desiring to meet the deepest need of your heart, your life, the need to be forgiven of sin and made righteous before Him. Why not surrender your heart to Christ today? Let Him demonstrate His sympathy, His sufficiency to save you even now. Give your heart to Christ and be washed clean, whiter than snow, new life having been born again by the Spirit of God.