

Secured with Confidence
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Hebrews 4:14–5:6

Opening Question: What are the characteristics of a great friend?

- A great friend will let you say anything you're thinking and they still love you.
- A great friend accepts you for who you are.
- A great friend will do whatever they can to help you.
- In Jesus, we not only have a sounding board for our problems, but THE SOLUTION for our problems. Jesus is both Savior and friend!

Big idea: I can live a CONFIDENT CHRISTIAN LIFE, because Jesus is my GREAT high priest.

Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

- The theme of this section of Hebrews is Jesus as the ULTIMATE high priest.
- To you and me, the term “high priest” may not mean much. To the Jews it was huge.
- Hebrews is a message to Jewish first century Christian believers who were slipping back into their comfort zone of the Jewish system of reaching God through human priests.
- They were steeped in the Old Testament system of sacrifices and the role of the high priest.
- **What do you know about the position of high priest? What role did the high priest play?**
- **What was special regarding the high priest and the annual Day of Atonement?**
- Verse 14, **WHY does it say Jesus is the great or ultimate high priest?**
- **What does the verse mean when it states He “passed through the heavens?”**
- **What do you think it means to “hold fast” to our confession?**

The writer argues that Jesus is supreme over any high priest and has eliminated the need for human high priests. He came to earth in human form; became the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of all mankind; and returned to sit at God the Father’s right hand speaking to Him for us. Jesus our GREAT HIGH PRIEST gives us eternal life forever, and the grace to live life TODAY.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- **What “weaknesses” is this verse talking about?**
- **How can we KNOW that Jesus understands our struggle with temptation?**
- Jesus felt the same temptations we feel, but he never yielded to them. Therefore, we have to believe Jesus felt even stronger temptation because he was tempted but never sinned.
- Jesus came to earth as both GOD and MAN, so He understands everything we face or feel.
- If Jesus totally understands our weaknesses he also understands our need for help with those weaknesses. That leads to the encouragement in verse 16.

16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- When we think of “confidence” what comes to mind?
- If we do a study of the Greek word used here it translates: outspokenness; frankness; bluntness. Speaking freely, openly, and plainly. That’s a comforting thought!
- But it get’s even BETTER! I might have a friend who will let me be “unfiltered” when I vent. However, though they have the power to listen, they may not have the power to help.
- What if we had a friend to whom we could speak freely AND they could solve every problem!
- **What do the words “draw near to the throne” say about who we’re approaching?**
- Because we don’t live in a monarchy, we might have a problem picturing the nature of drawing near a throne. **If you are coming into the presence of a monarch how would you act?**
- History teaches that kings could do good or they could be very harsh! One wrong word and it’s “*Off with their heads!*” But this King sits on a “throne of grace.” **What does that mean?**
- Because God is God, we should approach His throne with reverence. Because of Jesus our great High Priest, we can approach without fear.
- **What are the mercy and grace we will receive at God’s throne?**
- Let “us” draw near...that “we” may receive... **What is the significance of “us” and “we?”**
- We can only approach the throne of grace without fear because we are “covered” by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We can only be covered if we’ve received His free gift of salvation and believe in Him as both our Savior and Lord.
- As we said, Jesus gave us eternal life forever, and grace to live THIS life each day!
- In the first few verses of chapter five the writer of Hebrews continues drawing the comparison between Jesus and the human high priests of that day. It’s “compare and contrast.”

5:1-3

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. 3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;
6 as he says also in another place,
“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

- **What do verses 1-4 say was true of every high priest in Jewish religion ?**
- Verses three through five begin to show the DIFFERENCES with Jesus as our GREAT High Priest compared to human high priests.
- **What does verse three imply is DIFFERENT about Jesus?**
- In Old Testament times the high priest was chosen by seeking God’s will. You didn’t apply for the job. In the same way, God “appointed” Jesus to come, die, rise from the dead, and become our great High Priest. But here’s where the differences begin.
- In verses five and six the writer quotes two Old Testament passages (Psalm 2:7; 110:4). It’s God the Father speaking to Jesus His Son.
- **What do verses five and six say is different about Jesus compared to human high priests?**

- To summarize: Jesus was like the human high priests since He was once “among men,” and is appointed to act on their behalf to provide access to God and a sacrifice for sins.
- Because He was once human, He can “*deal gently with the ignorant and wayward.*”
- Jesus is our GREAT High Priest because of the differences:
- Jesus never sinned. Instead, on the cross, He bore the sins of all mankind to spare us from the wrath of God we deserve. He gave us MERCY instead of what we deserve.
- And because He is God’s Son and lives as our High Priest FOREVER, we receive GRACE... eternal life that we did NOT deserve.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

As I studied this text, I thought of an old song written by Bill and Gloria Gaither. The title is “What a Precious Friend is He.” The lyrics capture the feelings I have when I think of Jesus my Great High Priest:

I've a friend who's always near me
 I've a friend who always cheers me
 I've a friend who is so dear to me
 What a precious Friend is He.

On His promise I'm relying
 All my needs He is supplying
 He'll be there when I am dying
 What a precious Friend is He.

Chorus

He'll go with me through the valley
 He'll go with me all the way, everyday
 Savior, help me to have faith in Thee
 What a precious Friend is He.

(c) Bill and Gloria Gaither

Every day I can COUNT on Jesus my Great High Priest!

- He understands my weaknesses
- He will listen to anything I have to say...things I’d never share with anyone else
- He made the sacrifice for my sins to allow me to approach God’s throne
- He will give me mercy and grace for every need in my life
- I can approach God’s throne boldly because Jesus is my Great High Priest!
- Knowing all this, how could I NOT come BOLDLY to the throne of grace every day?